

Radio Free Europe in Paris: the Paradoxes of an Ethereal Opposition

by

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Abstract

This paper explores, interprets and contributes to the studies regarding Radio Free Europe in a cold War context. By focusing on the Romanian Department of RFE and further on to Monica Lovinescu's cultural broadcasts we intend to provide new insights about a type of cultural liberal advocacy framed by an international context and a local intellectual tradition.

By resorting to communication theory, intellectual history and socio-history of intellectuals we will place Monica Lovinescu's message within an intellectual historical interaction which is responsible for the establishment of a literary canon and for the present discourse about the past. A concentric contextualization will gradually introduce our case study, repositioning it into history after a classicized solemn locating it on a transcendental pedestal.

The elements of novelty of our undertaking are multifold: it provides factual information about a phenomenon only personally evoked, it applies a complex set of theoretical methodologies and last, but not least, it uses a comparative comprehensive historical approach in order to discard ethical, Manichean or self-centered visions about the Communist period.

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Introduction

Radio Free Europe holds a unique position in the annals of international broadcasting. Considered as “the most influential politically oriented radio station in history”¹, it played several roles, as propagandistic instrument within the Cold War context, as informative alternative arena counterbalancing party-dominated press and, last but not least, as a subject of communication theory development. Moreover, Radio Free Europe is not only immanently promoted and consecrated as a liberating voice; it is also retroactively acknowledged as an important actor in the “crusade for freedom”, practically retaining at the moment an undisputedly respectable place within the wide range of actors and institutions which belong to communism. The societies from Eastern Europe Soviet Union exposed to international broadcast numbered almost 370 million people who fed daily on uncensored news in order to grasp worldwide events but mostly to deal with daily local realities, disasters or thorny issues. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty managed to combine the theoretical American message advocating democracy with the pragmatic goal of supplying an audience with reliable intra-national and international based news.

The target of our thesis will be that of analyzing how national-based departments within a Cold War institutional framework deal with the propagandistic and professional informing task. Choosing as a case study the Romanian section, we shall try to answer the question of how is a Cold War ideology reframed or reflected by national exiled

¹ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: the Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), p. ix.

editors and in what RFE's role actually consist of when propagating freedom. Taking into account a cultural program which was highly appreciated by the Romanian audience and which enjoyed the status of a consecrating institution, we will argue that, despite the synchronizing appeals to opposition to communism, the Romanian cultural broadcasts lack the insight awareness of social dynamism, enforcing an elitist discourse and a vertical communication between intellectuals and the masses. In this way, advocating *change* along the rough lines of Cold War rhetoric leads to *endorsing existing* polarizations by means of the ethereal medium of radio endowed with a symbolic meta-capital. In order to understand the unintended consequences of such a liberal-conservative program, we shall pursue a concentric analysis, highlighting the institutional and intellectual peculiarities of Radio Free Europe and then of the Romanian Department.

Airing news not about the country from which the broadcasts originated but about the countries that were the broadcast target makes Radio Free Europe special, all the more so since the United States had not shown interest before and during World War II—unlike the Bolshevik and Nazi regimes - in taking part in the global war of airwaves. Therefore, what distinguishes Radio Free Europe from Voice of America or BBC is that it is not national with a strong international content, but international with a local content. It does not only seek to provide neutral information in standardized journalistic style, but to act as “surrogate domestic broadcasters”² while “keeping hope alive among the satellite countries of the USSR and improving the chances for a gradual change towards more open societies”³. An inherent paradox of the whole diplomatic history of Cold War

² Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens, The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, Forward by Lech Walesa (London: Brassey's, 1997), p. xiv.

³ This is Radio Free Europe's aim as it is expressed in 1954 by Cord Meyer, chief of the International Organizations Division of CIA. See Michael Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

arrangements would be that of focusing on containment initiatives as well as on coordinated campaigns to support underground resistance movements in countries behind the Iron Curtain. The propaganda broadcasting acquires the features of a contradictory strategy, aimed at raising people's consciousness without fueling internal upheavals.

The studies concerned with the history of Radio Free Europe as a whole collaterally touch upon the paradoxes of voicing freedom. In this respect, Radio Free Europe as an object of historical enquiry bears an intriguing peculiarity: its strategic imposition as a challenge for the historical flow did not necessarily enhance either multiple or complex investigations. It seems that the topic has been ranged as a *fact* despite its radiant tension as an *issue*⁴ during the Cold War era. Our task therefore is not only to further investigate an intriguing propagandistic phenomenon which did not enjoyed appropriate scientific attention, but also to account for its contradictory features within a type of research which goes beyond descriptivism. So far, the studies concerned with Radio Free Europe as an institution count only as factual reconstruction of the emergence of the institution, of its intricate evolution and diplomatic networking. Although the exposure of the radio's funding by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1967 introduced a gap between the studies having a "self-congratulatory tone"⁵ and the more neutral ones, basic methodological differences still constitute a sore absence. The

⁴ I use here the distinction formulated by Bruno Latour between "matters of fact" and "matters of concern". By this dichotomy he tries to promote a type of critical sociology defined as the 'Actor-Network-Theory' which is not interested in reducing complexities to social explanations, or to "substitute society for the object it explains". It rather postulates the irreducible nature of *facts*, converting them into *concerns*, insofar as do they not longer represent the object of a linear method of transporting causalities, but of detecting translations between mediators. What we retain is the urge to "get *closer* to the much variegated lives materials have to offer", to look at objects as "gatherings" and to indulge in a second empiricism "which is still real and objective, but is livelier, more talkative, active, pluralistic, and more mediated than others". See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 87-120.

⁵ Johanna Granville, "Caught with Jam on Our Fingers. Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956", *Diplomatic History*, Vol.29, No. 5 (November 2005).

only shifts in the data-based treatment are those related to tone and thematic diversity. It is intriguing and perhaps it may constitute a subject of research in itself the question of why a phenomenon that affected million of lives and which inscribed a new chapter in the history of international broadcasting enjoyed such an arid attention despite its richness in terms of scientific challenge. We would suggest that the inhibiting factors probably derive from RFE's own institutional and ideological complexity.

First of all, it is the self-imposed and highly legitimating principle of voicing "truth" that makes inviolable the aura of the source and its liberating message. Secondly, it is because of the organization of RFE as a multi-national and multi-level institution and because of the target countries' differences in appropriating their past, that the subject is understandingly difficult to be approached from the perspective of complex comparative analysis. The lack of immediate access (the broadcasts as well as the over-all internal reports are not situated within each country's national archives, but in the Hoover Institute, California) and the low intensity of interest for a history still emotionally incorporated and made obscure by the specific secrecies and vulgates about a police-surveyed past are the hindering factors for the existence of an insightful monograph on RFE.

The precarious bibliographical situation imposes itself as a primary motivation for assuming the task of developing such a topic. Moreover, choosing the Romanian Department within RFE proves not to be an elective, but a rather natural option, self-emerging under the actual conditions of scarce resources and reduced interest for much more focused studies. If it is paradoxical and scholarly frustrating that RFE as a subject is treated in Western studies as a monolithic institution having a factual development, it is

even more puzzling to see that in Romania, one of the countries with the biggest RFE audience, the topic is only personally evoked and not yet analytically objectified. Monica Lovinescu⁶'s recent death on the 20th of April 2008 revealed a general promptitude in canonizing her as a unique intellectual militant and analyst under communism and after, but also a deeper indifference towards neutral and applied research concerning RFE and its editors⁷. The only accounts about RFE's editors belong to the main actors or to their hidden interlocutors, namely the Security Police agents, who produced along years a vast quantity of reports which, although they can provide a rich source of information, are often unreliable either because of the malevolent intentions underpinning them or because of the unprofessional disclosure and publication of them. As if continuing a Cold War history, the diaries, memories and broadcasts of Monica Lovinescu, Gelu Ionescu or Virgil Ierunca stand against the doubtful collections of Security Police documents⁸ coordinated by Mihai Pelin, a dubious figure of the political and cultural arena.

⁶ Monica Lovinescu (born in 1923, Bucharest- died in 2008, Paris) is a main figure of the Romanian RFE Department as the editor of two influential cultural broadcasts transmitted from Paris from the 60s ("Theses and Antithesis in Paris" and "Romanian Cultural Actuality"). Awarded a scholarship in 1947, she leaves to France in September the same year and takes political refuge there immediately after Romania becomes a People's Republic in 1948. She marries another Romanian cultural figure, Virgil Ierunca, with whom she will share a lifelong militancy for political and cultural freedom. Since 1975, Virgil Ierunca joins as well RFE Romanian team, preparing the program "Povestea vorbeii" [The Tale of the Word]. After 1990, Monica Lovinescu continues to monitor and analyze Romanian cultural life, while accomplishing a complex task of recuperating the memory of the exile community, of RFE broadcasts and, last but not least, of her family. She died on the 20th of April, 2008.

⁷ Whereas, for example, elite-oriented newspaper "Cotidianul" supports the initiative of several organizations and personalities such as Sorin Ilieșiu, Doina Jela, Vladimir Tismăneanu to convince the authorities to organize national funerals for Monica Lovinescu, a famous journalists and former Radio Free Europe editor, declared to us that "Radio Free Europe is an exhausted issue" (conversation with E.H., 22th April 2008, Bucharest). A week later, Michael Shafir, RFE researcher in the 60s and 80s, told us almost the same thing, stressing that nobody will be ever interested in undertaking the task of disclosing the history of the Romanian Department within RFE and no foundation will ever sponsor such a project (interview with Michael Shafir, 29th April 2008, Cluj-Napoca). Instead of agreeing with the organization of the national funerals, the president Traian Băsescu decides for a more moderate homage, awarding Monica Lovinescu with the National Order "Star of Romania", a prize previously given to the defunct Teoctist Patriarch and to the famous football player Nicolae Dobrin.

⁸ We refer to the collection of documents *Cartea alba a Securității. Istorii literare și artistice 1969-1989* [The White Security Police Book. Literary and Artistic Histories 1969-1989] (Bucharest: Presa Română,

It is our primary task to fill a bibliographical gap between a canonizing or a personal discourse and a plethora of undigested documents, streaming along an uncritical perspective about the past. The symbolic and political position held by Radio Free Europe with regards to the Romanian cultural field in the 70s and 80s should be disentangled from the eulogistic discourse that has been wrapping it so far. This does not mean that we seek to minimize its importance or to disregard its cultural role as a missionary and critical voice penetrating the Iron Curtain. Our goal is to initiate a new type of discourse relating to Radio Free Europe which should render its role comprehensible within a historical context, an institutional framework and a polarized cultural field. From this point of view, the peculiarities of the Romanian Department constitute further evidence for the challenging status of our research. It suffices to say that in a country devoid of grand scale social movements the RFE's audience is the biggest or that four Romanian directors die under mysterious circumstances in a period when Ceausescu's dictatorship becomes harshest. If we add the fact that the cultural broadcasts enjoy the largest space overall among RFE overall cultural programs and that the Romanian editors from the beginning cause problems for the American directors, we obtain the image of a highly belligerent department, advocating democracy on cultural conservative grounds. It is not by accident either that our case study on the Romanian section of RFE will focus on Monica Lovinescu's broadcasts which, by standing at the intersection of literature and politics show the elitist basis of political moralism and frame

1996), which is an official intelligence account of literary life under communism and to *Operațiunile „Melița” și „Eterul”*. *Istoria Europei Libere prin documente de Securitate* [„Chatterbox” and „Ether” Operations. RFE History through Security Police documents] (Bucharest: Compania, 2007). Even if they do not offer accurate information, we will make reference to them because they show the type of discourse that police agents had about literary matters and the type of problems that the literary circles and the RFE journalists could pose for the stability of the regime.

an aesthetical-ethical approach to culture, contributing to a schematic understanding of politics and society even after 1989 and fostering an uncritical survey of anti-communist attitudes.

By trying to liberate RFE from the tautological Cold War discourse limiting it to a liberating role, we argue that the Romanian RFE broadcasts not just reflects or influences the political and cultural situation from communist Romania. Resorting to the latest inputs from communication theory as it was developed after the cultural turn, we will demonstrate that the propagandistic radio acted not as transcendental tribune with a transformationist agenda, but as an involved partner, stretching vertically and horizontally the limits of the cultural and civic field. The paradigm of *communication as interaction* will be preferred to that as *communication as domination*, thus subverting the very pragmatic agenda of a scientific discourse elaborated within the context of the “psychological warfare” itself. Because of the radio’s *ideological and symbolical* position within the macro-context of Cold War and micro-context of extended literary wars, the relationship between the RFE and the literary field in communist Romania goes beyond a shared militancy for liberty, acknowledged and feverishly boycotted by the regime from 1950 to 1989. It actually guides and provides legitimacy for the cultural fraction in search of professional autonomy. It also shapes the history of the rehabilitations of authors from the past and it establishes the discursive parameters of the debate on national identity. Consequently, it unintentionally narrows its political advocacy by trying to politicise a cultural debate and to seek for civic attitudes within a cultural field which is still enjoying in the 70s the privileges acquired during the liberalization from the 60s. Culture and

politics will prove to have blurred frontiers, thus influencing the postcommunist historiographic discourse.

The sources that will back up our demonstration are as complex as the theoretical perspectives that we shall adopt. Primary sources such as interviews with writers or RFE editors or researchers and archival materials situated either in the National Romanian Archives (Bucharest) or Open Society Archives (Budapest) will be corroborated with secondary sources representing the discontinuous series of Monica Lovinescu's broadcasts published by herself, diaries, epistolary exchanges, Security Police reports and press articles. If we should characterize all these materials from the perspective of the RFE as a coagulating network, we would say that they distribute themselves according to a system of interrelated reports about the "other": RFE's reporting about the political situation or the literary community from the country is accompanied by the literary agents' or the Securitate policemen's replies, within an ongoing dialogue which undergirds the idea of *media as interaction*. Other specificities of the sources, those of belonging to certain media (radio or press) or to certain intellectual categories (editors, writers) suggest also that the most appropriate theoretical perspectives must be grounded on communication theory and socio-intellectual history.

We shall start therefore our excursus on air-waving by positioning ourselves within the meta-field of radio anthropology, communication theory and intellectual history stressing the fact that the subject in itself dictates a sort of pluriperspectivism which makes the difference between our approach and all the other studies on the subject. Then in the first thematic chapter we will circumscribe the radio station within the Cold War propaganda and psychological warfare by taking into account its uniqueness in

broadcasting industry, its efficiency underpinning ideology and pragmatic goals, its efficiency in terms of organization and journalistic impact. Nevertheless, we will also disclose its paradoxes as an alternative agency for creating a public sphere through invisible air-waving and as an internationalizing liberal voice echoing local and national concerns. In the second chapter we will focus on the Romanian Department by displaying its tormented history, the audience's expectancies, the status of the cultural programs, and the combined authority of Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca as "a human constellation one can always rely on"⁹. We will take into account not only the Romanians' perception of the effectiveness of the broadcasts, but also the vision endorsed in the radio's reports about the Romanian elites' activism within the Eastern social movements. The few cases of dissidence that we shall discuss will therefore represent the result of an active coverage which does not only reflect, but *constructs cases* on the grounds of an old elitist pedagogy and intra-departmental RFE competition. In the next chapter we shall develop the question of intra-elitist communication by showing how a literary rehabilitating campaign concerned with the authors from the past is gradually metamorphosed – under conditions of complex political crisis – into a social cultural involvement in literary institutional affairs. During the protochronist debate, the stakes of institutional positioning and canon building will reveal the national orientation of the RFE broadcasts, despite their role as an interface between East and West. The historical and conceptual delineation of the Parisian intellectual milieu and of the exile entourage and the chronological analysis of the programs will show how an intellectual tradition is molded within a Cold War set and how the desire to open culture to history turns more into keeping culture, in a self-centered way, out of history. In doing so, we

⁹ Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire* [Love Declaration] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2001), p.86.

shall not only undermine the strict boundaries between a cosmopolite discourse and an autochthonous one, but we shall also dissolve a static relating to the past and to its glorious figures. The representatives of subversive air-waving will be thus relocated from their transcendental moral position to a local well-defined and interactive one.

Chapter I. Radio Free Europe: Theoretical Assumptions

As we previously asserted, Radio Free Europe is still a poorly treated subject despite the growing literature on the politics of the Cold War. Without taking into account the human diversity and the dynamic of intellectual networking within and surrounding Radio Free Europe, the Cold War and propaganda studies are still convergent with a theoretical apparatus associated with the ideological assumptions of two societal blocks clashing. Radio Free Europe is holistically approached as a tribune launching conscious attacks on a subservient audience or it is collaterally mentioned as a part of a strategic weaponry utilized by one of the superpowers of the postwar global field¹⁰. Although there are researchers who expose the frailties of a Western cultural infiltration which features elitist attitudes and therefore concludes that comprehensive explanations for the role of American overseas initiatives for the end of the East-West struggle need to be further undertaken, they remain loyal to a tendency of viewing the Americans and the Soviets as personalized partners involved in a relationship unfolding along an “action-reaction” pattern¹¹.

In the present chapter we shall make an inventory of the perspectives from which Radio Free Europe as a topic was approached and we shall propose new directions for its

¹⁰ “The Cold War was fought in different ways by superpowers: through brinkmanship, as in Berlin crisis of 1948 and 1961; military confrontation, both conventional and atomic; a political, psychological and ideological propaganda battle to try to win over the hearts and minds of rival populations; and, in the economic domain with separate trading systems centered on the industrial might of the respective superpowers, echoing Stalin’s concept of «two world’s economies»”. See Steven Morewood, “The Long Postwar, 1945-1989”, in Rosemary Wakeman (ed.), *Themes in Modern European History since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 17.

¹¹ See Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

further “coverage”. It is worth noticing, from the start, that the question of Radio Free Europe’s influence over the target populations places itself, in a resourceful and challenging way, at the intersection of different theoretical frameworks ranging from media sociology, radio anthropology, communication theory, Cold War studies concerned with propaganda, history of ideas, sociology of literature dealing either with enclosed fields or with transnational cultural networks. Our purpose is to borrow useful insights from all these fields and to make them converge in a comprehensive account of how and why radio broadcasting mattered for a cultural field which tried to attain its autonomy from the political sphere by resorting to politicized inputs. Because it relies on disparate acquisitions, our theoretical puzzle cannot be viewed as a subversive or revisionist approach, but as a catalyzing new manner of analyzing a phenomenon of several media interplay: air waves, press and books. Radio as a medium of communication requires special attention in itself, as it demonstrated its disseminating qualities many times in the history of broadcasting. It is not only a mass communication medium, but an informative device which creates an emotional public sphere by partly replacing the individual reading and involving in the social arena categories previously lacking the motivation and the skills of being informed.

Radio communication in itself as a subject already encapsulates intriguing features. We may say that our topic bears a unique status as well due to its implicit embeddedness within the theory which should transgress it. Insofar as *communication theory* develops within the Cold War context as a scientific discourse legitimating or fostering a military policy engaged in proactive acts, it makes any subject related to propaganda and psychological warfare contingent to its assumptions. In this respect,

media sociology will not be used just as an instrumental conceptual tool, but as a subject in itself, insofar as it is rooted in the history of radios piercing the Iron Curtain. However, because the Cold War history is not a static one, its “theories” are also developing, undergoing a process which seems to exonerate them from political implications and to acquire the meta-discursive features needed in objectifying examinations. In a relevant related development, the focused poignancy of Radio Free Europe broadens itself and internationalizes its contents towards the 70s.

1. The State of Affairs

The studies concerned with Radio Free Europe as an institution count only as factual reconstruction of the emergence of the institution, of its intricate evolution and diplomatic networking. Although the exposure of the radio’s funding by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1967 introduced a gap between the studies having a “self-congratulatory tone”¹² and the more neutral ones, basic methodological differences still constitute a sore absence. The only shifts in the data-based treatment are those related to tone and thematic diversity: whereas Robert Holt¹³ and Allan Michie¹⁴ provide detailed accounts of heroic operations and personal achievements, Sig Mickelson¹⁵, Bennett Kovrig¹⁶, Michael Nelson¹⁷ and Arch Puddington¹⁸ realize broader pictures of the

¹² Johanna Granville, “Caught with Jam on Our Fingers. Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956”, *Diplomatic History*, Vol.29, No. 5 (November 2005).

¹³ Robert T. Holt, *Radio Free Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958).

¹⁴ Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain: the Radio Free Europe Story* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963).

¹⁵ Sig Mickelson, *America’s Other Voice: the Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983).

¹⁶ Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: the United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

¹⁷ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: the Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (London: Brassey’s, 1997).

¹⁸ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: the cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, Ky : The University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

diplomatic relations between the United States and Eastern Europe, taking into account the economic and ideological factors which conditioned them. If in Sig Mickelson's and Arch Puddington's cases the causes for the narrative-based approach can be assigned to their intimate relationship with the subject (as directors within the radio¹⁹), for the other versions it is arguable that the temporal distance revived a sort of moderate teleological account centered on the political effects of the broadcasts. They endorse a new resurrecting trend, by moving away from a factually loaded critical standpoint to a softer discourse of replacing negative issues with positive outcomes.

The problematic status of Radio Free Europe is discarded altogether with a lively interpretation of the RFE's insertion in a larger socio-cultural landscape. The inner contradictions of a propagandistic institution aiming to erode communism on a large scale and with a composite staff enjoying a high degree of autonomy from the American authorities (CIA and Congress) are only descriptively shown, by alternating basic ideological guidelines with real results. In Arch Puddington's book, for example, the initial strategy to employ exiles as journalists is examined through the effects perceived by the American authorities. It is not discussed in its unreported consequences, such as discursive parameters, journalistic habits or retroactive way of conceiving politics. Neither is explored the ambiguous relationship between an imperative of gradualist change addressed to real individuals and the enraged impulses of generalizing evil and looking down on abstract categories of communists. He only notes that the evaluation of scripts of Hungarian political programs contained remarks about the inability of

¹⁹ Sig Mickelson is the first president of the corporation resulting from the merger between Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty in 1976. A broadcaster with a high reputation, he had been president of the CBS News Division. Arch Puddington has served as a deputy director of the radio's New York bureau in between 1985-1993.

broadcasters to speak to human beings, not to abstractions called “dirty Reds”²⁰. Thus, the tensioned mechanism of psychological warfare is pinpointed, but never circumscribed by theoretical allegiances which should try to account for the internal discrepancies of a *politics of pity and/or denunciation*.

One can argue that the problematic aspects of foreign broadcasting is apprehended, but not thoroughly examined in these works. Nevertheless, issues are converted into moral labeling. Michael Nelson bluntly recognizes the moral paradox on which the institution is grounded - “an organization dedicated to truth was founded on a lie”²¹ - because of its secret financial support; still, his account draws back to an apologetic discourse centered on the role of the radio in connecting subversive movements, informing a frustrated audience and producing trouble to Soviet intelligence. The dramatic ennobling effect is further reached through superseding the radio’s history with the testimonial symbolic weight of famous dissident figures. For Lech Walesa the radio represented “our ministry of information” and Jacek Kuron acknowledges it as a major companion of underground communication²².

In this way, samizdat organization, oppositional dynamics and representative histories blend within the distinctive overarching trajectory of a liberating voice. In a non-intentional manner, such a selective inventory devoid of analytical dimension rather obscures than highlights radio’s role in shaping critical consciousness by blurring distinctions between the cultural impact of the radio and the pragmatic channeling of information and mobilization through samizdat networks. Karol Jakubowicz’s distinction between the influence of samizdat and that of Radio Free Europe is in this sense

²⁰ Arch Puddington, *op.cit.*, p.59.

²¹ Michael Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

²² *Idem*, pp.158-160.

fundamental: in comparison with foreign media support, samizdat has an organizational function:

Samizdat and the underground media were among the mainstays of civil society in Communist countries, which often than not amounted to the beginnings of an independent public sphere, incorporating not only periodicals and publishing houses, but also alternative artistic events, “flying universities”. And so on. [...] They performed very much the same functions as foreign media, although of course their immediacy, emotional appeal, and detailed reporting of events of direct interest to and impact on members of society made them much potent and effective. They performed an additional organizational function because the very fact of their creation and dissemination required organizational work and the development of distribution networks and because they could guide the work of underground organization and mobilize the general public to oppose the authorities and their policies.²³

2. “Effects” paradigm

It is one of our tasks in this paper to distinguish between the *effects* of Radio Free Europe by reassessing concepts like “civil society”, “public sphere”, and “alternative culture”. In doing so, our purpose is to discard the usual linkages between them and to acknowledge the role of Radio Free Europe for the Romanian cultural field without a supposed influence on the assembling of organized movements. First, we have to draw the connection between the established overlapping of the terms and the adjustments of the *effects paradigm*. Secondly, we shall reframe the influence question by combining an interactionist approach with the general meta-capital of media.

In most cases, as the Polish example amply illustrates, foreign broadcasting, emergent “civil society” and clandestine publishing pertain to the constellation of underground movements or organized dissent in a well-naturalized association. The category of studies concerned with *social change* within the passage from communism to

²³ Karol Jakubowicz, “Media as Agents of Change”, in David L. Paletz, Karol Jakubowicz, Pavao Novosel (eds.), *Glasnost and After. Media and Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1995), p.34.

democracy usually reinforce this kind of conceptual and organizational affinities in order to trace an evolution, rather than a disruption, at the level of autonomous societal fields. It is not a coincidence that they recuperate the potential of a debate on media before and after 1989 and that they reinsert the positive role of Radio Free Europe within nascent democracies. This time, the focus on communication impels the usage of a more structural approach, the specification of the mediatic effects and the comparison with the totalitarian model. Oleg Manaev²⁴ stresses the importance of alternative radio in the detotalitarianization of social consciousness and the politicization of social reality. Karol Jakubowicz retains as major achievements “piercing the cognitive control” and “forging a community of hope”²⁵, but insists on the interplay between the content of the media, the technology and the social situation seen as a distribution of “opinion, belief, values and practices”²⁶.

From the point of view of communication theory, these ideas represent a clear departure from the idealistic model of content-based indoctrination, forged at the beginning of the Cold War, which claimed that “communication is the main instrument for socialization, as socialization is, in turn, the main agency of social change”²⁷. Radio Free Europe’s agency in nourishing mobilization is recognized, but it is seen contextually varying. It is clear though that they are still imbued with the modernizing discourse of the textual scientific cortege accompanying Cold War policies. It has been demonstrated so far that communication studies are not simply contemporary with military policies, but

²⁴ Oleg Manaev, “The USSR (Republic of Belarus)” in David L. Paletz & all, *Glasnost and After...*, op. cit., p. 87.

²⁵ Karol Jakubowicz, “Media as Agents of Change”, in David L. Paletz & all, *Glasnost and After...*, op. cit., p. 31.

²⁶ *Idem*, p.20.

²⁷ Daniel Lerner, “Toward a communication theory of modernization”, in L. W. Pye (ed.), *Communications and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 327-350.

convergent with them. The overemphasis of the transforming potential of a broadcast message is doubly rooted in the “psychological warfare” dynamic model²⁸ and in the behavioral modernizing visions about the power of the media in stimulating an evolutionary change²⁹. The Romanian case, with an audience exceeding all the others but with a low or inexistent open dissent challenges the transportation model in both its hard and soft variants and calls for a more developed model.

3. Interactionist paradigm

In the field of mass media communication, the counter-model to the developmental, normative or informational paradigm is the cultural pluralistic one developed in the beginning of the 1970s. Instead of immanently assessing the impact of a message independently of its conditions of production and reception, the media scholars have been more and more sensitive to the non-ideological aspects of communication. The rejection of effects paradigm posits a non-linear perspective on the cause-effect link by taking into account diversity in social phenomena and the interdependence of everyday culture and media. Paradoxically, the dynamism of this approach recommends it as the authentic social change interpretative framework insofar as the “hypodermic” model of indoctrination prioritized characteristics of the communication process that transcended temporal conditions at the expense of any contingencies that might be introduced by

²⁸ Cristopher Simpson’s critical insights show how the concept of “psychological warfare” has been appropriated in various and ambiguous ways in order to manipulate and coerce rather than to “communicate”. The author stresses the rise of communication theory as a methodological tool used by ruling elites to shape consciousness, not to stimulate it. The appearance of radio propaganda broadcasting may be considered rooted in this paradigm of *communication as domination*. See Cristopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion. Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²⁹ Ron Robin places the American radio broadcasting within a psycho-sociological modernization program aimed not at subverting people’s view, but of neutrally reinforcing predispositions while simplifying the constant and coherent malignity of the enemy. See Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001)

change in those conditions. Therefore, as Jay G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch observe, the bulk of previous research “was conducted as if the societal field on which the persuasive battle was waged was more or less stable” and thus “persuasive mass communication functioned more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of change”³⁰.

In contrast with this trend, the cognitive turn promoted a less deterministic or instrumentalist and a more flexible attitude. Several fruitful pathways can be discerned. Cultural studies see media as instances of ordering meaning due to the audiences’ capacities of interpreting and incorporating information in a non-passive way³¹. The sociological input of this perspective proscribes the rational or liberal values of the enlightened capacities of media, arguing that the media’s informational role is never purely informational: it is also a way of arbitrating between the discursive frameworks of organized groups in ways that can potentially affect the distribution of resources and rewards in society³². Consistent with this view is the post-critical paradigm which tempers the tone and assumptions of those who, desiring to deny the Cold War modernizing claims ascribed to international propaganda, ended up by promoting the same paradigm of *communication as domination*. By bringing more nuances to this type of labeling international radio broadcasting as media imperialism³³ or electronic colonialism³⁴, recent studies prefer the notion of “framing events” rather than that of

³⁰Jay G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch, “Media Change and Social Change: Linkages and Junctures”, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.), *Mass Media and Society* (London: E. Arnold, 1996), p. 121.

³¹Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, “Culture, Communication and Political Economy”, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.), *Mass Media...*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³²James Curran, “Mass Media and Democracy Revisited”, in *Mass Media...*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

³³See Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media are American* (London: Constable, 1977) or Chin-Chuan Lee, *Media Imperialism Reconsidered* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980).

³⁴Thomas L. McPhail, *Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and Communication* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1993).

“biased media”. They contend that media outputs are not delivered to large audiences by conscious and deliberate efforts to convey corporate interests, as Noam Chomsky³⁵ would argue, or to single out the Third World for self-serving negative coverage. News bias is unavoidably induced by either “unreflective use of typifications”³⁶ or by the “constraints of professional and organizational routines and pressures”. In other words, there is no such thing as intentional ideological perversion, but a historical ideological heritage and specific institutional practices which shape or *frame* an event.

Based on the interactionist approach in sociology³⁷ which postulates that everyday experience depends on institutionalized and internalized schemes of interpretation which frame every individual’s horizon, these inputs help us locate the power of the radio message not in its intended effects, but in its incorporated and shared values, channeled in a subtle way by means of a pervasive medium. In this respect, Monica Lovinescu’s broadcasts have a consecrating power not because of her belligerent attitude (whose political merits should not be however overlooked), but because of an interwar incorporated modernizing ethos unfolding along the flow of Cold War piercing waves. The confrontation with the communist regime becomes not only selective since it frames cultural-political events, but acquires the status of a *ritualistic confrontation* deprived of the mobilizing impact of a genuinely adversarial stance. The sacredness surrounding her broadcasts and other Romanian political programs endorse the idea of symbolic authority

³⁵ Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media* (London: Vintage Books, 1998).

³⁶ Philo C. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda. International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1992), p. 92.

³⁷ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

transgressing the informational content³⁸ and rendering “influence” a more complex interplay imbued with reverential loyalty. In this case, as Philo C. Wasburn shows, “various international audiences may not depend on IRB [international radio broadcasting] to learn the truth from a particular selected source; rather, they may be seeking what they understand as several alternative constructions of political reality”. *Media dependence theory* which argues that in conditions of uncertainty people will tend to become more dependent on the media for information and interpretations to help them find their way³⁹ is applicable only insofar as we add to it the *ritualistic interactionist mood* of an audience who rely on an authority perceived as transcendental to its affairs. It is not a contradiction then that Radio Free Europe’s editors enjoy an atemporal status after a long life involvement in temporal matters: people invest them with an aura of impartiality and cultural competence in order to legitimize themselves within orderly competitions.

The *interactionist paradigm* can thus fulfill multifold tasks: it can explain the polarizations induced within the cultural field by a medium which acts as an arbiter disguised in an intangible posture due to its distance and cultural capital, it contributes to the historical contextualization of an enchanted vision about RFE by detecting the grounds (frame) on which it is constructed and it can also lay the foundations for the interpretation of the discursive framework about communism as a personalized ritualistic

³⁸ Peter Gross notices the sacred aura of Romanian RFE broadcasts: “Judging by the religiosity with which these foreign broadcasts were monitored by (urban) Romanians, they had an important meaning that transcended the mere information they carried”. See Peter Gross, “Romania”, in David L. Paletz & all, *Glasnost and After...*, *op. cit.*, p. 207. He is using P. Dahlgren’s idea of “significance transgressing information”. See P. Dahlgren, “TV News and the suppression of reflexivity”, in E. Katz and T. Szecsko (eds.), *Mass Media and Social Change* (London: Sage, 1981), pp. 101-104.

³⁹ Media-system dependency was first introduced by Melvin L. De Fleur and S. Ball-Rokeach in 1976. They argued that individuals’ capacity to attain their goals is contingent upon the mediatic information resources. See S. J. Ball-Rokeach and M. L. DeFleur, “A Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects”, *Communication Research*, No.1 (1976), pp. 3-21.

denunciation forged under the conditions of inter-elite competition and under radio constraints of quick, sharp and dramatized reporting.

4. Intellectual History and History of Intellectuals

Last, but not least, the interactionist paradigm maintains a fruitful proximity with Pierre Bourdieu's field theory⁴⁰ and with intellectual history understood in its double interest for the "history of situated uses of language constitutive of significant texts"⁴¹ and for socio-cultural intellectual sets. Dialogical communication between RFE and the cultural field extends the physical and temporal national boundaries of an inter-elite struggle which reproduces the *topoi*, oppositional stances and missionary ethos of an intellectual debate dating from modernization period. It is not our goal to reconstruct interwar debates about the pathways of modernization, but it is relevant to mention that the adversarial points of view roughly gravitate at that time around the traditionalist or the Westernizing stands, which do not follow the demarcation right-left, but rather the difference between a metaphysical understanding of nation and a liberal – critical ideology open to Western influences. Even these differences are blurred in the 30s, when a new generation emerges seeking to integrate a national revival within an international spiritual framework through the activism of an intellectual elite interpreting political crisis on cultural basis and manifesting its energetic claims by ardent journalistic reflections. We argue that intellectual dispositions such as elitist cultural militancy and journalistic denunciations still frame the postwar debates which are still anchored in an

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is a useful reference because he makes the connection between a structural sociology of intellectuals and a historical account of intellectual dispositions. He elaborates the concept of *field* as a social arena in which people maneuver and struggle in pursuit of resources in ways that are consistent with their *habitus*, which is an incorporated system of dispositions or schemes of perception, action and thought, acquired within historical processes.

⁴¹ Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 19.

ideologically in a modernizing drive, enhanced by the traumatic view of the totalitarian perspective voiced from RFE microphone. Intellectual history⁴² in this sense provides us a legitimate concern for the “analysis of « work » done on specific ideological material”, giving way to a dialogical (engaging) reading of RFE broadcasts, seen as texts emergent within an intellectual discursive community. We may say that intellectual history frames from its interpretive point of view what interactionist paradigm assigns in its assumptions: meanings are constructed by horizontal (synchronic) interactions, by a continual reshaping of diachronically formed and internalized ideological sets. Monica Lovinescu’s use of a modernizing idiom (by reference to artistic novelties, intransitive literary messages, Western models) is rooted in an intellectual tradition which is given new form under different political and literary circumstances.

We may also enter therefore the domain of socio-history of intellectuals which uncovers the linkages between intellectuals’ positions within society with cultural

⁴² It is difficult to position ourselves within the field of intellectual history precisely because of its division between at least three national schools (“Cambridge” school in England, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* in Germany, “Annales” in France) with no immediately apparent approaches. The subject of the conceptualist-contextualist methodology is difficult to formulate even for the specialists. Roger Chartier assumes that “the field of so-called intellectual history covers, in fact, the totality of the forms of thought and its object or objective has no more precision a priori than that of social or economic history”. Hans Kellner notices that even the most optimist supporters of the autonomy of intellectual history are “depressingly elusive” in their demonstrations and prefers, instead of finding a definition, the search of a motivation for intellectual history’s loss of identity after the linguistic turn, when the demarcations between historiography and literary studies tend to be more and more blurred. See Roger Chartier, “Intellectual History or Sociocultural History? The French Trajectories” and Hans Kellner, “Triangular Anxieties. The Present State of European Intellectual History”, in Dominick LaCapra and Steven Kaplan (eds.), *Modern European Intellectual History, Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp.14 and 114. What we nevertheless find common to the articles about intellectual history and we try to apply in our analysis is the emphasis on a “mode of inquiry rather than a methodology”, a rejection of both a textualist immanent approach to literary or political construction and of causal deterministic socio-economic explanations and an openness towards imaginative reconstruction of the past, grounded on hermeneutics and non-reductionist sociology of knowledge. Dominick LaCapra argues in favor of a dialogical intellectual history at variance with documentary factual reconstruction of the past, Roger Chartier proposes a non-quantitative investigation of how a “group or an individual appropriates an intellectual theme”, Donald R. Kelley draws attention to developments in philosophy, anthropology, natural science in order to indicate a creative historical interpretation with should not operate with “immortality of ideas”, but with “horizon-structure of experience”. See Donald R. Kelley, “Horizons of Intellectual History”, in Donald R. Kelley (ed.), *The History of Ideas: Canon and Variations* (Rochester, N. Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1990), p.167.

(self)representations. We would touch upon the association between a persistent cultural militant ethos dating from XIXth century and a set of socio-cultural problems worked upon by intellectuals for their self-positioning and self-definition. *Political engagement* and the emergence of *symbolic capital*⁴³ as a social asset represent specific European phenomena⁴⁴ delineating a dramatic history of intellectuals who try to upgrade their status in relation with a local political condition or with foreign models of intellectual autonomy.

It would be interesting to discover how, in a Cold War Republic of Letters, Monica Lovinescu's East European political engagement as RFE journalist is forged against a French Sartrian model of engagement⁴⁵ while aspiring to a Romanian cultural autonomy from the perspective of a long Francophone critical tradition (best embodied by her father, the literary critic Eugen Lovinescu). We shall not bring into discussion all the classifications concerned with political involvements; we shall restrict ourselves to noticing various European interests in politics in order to circumscribe a Romanian missionary elitism reshaped by conditions of exile and cultural demarcation. In this regard, we will take notice of Central European intellectuals' entitlement to pose as the

⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu defines social world as "accumulated history". In order to appropriate social energy, individuals act as agents endowed with different types of *capital* (economic, cultural etc.) within an economy of practices. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", in J. G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of a Theory and Research for Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 242. By "symbolic capital", Bourdieu generally means any type of capital that happens to be legitimated or prestigious in a particular field. Due to their education and expertise, intellectuals claim having a monopoly over knowledge and truth and so they exert a symbolic violence over other practices and world-views. See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 230, or *In Other Words* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), pp. 136-135.

⁴⁴ Charle Cristophe conceives his comparative analysis of XIXth century European intellectuals as different and converging but non-concomitant historical evolutions towards intellectual *autonomy*, seen as "the most common and abstract European intellectual pretension". The intellectuals' involvement in politics is not then contradicting the autonomist ambitions, but derives from a necessary collusion with religious and political forces which infringe upon intellectual activities. See Charle Cristophe, *Les Intellectuels en Europe au XIXth siècle. Essai d'histoire comparée* (Seuil: Paris, 1996), p. 21.

⁴⁵ Sartre inaugurates the model of intellectual prophetism based on excellence. See Anna Boschetti, *Sartre et 'Les Temps Modernes'* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), p.147.

“living conscience” of their nation and to uphold democratic values in undemocratic times, an attitude leading in more backward countries to the widening of the gap between a knowledge-elite and the uneducated masses⁴⁶. On this basis, factors like intellectual *marginality* in relation with an active and glamorous French intellectual milieu and symbolic *centrality* in relation with a distant Romanian cultural field create the prerequisites of a patriotic moralism and an individualistic militancy for freedom and for synchronization with dissident movements, while undergoing a reverse (self)de-synchronization with the French cultural arena and with their own country’s social dynamism. Radio Free Europe as a project of subverting communism by a European symbolic reintegration of Eastern countries may be thus seen as a partial failure in its unintended consequences, despite its enlightening intentions and despite (or because) RFE editors’ cultural populism.

5. Combining Threads

All the methodological issues described in this chapter should not give the impression of a cumbersome theoretical apparatus. Our goal is to find a suitable theoretical framework for a subject dealing with media effects, without subscribing to the “media effects” paradigm developed within the developmental or the counter critical imperial studies. The consecrating power of Monica Lovinescu’s broadcasts enforce the idea that media are endowed with a “meta-capital”⁴⁷ influencing other forms of capital

⁴⁶ András Bozóki, “Introduction”, in András Bozóki (ed.), *Intellectuals and Politics in Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁴⁷ Nick Couldry applies to media field the notion of “meta-capital” which was used by Pierre Bourdieu in connection with the political field. “Media’s meta-capital over specific fields might operate in two distinct ways: first, as Bourdieu explicitly suggests for the state, by influencing what counts as capital in each field; and second, through the media’s legitimating of influential representations of, and categories for understanding, the social world that, because of their generality, are available to be taken up in the specific conflicts in any particular field.” See Nick Couldry, “Media Meta-Capital: Extending the Range of

from other fields, but do not fit into a transformationist ideological or societal model. Their symbolic power draws not on an intentional explicit mood (although its existence cannot be denied), but on a literary legacy composed of a recognized intellectual capital and a legitimate set of cultural obsessions professed from a mass air-waving disseminating tribune, which is at the same time external (because of the physical distance) and internal (because of the emotional and patriotic proximity) to local struggles. The power of the radio as a special type of communication medium is thus combined with the grounded power of certain ideas and certain intellectual agents. For our methodological chapter, this means the unfolding of three basic theoretical threads: communication theory, history of ideas and the socio-history of intellectuals.

Bourdieu's Field Theory", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 32, No. 5/6, Special Issue on The Sociology of Symbolic Power: A Special Issue in Memory of Pierre Bourdieu (Dec., 2003), p 668.

Chapter II. Radio Free Europe within the Cold War

On June 1, 1949, Joseph C. Grew introduces the Free Europe Committee to the American people stating that “only a victory in the field of ideas can we achieve a victory that will last”⁴⁸. The former ambassador to Japan implies by these words that military defense and strategic economic measures (Marshall Plan) do not suffice in the engaging world struggle of the time. In this chapter we intend to see how an ideological warfare is set within a Cold War context by means of international radio propaganda. For the purposes of our thesis we shall focus only on the structural aspects of the implementation of a propagandistic institution characterized by an intriguing dynamic: Eastern European personnel acting within a Western procedural and infrastructural framework.

We are not interested therefore in outlining a factual diplomatic history or in subscribing to the revisionist views in the Cold War studies arguing in favor or against the utilitarian aspects of military, economic or even symbolic positioning of the American and Soviet powers. We shall only delineate the political assumptions of the RFE project and its intertwined relationship with academic agenda, the organization and the efficiency of an institution which has no precedent in history and the perceived success of a liberating operation, from the perspective of both official communist regimes and random listenership. We shall be interested in providing a short descriptive outline of RFE, while focusing on those non-decorative and less explored cultural and social

⁴⁸ Robert Holt, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

aspects of its existence which configure the paradoxes of airing freedom and universalistic values on an intra-national basis. Since our theoretical approach pertains to the paradigm of media as interaction, we shall not place ourselves within the trend of triumphal rhetoric about the Cold War which envisages its ending as the final victory of the West ideas about individualism over a collectivistic backward thinking⁴⁹. Adhering rather to the post-revisionist school⁵⁰ in Cold War studies⁵¹, we look at the battle over hearts and minds of the postwar decade as being part of a complex American involvement on a European scene which adapts to its own traditions a transatlantic model of freedom. As it is the task of the last chapter to focus on the adaptation of Cold War rhetoric to local modernizing discourses, we shall envisage this one as an introductory one to the question of the positioning of intellectual émigrés within a politicized international field. We are interested therefore in the reasons, as well in the paradoxes of a project in which democracy and freedom are beamed “through the voices of 19th century reaction”.

⁴⁹ David Armstrong and Stuart Croft, “The Individual Level. Individualism in European Relations”, in G. Wyn Rees, *International Politics in Europe. The New Agenda* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 49.

⁵⁰ The emergence of post-revisionism trend in Cold War studies is marked by John Gaddis’s book *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (1972). Unlike the traditionalists or the revisionists who lay the blame on one of the sides, Gaddis pleads for the observance of an interaction between the two major parties, the United States and the Soviet Union. Post-revisionists argue that the motive powers must be sought within a wide range of security considerations, economic considerations and cultural warfare strategies.

⁵¹ “It is apparent that for much of the Cold War’s duration its existence suited the opposing sides. For the Soviet Union, the portrayal of the West as an evil force helped to unite the population and make it tolerant of the sacrifices and low standard of living prevalent under the communist system. Once, however, the perception of the West began to change, then the writing was on the wall. [...] Successive American administrations often found it convenient to pay governments to exaggerate the extent of the Soviet threat to justify vast military expenditure on research and development and advanced weaponry. The Cold War also allowed the United States to project its power and culture into Western Europe and Southeast Asia, generally finding a more receptive welcome because of the security dimension. It was, as Lundestad emphasizes, the interaction between East and West, initiative and counter-initiative, which sparked and sustained the Cold War and ultimately brought it to a conclusion.” See Rosemary Wakeman (ed.), *Themes...op. cit.*, p. 31.

1. *Elitist Pedagogy*

In other words, we will try to avoid the tautological discourse about Radio Free Europe and American activism as one-way process in which disenfranchised people passively welcomed American values about liberal democracy. We do not want to trace the emergence and evolution of RFE within a simply mediatic warfare staged by diplomatic interests. Our case study framed by intellectual history urges us as to place RFE within a broad crusade with a covert sponsorship of “culture” and intellectual networking between the state and the private sphere⁵². We would like to stress in this manner the elitist component of the ‘psychological warfare’, both responsible for the articulation of a pedagogical project and for the spreading of vast trans-national intellectual networks endowed with symbolic power and experiencing thwarted allegiances.

Radio Free Europe is an integral part of large scale policy to subvert tyranny by close collaboration between the American National Security Council (created in 1947) and Central Intelligence Agency, whose responsibility is to “oversee covert psychological operations” (NSC 4-A). It is not only a propagandistic device for the benefit of East-European countries subdued by Bolshevism, but a by-product of the actions of an official-private network interested in promoting American cultural values to an integrated Europe. The Congress for Cultural Freedom⁵³, the National Committee for a Free Europe,

⁵² W. Scott Lucas highlights the fact that this type of culturalist approach to Cold War is rarely portrayed, let alone examined. See W. Scott Lucas, “Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to Culture and State-Private Network in the Cold War”, in Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbedam, *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 53.

⁵³ Congress for Cultural Freedom is an anti-Communist advocacy group which sprang on a Berlin Conference on 26 June 1950. “A central feature of the programme [of cultural propaganda to Western Europe] was to advance the claim that it did not exist. It was managed, in great secrecy, by America’s espionage arm, the Central Intelligence Agency. The centerpiece of this covert campaign was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, run by CIA agent Michael Josselson from 1950 till 1967. Its achievement – not least its duration – were considerable. At its peak, the Congress for Cultural Freedom had offices in thirty-five

the “free” labor organizations projected overseas, the Moral Rearmament Movement, the Crusade for Freedom represent organizational bodies aimed at countering Communism and of “Winning World War III without having to fight it”⁵⁴. Institutionally they are partly linked through a governmental department called the Psychological Strategy Board (created in 1951), whose program codenamed “Packet” is designed to “brake down worldwide doctrinaire thought patterns”⁵⁵, to promote American truth through a pervasive scheme. Functionally, they are devised as a machinery exerting pressure through local opinion leaders, in a way reminiscent of Vilfredo Pareto’s theories. If in the case of the Congress for Cultural Freedom the focus group is that of Western public intellectuals to whom liberal democracy must be presented as compatible with culture, in the case of National Committee for a Free Europe and Radio Free Europe the maneuver staff consists of Eastern émigrés who became disenchanted with real Communism and who are offered to serve their countries from afar. The common strategic use of *intra-national elites* of the two projects can be attributed to the initiative of a key person in the tight circle of power of the invisible government (C.D. Jackson⁵⁶). It can also be ideologically circumscribed to the enforcement of a modernization and communication theory concentrated on how modern technology could be used by the elites in order to “manage social change, extract political concession, or win purchasing decisions from

countries, employed dozens of personnel, published over twenty prestige magazines, held art exhibitions, owned a news and features service, organized high-profile international conferences, and rewarded musicians and artists with prizes and public performances. Its mission was to nudge the intelligentsia of Western Europe away from its lingering fascination with Marxism and Communism towards a view more accommodating of ‘the American way’.” See Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War. The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2000), p. 1.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, p. 148.

⁵⁵ These are the words of Charles Burton Marshall quoting from PBS doctrinal plan. See Frances Stonor Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁵⁶ A graduate from Princeton, C. D. Jackson is president of the National Committee for a Free Europe and later special adviser to Eisenhower on psychological warfare. In 1954 he becomes a board member of the American Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

targeted audiences”⁵⁷. The concept of “psychological warfare”⁵⁸ arises at the juncture between federal research sponsorship, academic preconceptions regarding communication and military strategic interests in managing empires. De Witt C. Poole, for example, one of the architects of the Cold War strategy and Free Europe Committee, is a State Department expert on anti-Communist propaganda, the founder of “Public Opinion Quaterly” and the chief of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] charged with the recruitment of foreign agents from immigrant communities inside the United States. The urgency of managing a dismantling world produces and it’s produced at its turn by scientific holistic drives to mathematize human behavior (behavioralism) in order to master and influence it by mass communication means (communication as domination) and to bring about a supposedly natural evolution from authoritarian rule to rational democracy (modernization theory). The studies concerning the symbolic power of primary influential groups (Paul Lazarsfeld) concurred by general apprehension regarding the decline of human autonomy and the rise of totalitarian powers converge with research about media’s meta-capital in shaping human behavior (Harold Lasswell, Walter Lippmann, Daniel Katz, Daniel Lerner⁵⁹), thus giving way to an action-oriented theoretical fusion between psycho-culture and elite studies. The

⁵⁷ Cristopher Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵⁸ “Psychological warfare can be best understood as a group of strategies and tactics designed to achieve the ideological, political or military objectives of the sponsoring organization (typically a government or political movement) through exploitation of a target audience’s cultural-psychological attributes and its communication system.” *Idem*, p. 11.

⁵⁹ “Lerner’s book [*The Passing of Traditional Society*, 1958] long served as a paradigm for studies of the role of communication in development, clearly influencing subsequent work such as David McClelland’s *The Achieving Society* (1961), Lucien Pye’s *Communication and Political Development* (1963), and Wilbur Schramm’s *Mass Media and National Development* (1964). These studies suggested that Western communication to the Third World encouraged economic development and, subsequently, political democracy in these regions.” See Philo C. Wasburn, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

interlinked academic and political mobilization and mutual legitimization create the enticing Cold War engine:

Why did the Cold War start? Because for the first time the challenge of authoritarian socialism to democratic capitalism was backed by sufficient power to be an ever-present political and military threat. It is far more complicated and potent challenge than that represented by Germany in 1914 or Japan in 1941; it is the kind of challenge associated with the breakup of empires and the transformation of whole societies rather than with the ordinary jostling of diplomatic intercourse.⁶⁰

In this context, the discourse about RFE's role in eroding Communist power is divided between an imperative one and an objectifying one, tempered by the revealed sponsorship of CIA. Donald R. Browne notices that in writing about Radio Free Europe, political scientist Robert Holt referred to the station as a "nonofficial instrument of [U.S.] foreign policy." In a conference on international public diplomacy held at Tufts University in 1967, international broadcasting was called an "instrument of public diplomacy". It is though still unclear if "international radio broadcasting plays any role in policy making"⁶¹.

We also cannot measure, as was fashionable in the 50s, the impact of the radio on the local cultural or political elites or even on the large public itself. A reasonable approach would be, after the sketching out of the political-cultural background of the 'psychological warfare', the inference if its efficiency on the grounds of its organization, personnel composition and audience assessment.

⁶⁰ Staughton Lynd, "How the Cold War Began", in Norman A. Graebner (ed.), *The Cold War. A Conflict of Ideology and Power* (Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1976), p. 16.

⁶¹ Donald R. Browne, *International Broadcasting. The Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York: Praeger, 1982), p.30.

2. *Emergence, Structure, Evolution*

Universally heralded today as a key element of psychological warfare, Radio Free Europe emerges as one of the four divisions of the National Committee for a Free Europe⁶², an organism devised in 1949 to collaborate with the National Councils of Eastern émigrés. The urgency to find suitable outlets for the exiles' anti-Communist ethos and to familiarize them with the American culture at the time of mapping spheres of influence calls on the establishment of a radiant anti-imperialistic platform. Radio Free Europe begins broadcasting on the July 4, 1950 to Czechoslovakia, the country with the longest democratic tradition and the last to be subdued by the spreading Communist power. Relying on the model of the model of the Radio in the American Sector of Berlin (1946) created as a radio service for the Germans living in that area before and after the Berlin Blockade, the Americans use a mass-communication device perfected by totalitarian powers themselves in order to subvert them and to send a message of hope to the captive people from the East. It is an irony that the American officials resort to international radio broadcasting in the same manner as expansionist powers⁶³ with long state-sponsored propaganda, but it is also a fact that World War II opens a new era of mass warfare and political concern with worldwide effects of foreign policies. There is also evidence that, even if not state-sponsored during the inter-war period and WW II, “no other medium changed the everyday lives of the Americans as quickly and as

⁶² The other three divisions are: National Councils Division, the Division of Intellectual Cooperation and the Research and Publication Office.

⁶³ Russia uses radio communication as a propagandistic and educative centralized agency able to spread communism throughout the world (Lenin broadcasting from cruiser Aurora in 1917) and to solve illiteracy. Britain lays the foundation of British Broadcasting Company (1927) for the purpose of keeping her colonized subjects in contact with their mother country by means of a low investment. When Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor in 1933, Germany expands its radio operations. See Philo C. Wasburn, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

irrevocably as the radio”⁶⁴ and so was able to transform the public and cultural arena into a wartime environment. Besides the developmental potential of the radio, American sociologists (Paul Lazarsfeld⁶⁵) acknowledge as early as 1939 the unusual attractiveness of a “friendly” and “personal” medium of communication which uproots people from their solitary brooding over the written news and which stretches the realms of the public sphere beyond the circles of intellectual strata.

In the case of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty⁶⁶, the friendliness of the tone and the accessibility of the message are not just consubstantial features, but intentional outputs⁶⁷. Unlike Voice of America (1942) or the BBC which beam into several countries, including the Soviet Union, international news on a detached professional tone, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty air news and comments about the target countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and USSR), acting as surrogate domestic radios. They prove to be familiar in their approach to home-land realities and confrontational in their political stand against imperialism, supplying a general Cold War early rhetoric with the belligerent ethos of the emigrant editors. The tendentious mood

⁶⁴ Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War. The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during WWII* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 1-3.

⁶⁵ *Idem*, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Radio Liberty emerges 4 days before Stalin death as a radio station targeting Soviet peoples. Its name changes from Radio Liberation from Bolshevism to Radio Liberation and then Radio Liberty because of the difficulties of fighting against Bolshevism in a country where Communism represents a home-grown affair. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty merge in 1976.

⁶⁷ After the creation of the Committee for a Free Europe is created on June 1, 1949, Joseph C. Grew, elected chairman two weeks later, holds a press conference during which he announces the formation and listed three objectives:

1. To find suitable occupations for those democratic exiles who had come from Eastern Europe.
2. To put the voices of the exiled leaders on the air, addressed to their own peoples back in Europe, “in their own languages, in the familiar tone”.
3. To enable the exiled leaders to see democracy at work and to experience democracy in action so that they could “testify to what the trial of freedom and democracy in the United States has brought”. See Michael Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 42

derives from a patriotic anti-Communism, highly praised by listeners, but self-destructive in its unintended effects.

The intra-national content of reports, the hard-hitting timbre of the political comments (RFE's most distinctive programs) and the largest audience ever enjoyed by a strong politically colored project make Radio Free Europe unique and sharply contrastive with other international broadcasting radios. A certain radiophonic format follows, becoming the blueprint of the abrasive style of RFE journalism. Its omniscient status with regards to domestic affairs and the indulgence in the rhetoric of denunciation predispose to the realization of programs with "listing" features, intentionally objectifying a regime, but eventually only pinpointing to individual cases on moralizing basis. The Hungarian "Black Book"⁶⁸ or the Romanian "Shameful Inventory" compiled by Virgil Ierunca best illustrate a type of counter-nomenclaturistic account which posits journalistic investigation at the intersection between transcendental inventory and personalized rebuke⁶⁹. It is a bit paradoxical that the primary sources of these minutely surveys are the very official dailies, broadcasts or propagandistic publications which are carefully monitored and interpreted. The complex monitoring system insures the prestige of RFE

⁶⁸ Andras Mink, OSA researcher, suggests us that broadcasts like "The Black Book" are involuntarily intended to prove that the American radio is in fact a national and familiar one, paying attention to home affairs with the astuteness of a domestic radio (interview with Andras Mink, 29.05. 2008, Budapest).

⁶⁹ The range of the programs is wider, however. Even if they can be divided into six main categories (political comments, news, domestic affairs, international affairs, entertainment, listeners' mail), they differ from one department to another. In 1955 the Czechoslovak department has 16 programs ("News", "Messages", "Political Commentaries", "Peroutka Talks", "From My Notebook" (Kohout), "Europe without the Iron Curtain" etc.), the Hungarian one has an impressive number of 43 programs ("Youth Cabaret", "Reflector", "Black Book", "Hungarians' Past and Present", "Col. Bell Reports", "Workers' Program", "Artisans", "Book Review" etc.), the Polish department has 10 ("Swiatlo", "Religious Program", "Messages", "Father's Bochenschi's Program", "Light Music" etc.) and the Bulgarians have ...4 ("News", "Political Commentaries", "Sketch: Malki be Mukane and Music"). See *Audience Analysis Monthly Survey*, February 1956, in Open Society Archives [further referred to as OSA], Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 176.

programs as being well-informed alternative sources and produces in time its own ample archival funds, inevitably consisting of both valuable and waste materials⁷⁰.

Having its own research institute providing recurrent reports and audience surveys and processing a large amount of information acquired from official and unofficial sources (from visitors of defectors) does not invest RFE, despite the physical distance (its quarters are in München), with an objective stand. In fact, one of the difficulties when dealing with such a subject is the assessment of the percentages of news-based versus propagandistic programs. From our point of view, grounded on the assumption that any report supposes a certain “framing” of the event dependent on contextual factors, making such a differentiation is irrelevant. Though, the CIA sponsorship disguised under a campaign of public financing, the employment of émigrés and the flow of imperative testimonies regarding the role of RFE as a “comforting and encouraging voice for those in bondage”⁷¹, spreading and reinforcing the democratic values, distinguishes RFE as an energizing (not only informing) tribune. The research reports are only the support for the aired broadcasts⁷², whose spontaneity sometimes transgresses the limits of a required Cold War moderation. One constant problem of an anti-Soviet militancy performed with the help of disenchanted agents is to urge liberation from Communism as in incremental change while continuously demonizing the enemy and retrieving any sign of military support.

⁷⁰ After the filtering of a huge inheritance from the RFE library, Open Society Archives are still left with 12.000 waste publications, which are recycled by being bound in concrete to mark the Week of Books at the Galeria Centralis, OSA (4-7 June 2008).

⁷¹ De Witt C. Poole, cited in Arch Puddington, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁷² Michael Shafir, a RFE researcher in the 60s and 80s for the Romanian Department, declares to us that in the seventh decade the “background reports” are of real use to the editors. They progressively emerge as almost parallel publications to the flow of political sarcasms (interview with Michael Shafir, 29 April 2008).

This was to be a recurring dilemma for the agents of psychological warfare. Reinforcement of the East Europeans' abhorrence of their regimes and desire for freedom was an easy task and one that presumably enhanced the security of the west by sustaining political instability in the East. But what was the proper role of the propaganda organs in the event of rebellion? To cold-bloodedly continue with incitement? To belatedly warn their listeners that they faced hopeless odds?⁷³

We may argue that the history of the radio is underpinned by the fluctuations in the intensity of the confrontational mood. 1956 marks in this sense not only the end of the Stalinist period, but the articulation of a tempered approach, devised to counter the exuberant support to the Hungarians' unrest and to introduce a more responsible journalistic style. Considered to have contributed to the Soviet crackdown on Hungary on November 3-4, 1956, the coverage of the Hungarian Revolution stands as evidence for RFE's impact as a strategic and emotional ally⁷⁴. In a gesture of humble repositioning, the five language sections are nominally transformed afterwards from autonomous "voices" (Voice of Free Hungary, Voice of Free Romania,...etc.) into simple departments belonging to a homogenous institution, with a strict package of rules and its own *esprit de corps*. Even if this code of neutrality is often broken by sarcastic, pamphleteering or nationalistic overtones⁷⁵, inflammatory incitement to upheavals is not an issue anymore.

⁷³ Bennett Kovrig, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁷⁴ There are several reasons (and not redundant in the historical accounts) for which RFE is considered to have been a causal factor in the denouement of the Red Army's intervention. Johanna Granville identifies three of them, viewing RFE as an image-creating medium: "1)the broadcasts contributed to Moscow's lack of faith in Imre Nagy's ability to control the situation, 2) they aroused Soviet fears of Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw pact long before Nagy himself announced it, 3) the broadcasts contributed to the disbandment of the Hungarian security police (ÁVH), thus convincing Soviet (and Hungarian) Communist leaders that Soviet troops were needed to fill the security vacuum in Hungary." See Johanna Granville, "«Caught with Jam on Our Fingers». Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956", *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (November 2005). Other analysts (Philo C. Wasburn, Bennett Kovrig) are rather convergent in stressing the inciting coverage filled with tactical advice and active involvement (as a transmission belt between the rebellious groups).

⁷⁵ Radio Liberty's messages are very problematic due to the conservative mood of its personnel, for example. While noticing that you could feel inside the re-emergent conflict between Westernizers and Slavophiles, Donald Shanor points that "the United States are spending close to one hundred million dollars a year on a broadcast operation that not only airs the views of the anti-Western movement, but quotes some of the least attractive representatives Russian nationalism has ever produced. "Konstantin Pobedonostsev,

During the 1968 Prague Spring, RFE's performance over the crisis is "an impressive combination of comprehensive news reporting, wise if cautious commentary, and expert analysis"⁷⁶. When it becomes confrontational again in the 80s, the style of RFE is actually cautioned by the Reaganite regime, which seeks to redirect the message of Europeanism on more muscular lines after a distressing period of détente and Communism reformism associated with a Liberal leftist hostility towards RFE/RL (perceived as relics of a Cold War ideology).

The temperamental evolution of RFE discourse points to the fact that, despite its language-based cells, the institution can function as a monolithic, albeit multi-level organization. The impressive research system, the complex multi-lingual, departmental and thematic division mobilizing a cohort of editors, researchers, political analysts and professional news writers support a dynamic institution which acts as a unitary system and covers the West and the East in an efficient and rapid way. The heavy financial efforts displayed by the Soviet Union in order to jam the foreign radios attest to the undesirable poignancy of the whole operation⁷⁷. Considering that as early as 1951 there is

the reactionary anti-Semitic adviser to Czar Alexander III is described in one broadcast as «the great conservative ideologist». The WWII General A.A. Vlasov, who collaborated with the Nazis and organized an army against the Soviet forces, is given a favorable image on RL broadcasts, Christianson says". See Donald Shanor, *Behind the Lines: the Private War against Soviet Censorship* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 139.

⁷⁶ Arch Puddington, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁷⁷ In order to jam RL, the Soviets spend in the late 70s in between \$750million-\$1.2 billion, which represents more than the amount invested by the Americans for RFE/RL. "It is estimate that in the Soviet Union alone 3,000 transmitters are engaged in round-the-clock jamming with a total staff of some 5,000. Though estimates vary, all experts agree that jamming is an enormously costly effort, using for instance an estimated 1,000 million kWh a year in the block as a whole at a time of a deepening energy crisis. In 1971, it was estimated that the Soviet Union alone spent about \$300 million year on jamming six times the cost of international broadcasts! [...] When the Poles temporarily stopped jamming in 1956, they put the savings at \$17.5 million, which was the equivalent of the worldwide VOA budget." See Paul Lendvai, *The Bureaucracy of Truth. How Communist Governments Manage the News* (London: Burnett Books, 1981), p. 167.

practically nobody inside RFE personnel with radio experience⁷⁸, it is rather surprising that RFE gains in time the popularity not just for its critical attitude, but for the immediacy of reporting, thus giving a hard time to the Communist censored press. The coverage of political events (Khrushchev's "secret" discourse from 1956, the Poznan riots from the same year, the election of Cardinal Wojtyla as the new Pope in 1978, the Nobel Prize ceremony in honor of the dissident Andrei Sakharov) is as quick as that of calamities (the devastating Romanian earthquake of 1977), despite the mandatory checking of two official sources before airing the news. The coverage of the Romanian earthquake in 1977 practically inaugurates a new type of horizontal communication with the listeners within the Romanian unit⁷⁹, dissolving the walls of fear interposed by the Security Police. The Romanian editors act, in the same manner as the Hungarian ones in 1956, as a transmission belt for the rescue appeals.

We do not intend, by giving this selective account, to stress the success of a Cold War story in causing the downfall of communism. We rather seek to detect the structural outcomes of a heterogeneous initiative. The intellectual, political and emotional predispositions of a personnel "in exile" inside an American wartime institution can be both pernicious and advantageous for the institution's own existence. The inevitable bickering, petty politics or nationalist deviations are counterweight by a missionary *esprit de corps*, replacing staggering professionalism with political motivation. From this point of view, we infer that one of the Romanian editors' testimony has a convertible message, being applicable to the other departments as well:

⁷⁸ Arch Puddington, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁷⁹ "We stopped being, under the harsh Ceausescu dictatorship, the scarecrow everybody feared. The wall of fear and silence, erected by the communist regime between us and the country, had finally crumbled." See Ioana Măgură-Bernard, *Directorul postului nostru de radio* [The Director of our Radio Station] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2007), p. 43.

Something kept us together, beyond rivalries or sympathies, maybe the instinct of the “importance” of our work. There also was a waste of means and impressive financial force which pushed everything forward with a remarkable success, today less and less remembered by our listeners. We will never forget it, because we lived this seizing and captivating experience – UNIQUE in the history of emigration - together, albeit at different temperatures and in different styles.⁸⁰

3. Audience’s image about RFE

As far as the listeners are concerned, their “experience” is pretty intense too, at least as it is reported as immediate evaluation. Since our overall paradigm is media as interaction, it is worth recording some reactions to the RFE performances (by comparing the Bulgarian and the Hungarian sections⁸¹), for the double purpose of highlighting media’s meta-capital and the regime’s positioning towards it. The Communist counter-propaganda images about RFE are revelatory insofar as they do not only objectify the radio station as an adversary (thus implicitly recognizing its influence), but they also minimize the national component of the message. As we shall see in the case of Monica Lovinescu, she is exaggeratedly perceived as an agent of American imperialism, and not a mere third party within the literary battles of the time. This disproportionate image demonstrates the political stakes of cultural debates as well as the international enforcement of cultural matters through the resonating broadcasts.

The resonating power of the broadcasts represents a main concern for RFE survey analyses. They provide useful information as they try to gauge, through questionnaires, the clarity of the messages, the listeners’ preferences and listening habits and the technical qualities of the reception. What is typical to the majority of statements is the comparison between RFE or other Western radios to the regime media. As we encounter

⁸⁰ Gelu Ionescu, *Covorul cu scorpii* [The Carpet with Scorpions] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2006), p. 152.

⁸¹ The audience surveys for the Romanian section will be discussed in the chapter dedicated to the Romanian section.

in one Bulgarian report, RFE, in contrast to regime press and radio, is “the only complete source of news”⁸². The dependency pattern is also stressed: “people have confidence in Western broadcasts...they cannot imagine that the West will forsake them”. The problematic aspect for the Bulgarian audience is that the ties with the exile community are weak and the patriotic component is thus overlooked. The longing for liberation is so great, according to one source, “that the Bulgarians would welcome anyone who would be willing to help them in the fight for freedom – as long as it is not a communist- , even it is a Mustafa, it is of no importance”⁸³. Conspicuously absent is the emotional identification with émigrés, such as that expressed by polish refugees with the Poles in exile. This is partly explained by the non-existence of a large well-organized body of exile Bulgarians living in the West such as the Poles in England and America.

In contrast with the Bulgarians, the Hungarians suggest that the leadership of the station should be assumed by the defectors themselves. The Hungarian exile community from the States seems to be one of the strongest in the 1950s, since there is no difficulty for the Americans to assemble a large Hungarian staff (comprised of approximately 100 persons) as early as 1951. After the Hungarian revolution, the Hungarians do not share the international disappointment in the performance of “their radio station”. The audience surveys show that “when the Hungarian people were left alone in their fight for freedom, RFE remained their only friend, who encouraged them, cried with them, felt sorry for them. «The radio was united with us in our helplessness to get Western aid, which did not come, and broadcast the messages - though without any results - of the freedom fighters to the entire world». And although the Hungarian people in their life and death struggle

⁸² *Bulgaria audience response to Western broadcasts (August 1954- July 1955), Nov. 21, 1955, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 179, p. 7.*

⁸³ *Idem, loc. cit., p. 4.*

expected much more from RFE, they appreciated getting at least this much”⁸⁴. Other evaluations retain that the Voice of Free Hungary is referred to as “Budapest III”⁸⁵ and that the listeners’ reliance and expectancy is so great that the discontinuance, or even a cut in the length of the broadcasts, would have great consequences, because Hungarians would think that the West “wrote them off”⁸⁶.

The stringent dependency seems to soften in the late 60s, when the weariness with the political programs such as “Reflector” or “Black Book” (for the Hungarians) brings about a redirection of the audience’s taste. In an ironic twist, the favored programs or the longed broadcasts are not those about internal problems, but those airing Western *loisir* culture. In 1967 the audience analyses recurrently dwell upon the Hungarians desire “to have more entertaining programs, and far fewer political ones and dull political commentaries, of which they have enough at home. People in Hungary are interested in programs dealing with Western cultural life: music, theater, movies, books, etc.”⁸⁷. A counter report from the Bulgarian Communist press on the evolution of RFE registers the same shift and interprets it accordingly to a capitalist mediatic competition on the market of loyalties: “the increased number of scientific, sports, and music programs” is described as an attempt “to increase the size of the audience and to win the confidence of the listeners in order to deceive them more easily”⁸⁸. It is relevant for our case study to mention that the Romanian listeners keep their appetite for political matters whereas the surrounding publics are much more mass-culture oriented. As it at least looks in a

⁸⁴ Item No. 10604/ 1956, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 40, Series 4, Box 8.

⁸⁵ Item No. 11189/ 1953, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 40, Series 4, Box 8.

⁸⁶ Item No. 11188/1953, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 40, Series 4, Box 8.

⁸⁷ Item No. 2178/ 1967, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 40, Series 4, Box 8.

⁸⁸ Michael Costello, *A Special Report on the First ‘Modern’ Bulgarian Attack on RFE*, Bulgaria, 14 March 1969, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 179.

research dating from 1978, the Romanians demand – unlike the Hungarians - more lengthy political programs than music⁸⁹. The reasons for this distinctive preference might be found in the audience's social composition (less urbanized) and in the lowering of living standards from the late 70s on, calling forth the reinforcement of mandated vengeance and criticism.

Although it expresses a pedestrian contempt for the foreign broadcasting, the official counter-propaganda is sensitive to the changing mood of the interaction between RFE and its listeners. The “political phase” is fought against by the unveiling of the oppressive, stifling but financially rewarding manipulation by the American power, resting upon the decomposed relics of Fascism (Figure 1 and 2). What is suggested is that RFE editors are mere puppets of American propaganda, voicing their restless belligerence within a suppressing environment. It is not necessary to know that RFE never used centrally written transcripts in order to perceive the extreme schematization comprised in these cartoons. The RFE staff is denied any agency, in perfect accordance with the reversed totalitarian Cold War thinking. The “entertaining” phase is simply mocked at by caricaturing listeners' foolishness and superficiality (Figure 4). In terms of listening habits, this period is opposed to the more rigid one, when the bourgeois decadent message targets a similar audience (Figure 3), who can produce its own “noise” when the radio tube is burnt out.

⁸⁹ *East European Area Audience and Opinion Research*, July 1978, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 179.



Figure 1: Cartoon from a German newspaper, 19 Mai 1955. The caption reads: "Just a moment, dear listeners, take a deep breath of freedom". Source: OSA, the Bulgarian Unit.



Figure 2: Cartoon from a book of anti-Western cartoons called *A Shattering Blow* by Boris Efimov, Plakat, moscow, 1985. the Caption reads: "Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, these two old toads love croaking loudly. Their base is in an old rubbish bin containing provocations, lies, slander, inventions." Source: Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain*, 1963.



Figure 3: Caricature from the Romanian daily “Urzica”, 11 April 1959. The caption reads: “The tube is burnt. We have to produce the sound ourselves”. Source: OSA, Bulgarian Unit.

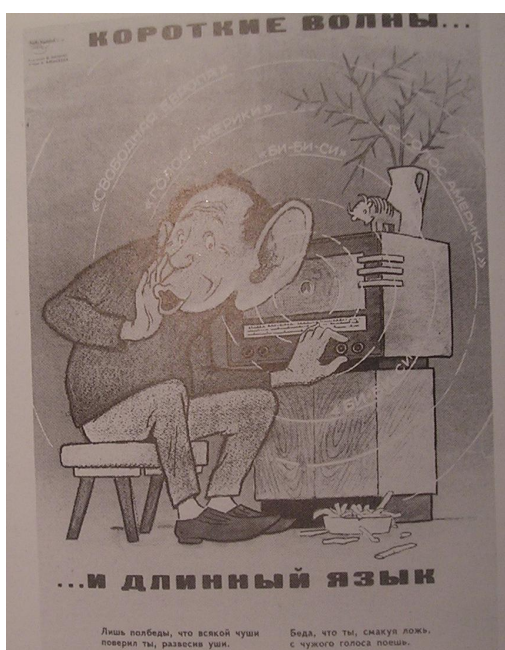


Figure 4: A poster attacking Russian listeners to Western radios. The caption reads: “Bad enough you should believe that rubbish, ears flapping. Worse still, that you should swallow the lies and sing a foreign song”. Source: Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain*, 1963.

In conclusion, if we look at the history of RFE from the perspective of its controversial human capital, we would contend that in the past it represented a source of simplistic and blatant counter-propaganda, whereas for the present it should be the target of minute studies concerned with the ideological and social interaction inside and outside RFE quarters. Tendentious reporting, accumulation of symbolic capital and influence over the discourse about the communist past cannot only be attributed to the pervasiveness of a Cold War struggle, but to the complex intellectual agency exposing itself to a vulnerable public under conditions of “close distance” and re-emergent modernizing drive.

Chapter 3. The Romanian Department

A second introductory chapter is needed in order to understand the importance of Monica Lovinescu's cultural and political criticism as a distinctive program within the Romanian Department of RFE. After outlining the strategic and intellectual grounds as well as the general institutional characteristics of a project of propagating truth to a captive world, we shrink the scope of the contextualizing operation by taking into account the Romanian section. As in the previous chapter, we will be interested in those aspects relevant for our case study, such as audience and program profiles, social and political composition of personnel and management of political advocacy. Through data and testimonies we will stress the peculiar dependency of the Romanian public on a transmission which is referred to as "our radio station" and we shall ascribe it to a traditional empowerment of elites with producing and classifying meanings. We shall better understand therefore the reasons for the establishment of a vertical communication with the radio station, for the rise of an ethereal "civil society" and for the development of an ethical and personalized political discourse. The case-based militancy and the status of both transcendental arbiter and immanent player are specific for the Romanian Free Voice, which airs its political analyses or literary populism within the framework of a national intra-elitism. Throughout the chapter we will point to Monica Lovinescu's activity, highlighting the things that it has in common with other departments (casuistic militancy, constructing/ reflecting cases of dissent, adversarial stand towards the regime), but also the things that distinguishes her: the length of the broadcasting time, extreme

popularity, symbolic authority on the overall definition of the communist regime in all its aspects (cultural, social, political). We choose to disseminate her institutional and discursive position along the chapter instead of creating a special subdivision for her, as we intend to smooth the way for her “real appearance” in the last chapter in a comparative manner. Our purpose is to reconstruct the institutional set circumscribing her case, but also to make it “naturally” emerge against this background due to its condensed representative peculiarities. She is one of the causes of the popularity of the radio station and she also exemplifies a type of cultural-political advocacy which is feared by the regime and very much tasted by the public. We cover therefore in this chapter the institutional part of “media as interaction” and the sociological parameters of the elites-public dialogue, leaving for the next one the discussion on the conceptual interaction with an intellectual tradition.

Because of the language-based division of RFE and because of the loosely central control, the five departments can be institutionally situated on the borderline between unit-sections and semi-autonomous micro-universes. The whole institution being a “ghetto”⁹⁰ for its 1,200 employees from München, the divisionary branches develop a family character, stylistically diverse, but nationally and missionary integrated. If internal bickering, patriotism and anti-Communism can be considered features common to all departments, cultural and social differentiation cannot be denied. Quantitative data regarding listenership, program length, preferences and programs could therefore set the empirical background for the discussion on dissimilarities. The statistical data will not be therefore simply displayed: it will constitute the setting for the socio-historical inputs

⁹⁰ Gelu Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

concerning the relationship between elites and masses and the value of cultural and political capital.

1. Statistics...

Conspicuously from the beginning is the paradox that the country with the biggest number of listeners to alternative broadcasts is also the country with the smallest number of social movements. Paul Lendvai estimates that in 1978-1979 in Romania RFE audience counted 55% of the adult population (whereas in Bulgaria it registered 32%, in Czechoslovakia 35%, in Hungary 49%, in Poland 50%)⁹¹. Peter Gross remarks that the greatest penetration of foreign media is recorded in Romania and it is by radio. He cites a RFE 1971-1972 RFE survey which concluded that 59% Romanians listened to its Romanian-language broadcasts, 22 % to the BBC, 18% to the VOA and 14% to Radio Paris. By 1982-83, RFE's audience increased to 64%. Although all these sources may be considered to have a low degree of reliability due to the difficult conditions under which the surveys were conducted⁹², what they recurrently have in common is the positioning of Romanian audience to RFE on top. Before resorting to a sociological explanation, we should take notice of the fact that, unlike Poland or USSR, Romania was the first country which had stopped jamming in 1963 because of the high cost of the operation⁹³. RFE

⁹¹ Paul Lendvai, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

⁹² Michel Shafir worked for the Research Department within RFE (between 1965-1967 and 1985-1987) and he explained to us how these audience surveys were conducted. They were made by independent institutions, not by RFE, on the basis of questionnaires elaborated by RFE. Because of the low representative character of the sampling (applied on defectors or visitors), the results were not made public unless the criteria of "continuous sampling" is fulfilled (that is the recurrent statistical operations should give approximately the same results within a range of several years). Interview with Michael Shafir, 29 April, 2008.

⁹³ In a book in which he collects many documents belonging to the security police and relating to RFE, Mihai Pelin advances the idea that Romania was obliged to disinfest the ether as a consequence of signing international communication agreements. He also states that the liberalizing policies acted like an armistice between RFE and Romanian intelligence. See Mihai Pelin, *Operațiunile „Melița” și „Eterul”. Istoria Europei Libere prin documente de Securitate*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

could be thus listened to in better conditions than in the other countries, which additionally had much ample coverage of local events through national radio stations. We could also attribute the wide audience to the popularity and professionalism of Noël Bernard⁹⁴, who reassumes the leadership in 1966 and tries to increase the feeble impact of a radio which enjoys the same success as that of VOA or BBC for a 12 times bigger broadcasting time. Within two years of leadership, Noël Bernard succeeds in raising three times the number of listeners, by the changes introduced in the news programs (accurate information twice verified from official sources, dry and exact Anglo-Saxon style in presenting). The Western perspective is in this respect schematic: whereas Ioana Măgură-Bernard and Michael Shafir stress on Bernard's professionalism to account for the distinctiveness of the Romanian section, Arch Puddington points out the sarcastic poignancy of a restless campaign against Nicolae Ceausescu and his camarilla (undertaken by both Noël Bernard and Vlad Georgescu). We would argue that these are complementary points of view, insofar as Noël Bernard and Vlad Georgescu are indeed the followers of an objective type of journalism, but the staff under their direction is difficult to be restrained from violating the American strictures against vituperation and rhetorical excess: "The problem was that Noël and Vlad were very westernized, while the others very much still lived in Romania. These ones were keen on pamphleteering. The two directors tried to educate them as much as they could"⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ In all testimonies about RFE, Noël Bernard (1925-1981) is held to be the best director of the Romanian Department. Nestor Ratesh contends that under his leadership, the Romanian language department of RFE became the most popular department (See Nestor Ratesh, "In memoriam: Noël Bernard", *Revista* 22, 4 March 2006). Born to a Jewish family in Romania, he leaves the country in 1940 to become a reputed journalist, for BBC and then for Radio Free Europe (whose leadership he assumes in between 1954-1958, 1966-1981).

⁹⁵ Interview with Michael Shafir, 29 April 2008.

The combination of sarcasm, promptitude and dedication which insures the special salience of the Romanian political programs might be a reason for the top popularity⁹⁶ of the Romanian Department. The performance is not ordinary if we consider the fact that the Romanian staff, as well as the Bulgarian, was hard to be assembled, due to the little exile community in the 50s, predominantly with rightist sympathies⁹⁷. The Romanians tune in the most to RFE and 33% consider that RFE is one of the factors influencing public opinion in the lead-up to the overthrow of Ceausescu⁹⁸ despite the fact that the broadcasting time which is allotted to the Romanian Department is among the shortest (Radio Free Europe broadcasts twenty and half hours daily in Czech and Slovak to Czechoslovakia, nineteen hours in Polish and Hungarian, thirteen hours in Romanian and eight hours in Bulgarian⁹⁹). In the Figure 5 we can perceive the discrepancy between the Romanian and the Czechoslovak case, which is a very revelatory one. The country with the longest democratic tradition in Central-Eastern Europe is allotted by the Americans the longest broadcasting time, but its audience prefers the less tendentious style of other foreign radio stations. Nevertheless, the communication with RFE is the strongest in 1965 (Figure 6), at least as it is attested by the mail inflow (some letters carry more than 20 signatures, many of them being sponsored by clubs, musical groups and so on¹⁰⁰).

⁹⁶ There are even Hungarians who tune in to the Romanian station as they find them – paradoxically – “less overtly and obsessively political and propagandistic” (interview with L., Hungarian listener, 1 June, 2008).

⁹⁷ Arch Puddington, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁹⁸ Michael Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁹⁹ Paul Lendvai, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁰ *Audience Mail*, January 1-June 30, 1965, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 176.

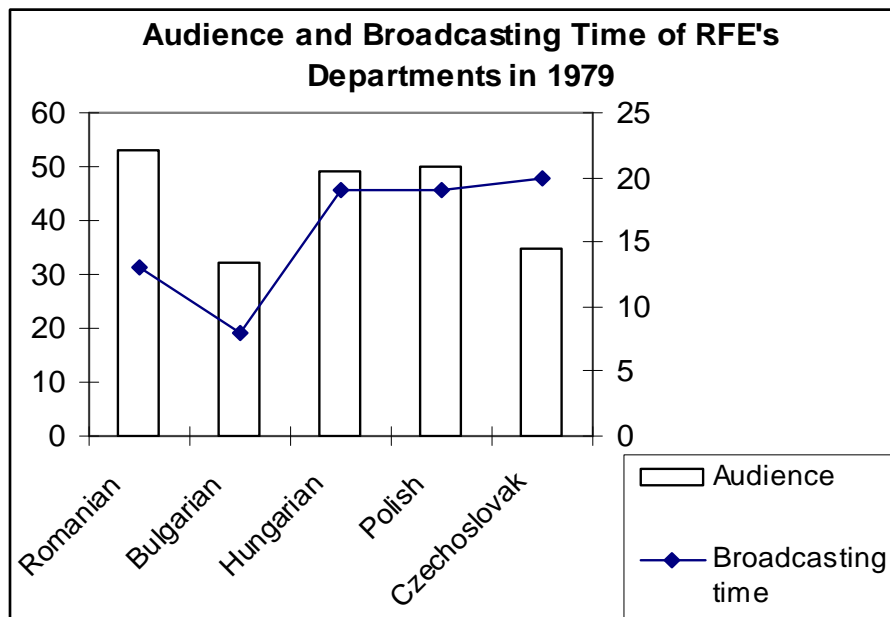


Figure 5: Audience and Broadcasting Time of RFE's Departments. Source: Paul Lendvai, *The Bureaucracy of truth*, 1981.

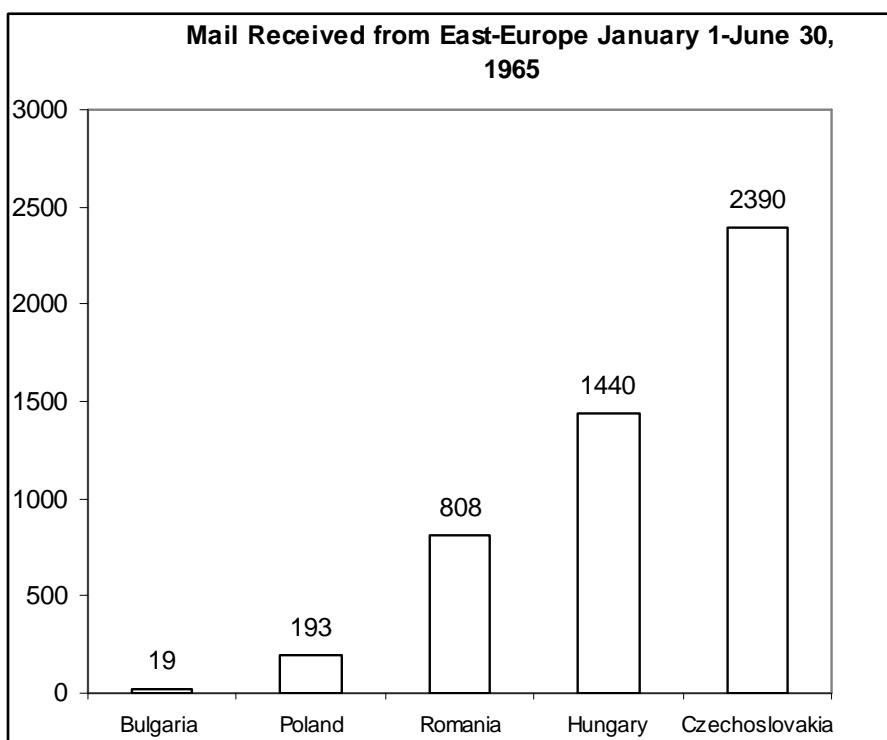


Figure 6: Mail Received from Eastern Europe January 1-June 30, 1965. Source: OSA, Bulgarian Unit.

The communitarian spirit of an urbanized culture enhances a collective epistolary communication (screened by the civic tradition of clubbing) and at the same time diversifies the need for information. Romania instead, with a feeblar democratic legacy, is allotted far less airing space, which is hungrily absorbed by a more dependent and more atomized audience. It wouldn't be far-fetched to hold that there is an implicit correlation (not a causal determinism) among these data: the reliance on external media support is greater in a country having experienced a late and dramatic modernization, whose elites do not enjoy so much external lobby, but a very strong internal symbolic mandate. Sociologists and historians converge in saying that Romanian *intelligentsia* act as a middle class during a modernization period which lacks sufficient economic resources: the result is an overestimation of cultural capital, but also a growing distance between the elites and the masses¹⁰¹. One would argue that the data is irrelevant because of the censorship (the Bulgarian one being harsh). We would say that the harshness of censorship is not only a factor restricting mail outflow, but also another symptom of an atomized society lacking democratic traditions. Only the Polish case can be really extracted from this comparative analysis because the Polish Department does not directly solicit mail, as the others do.

2. Programs

Mail inflow, audience and broadcasting time are not sufficient, however, if we try to detect the type of interaction between RFE's Departments and their public, especially

¹⁰¹ Sorin Antohi, *Civitas imaginalis* (Bucharest: Litera, 1994), p. 258.

if they do not contain serial data from successive periods. We should therefore back up our allegiances by resorting to the comparative analysis of thematic preferences and of the type and length of broadcasts realized by every department. At this point our data is again elusive, but it can offer some useful hints. The listening habits to RFE could be first inversely correlated with the listening habits to the home radios. If all publics show constant abhorrence to the local propagandistic and political programs in the early 60s (44% Romanians detest them, 28% Poles, 60% Bulgarians, 50% Hungarians, 48% Czechs and Slovaks), there are significant differences concerning cultural and entertaining programs. Only 12% Romanians and 4% Bulgarians find home cultural programs interesting, while the Poles, the Hungarians and the Czechs and Slovaks¹⁰² appreciate them more (17%, 39%, respectively 26%). Native music programs enjoy almost the overall appreciation of the Hungarians (72%), while they satisfy only a small proportion of the Romanian audience (28%)¹⁰³.

It is not surprising that, being offered such a small quantity of qualitative programs (be them educational or entertaining), the Romanians find refuge in listening foreign broadcasts, eagerly consuming political and cultural items. They provide for them an outlet for channeling frustrations and a wide range of updated information. It is an irony that Monica Lovinescu's programs, designed to "synchronize" the Romanian cultural field with the Western one, turn progressively into a very local program, involved in the literary struggles of the time, but seen and heard from distance. However,

¹⁰² A student reports that Radio Prague played a big role in his radio listening habits. "He preferred home broadcasting radios because it's impossible to listen all the time to strongly jammed Western radios. [...] Furthermore, the programs of the Czechoslovak stations improved in keeping with the increasingly cultural and liberal tone advocated by the regime in the last 18 months." (See *Audience Analysis Monthly Report*, February 1956, p. 9, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 176.)

¹⁰³ Data extracted from *Audience Research*, April 1963, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 176.

RFE acquire the status of “Bucharest IV”, being highly respected for its informed and detailed analysis about local realities. The supreme efficacy and impact of the radio station is evoked in combination with its being rooted in the Romanian consciousness: “RFE’s broadcasts constitute the daily intellectual food of the majority of the Romanian people. [...] These broadcasts maintain the flame of Romanianism and the contact with the free West and with his ideas; they also leave the impression that the people is not abandoned and so they keep up morals¹⁰⁴”. Under the threat of the dismantling of the Radio Station (due to its revealed secret intelligence support), and against the background of the depressing torpidity of Romanian intelligentsia, RFE teleological value increases as a conveyor of national and democratic message. Its enormous credibility is forged, under conditions of scarce information and projected objectivity and authority by the impression of omniscience. This is due to an assiduous system of self-informing and cross-monitoring (each editor receives daily a 200 hundred page file containing news and updated analyses¹⁰⁵) which, although not faultless because of secondary sources (Romanian press or unofficial information delivered by visitors) and human agency (some editors lack the diligence and curiosity in correlating data¹⁰⁶), is invested with a trustworthy aura. The most appreciated seem to be, - as in the case of the other departments - the “News” program, the “Political Program”, “Censored News from the

¹⁰⁴ *About RFE’s programs and their audience*, 6 Jan. 1972, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 30, Series 2, Box 2.

¹⁰⁵ Emil Hurezeanu, “Memoria lungă a undei scurte” [The Long Memory of the Short Wave], *Dilema Veche* [The Old Dilemma], No.212 (2008).

¹⁰⁶ “There was a lot of information, picked up by a central bureau for the whole radio station, there was so much, practically inexhaustible. And then there were the subscriptions to international dailies and magazines and to the Romanian publications – which mostly the editors from “Romanian Actuality” and the directors read. Few took pains in reading this “mendacious” press until ’89, but we had to read it in order to extract our sources and subjects. This ordeal meant that some of the editors from other programs were not updated with the events from the country, which was a constant source of errors and mistakes”. Gelu Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

Press of R.S.R.”, “Talking to the Listeners”, the “Editorial of the Week”, “The Occident seen by the Romanians”. They are followed by the “Romanian Actuality”, which is a composite program covering internal affairs, with a composite staff of editors. The constancy in the professional stand of the news program is reflected in the long leadership of Mihai Cismărescu (30 years, until 1983), alias Radu Gorun, a close collaborator of Noël Bernard. The popularity of the “Romanian Actuality” or the “Political Program” is reflected in the long-run fame of its editors (N. C. Munteanu, Emil Hurezeanu, Șerban Orescu, Gelu Ionescu, Monica Lovinescu, respectively Vladimir Ionescu, Preda Bunescu, Ion Haralamb). Although they are less cited in the eulogies concerning RFE, the mass culture programs (“American Actuality”, “Women Chronicle” or Music) play their role in opening the listeners’ horizon and attracting them (especially the young ones) to tune to the political ones as well¹⁰⁷. The total broadcasting time of the Romanian Department is 80 hours a week (insured with 80 persons)¹⁰⁸.

Monica Lovinescu’s programs lie at the intersection between coverage of the West and criticism about the East, between literary reviewing and political indictment. She analyzes events, organizes round tables and insures the lobby for the dissidents, everything being done from Paris, not from München. She provides 35 minutes of cultural actuality out of the total of 50 minutes of the program. Together with the 50 minutes of her own program (“Theses and Anti-Theses from Paris”), this will make an impressive sum of one hour and twenty minutes of weekly transmission since 1967, first

¹⁰⁷ The denigrating campaign led by Artur Silvestri in 1983 in “Luceafărul” magazine starts by noticing that that the 32% time of news is paralleled by the 27% time of the entertaining programs because the listeners are attracted through music to pay attention to the “intoxicated news”. We noticed however that the Romanian department did not excel at the entertaining level as the Hungarian one, for example. See Artur Silvestri, “Pseudocultura pe unde scurte” (III) [Pseudo-culture On Short Waves], *Luceafărul* [The Morning Star], No. 6 (12 Febr. 1983).

¹⁰⁸ Mihai Pelin, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

spread around the week and then gathered in the weekends. It is no wonder then that she is often recorded as the second most important editor after Noël Bernard¹⁰⁹, a performance that no other cultural editor attained within RFE. We should further stress in this sense that, even if they are very popular, the political programs are not “personalized” as the cultural one (besides the personality of Noël Bernard). Against the background of the whole RFE, Monica Lovinescu’s case is even more distinctive. The Hungarians do apparently have a very popular cultural editor within RFE (Sandor Marai, alias Candidus¹¹⁰), but he shares the monopole over the cultural matters with Zoltan Szabo, Gyula Borbandi and Lazslo Kasza. Moreover, Hungarian RFE usually report on the fresh issues of two Hungarian émigré literary periodicals, “Latohatar” and “Irodalmi Ujsag” or support the samizdat and underground literature (especially in the 80s, with the broadcast “On the Waves of Tomorrow”)¹¹¹. The profile of the cultural involvement thus appears to be different from the “institutional” character of Monica Lovinescu’s broadcasts, which molds the internal literary canon before and after 1989 and plays a political protective role for the dissidents. The comparison with the Bulgarian department is even more revealing: the most listened broadcast in 1969 is cited to be “The Critical Review of the Bulgarian Press”, while the references to the cultural programs are rather vague¹¹². In 1954¹¹³ there is no cultural program among the different accounts of

¹⁰⁹ “She admirably flogs the vices of the regime and her broadcasts are very appreciated by the Romanian public.” (See *About RFE’s programs and their audience*, 6 Jan. 1972, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 30, Series 2, Box 2.)

¹¹⁰ Candidus is the first in a top of the most appreciated editors from 1967 (Candidus, Albert Vajda, Gallicus, Farmer Ballint, Pal Julian). See Item No. 53/ 1967 in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 40, Series 4, Box 8.

¹¹¹ Information provided by Andras Mink in a questionnaire, 2.06.2008.

¹¹² The official criticism towards Bulgarian section of RFE does not mention any cultural broadcasts. The coverage of the Writers’ Union is considered tendentious, but no special program is mentioned. See on Anti-Bulgarian Wave, Bulgarski Zhurnalst, Issue No. 1/ 1969, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 20, Series 1, Box 176.

international and national affairs (International News, Doctor Matzankieff Speaks, Communists –To and About, Youth etc.).

Speaking about dissimilarities, we cannot refrain from noticing a rather morbid note of distinction of the Romanian department. Instead of delivering it as a dark anecdotic fact, we can verify by it Juan Linz's theories about "sultanistic regimes"¹¹⁴. Some commentators argue that the serial dramatic endings of four RFE directors in the 80s (Noel Bernard in 1981, Mihai Cismărescu in 1983, Emil Georgescu in 1985, Vlad Georgescu in 1985¹¹⁵) can be attributed to the secret operations of the Romanian Security Police. Monica Lovinescu is also the victim of a criminal assault in 1977, after a vivid coverage of the Paul Goma case. In case all the allegations about the involvement of the Security Police were truth, Juan Linz's idea about "the tendency of sultanistic regimes to expand the repressive activities of the state abroad"¹¹⁶ would to be thus tested. It is no secret, nevertheless, that Romanian Security Police deployed a heavy, systematic and sometimes superficial (because of an internalized routine) activity in monitoring RFE's programs, keeping evidence of its personnel (with data which do not always correspond to reality) and even arranging offensive operations against the radio station (the bomb assault organized by the help of international terrorist Carlos in 1981). The reports made by the security agents within the operations "Chatterbox" and "Ether" provide rich

¹¹³ *Audience Response to Western Broadcasts*, August 1954-July 1955, in OSA, Funds 300, Sibfunds 20, series 1, Box 176.

¹¹⁴ A sultanistic regime is characterized by having a rulership based on a mixture between fear and rewards to his collaborators. Although sultanist regimes can be modern in many ways, what characterizes them is the weakness of traditional and legal-rational legitimation and the lack of ideological justification. See H. E. Chebabi and Juan Linz, *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p.7.

¹¹⁵ As three of them die of cancer, it is supposed that the Security Police devised a plan to irradiate them. Last year, the most important daily targeting an elite public from Romania led a campaign in order to prove that a prominent intellectual and liberal senator (Constantin Bălăceanu Stolnici) collaborated with the Security Police in the 80s furnishing the plans of Vlad Georgescu's house. See Mirela Corlăţan, "Stolnici, spion la Europa Liberă: dovada" [Stolnici, a Spy at Free Europe: the Proof], *Cotidianul* [The Daily], 3 Dec. 2007.

¹¹⁶ *Idem*, p. 25.

(though questionable) information, disclosing the scope (large) and the profile (explorative but also imaginary) of a type of surveillance aimed at informing and – therefore – tracing spheres of influence over society. The war fought by the Security Police against Radio Free Europe from 29 October 1951 until 22 December 1989 is thus impressive not only from the perspective of a malefic transcendental endeavor (privileged by the discourse about the traumatic aspects of totalitarian regime), but also if it is seen as the product of a political and social interaction driven by vitiated schemes of perception and of action. Most of RFE's editors are presented as being fascist hard-liners, and the updating process is slow, ritualistic or triumphal¹¹⁷, benefiting from the same classificatory schemes which render superfluous the proper listening of broadcasts. It is surprising that only in 1981 the chief agents are required to read the transcripts of the broadcasts, signaling the fact that in the meantime the combat was led without a proper knowledge of what exactly one should fight against¹¹⁸. We would argue that the schematic assessment is in fact reciprocal and that the battle forge on both sides a demonizing discourse about an invincible over-powerful enemy. It is no wonder that the Security Police paid more attention to Monica Lovinescu's case than to the political programs, since she is perceived as detaining a symbolic monopoly over the definition of communist power in all its social, cultural and political aspects. As soon as she is seen as a threat to the regime's effort to promote a new path for the construction of socialism at the end of the liberalization period (1971) and after her impact on the cultural scene is

¹¹⁷ "The working plans of the operational group « Ether », which coordinated the activity of RFE in the 80s, seemed to be impeccable, endowed with remarkable force, but, in reality, they were copied from one month to another, from one semester to another, and the chiefs accepted them with no reply, this being a generalized practice at all levels of the political regime. Different services involved in the "Ether" operation made up baffling statistics, very often not conforming with the truth, but thoroughly similar to the statistics from the industrial or agrarian sector". See Mihai Pelin, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 325.

recognized (the promotion of Marin Sorescu and Ioan Alexandru within the internal hierarchy of the Writers' Union), she is ranged among the "legionnaires"¹¹⁹ (the adepts of the interwar fascist Iron Guard) and the people surrounding her are carefully screened and listed down. There is something paranoiac about these inventories which resemble the black lists concocted by RFE departments in general¹²⁰. There is also something relevant in them in the sense that they help recreate the intellectual networks of the time and that they intuit the influencing potential of a circle of persons who enjoy conspicuous transnational and institutional mobility within a restricting regime.

3. Orientations of the Personnel

It is difficult to categorize the social and political backgrounds of the staff of RFE precisely because they constitute the object of a symbolic combat in which actions are judged in correlation with the type of capital possessed by the intellectual agents. At the same time, it is crucial for our discussion on the interference between Cold War rhetoric and cultural habits to be able to highlight the existence of a conceptual and ideological tension between the American set and the/ a national tradition. There is one key testimony in this sense, that of Gelu Ionescu, who draws attention to the fact that in order to be hired as a RFE editor, one's anti-Communism prevailed over being a democratic militant¹²¹. Michael Shafir backs up this affirmation, secretly declaring to us that, when he was asked in the late 80s, to become the director of the Romanian Department, he refused by saying that "being RFE director equates being a prime-minister in exile;

¹¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 71.

¹²⁰ There are 3 types of lists: persons who are praised in Monica Lovinescu's broadcasts, persons who contacted Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca in their visits to Paris and persons who were both praised and contacted, possibly acting as "communication channels between the cultural environment from Bucharest and those from München or Paris.

¹²¹ Gelu Ionescu was a RFE editor working in Munich quarters for 12 years, since 1983. He covered Romanian cultural matters, together with Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca. His key testimony is given to Alexandru Solomon in his movie about Radio Free Europe, entitled "Cold Waves" (2007).

therefore, he does not want for RFE to have a Jewish leader”¹²². This is not to say that all the 80 persons of the Romanian Department had rightist affinities. It is though maybe true that in the 50s, as Arch Puddington suggests, the Romanians added to the émigré type of *petty politics*¹²³ their partially problematic background as supporters of rightist movements, which contradicted the recruiting rules¹²⁴ and recommended themselves as actors of reactionary trends. It is also a fact that that before RFE’s activity started, some of its future collaborators or even directors are condemned by the communist authorities in 1946 during a show trial for helping “the penetration of fascist ideas into the country”. Alexandru Gregorian, Horia Stamatu and Vintilă Horia¹²⁵ are condemned to prison for life. The General Ion Gheorghe, the father of Ionel Nicolae Gheorghe, the future director of the RFE Romanian department responsible with the evaluation of information, is condemned to death for the same reasons. The first director of the Romanian Department (which starts broadcasting on the 29th of October 1951), a former collaborator of rightist publications and a prominent member of the Italian exile association founded in Rome (in 1949), Alexandru Gregorian resigns in 1954 because he is not allowed to speak about the

¹²² Interview with Michael Shafir, 29. 05.2008.

¹²³ Arch Puddington mentions that the émigrés in general represented a problem for the American authorities, due to their way of “treating exile affairs as a small scale version of politics back home and of dealing with adversaries with a mixture of polemics, vituperation and deception. See Arch Puddington, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹²⁴ *Idem*, p. 36

¹²⁵ Alexandru Gregorian and Vintilă Horia belong to the editorial staff of the review *Sfarmă-Piatră* [Stone-Crusher], an anti-Semitic daily, monthly and later weekly newspaper published in Romania during the late 1930s and 1940s. The review was supposed to bridge the gap between fascist and pro-fascist movements around Nichifor Crainic’s idea of ‘ethnocracy’. Vintilă Horia (1915-1922) is an interesting case of ambivalent commitment to pro-fascist ideology. He is appointed member of the diplomatic mission to Rome during King Carol II’s authoritarian government, but rejects Iron Guard and is taken prisoner by the Nazis in 1944. In 1960 he wins the Prix Goncourt for his novel *God is Born in Exile* in 1960, but he does not receive it, following the allegations that he has been a member of the Iron Guard. He takes part in many “round tables” organized by Monica Lovinescu. Horia Stamatu (1912-1987) has Iron Guard sympathies in his youth (he first publishes in the review *Floarea de foc* [The Fire Flower]) as his generational colleagues, with whom he will keep close relations during his exile years (he is one of the founders of the Romanian Institute for Research within Sorbonne together with Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade and Eugen Ionescu). He is also a regular collaborator of Monica Lovinescu’s programs.

Romanian lost territories after the War. Another hard-liner nationalist would prove to be the director Nicolae Stroescu-Stînișoară (1988-1994), who manifests throughout his writings a metaphysical understanding of the Romanian essence and who cannot envisage an authentic dissidence without the faith in the spiritual continuity of the nation¹²⁶. By detecting the legionnaires inside RFE does not therefore solve the problem of the evaluation of the degree of extremism inside the institution. Albeit it is true that legionnaires want to infiltrate themselves in the Free Europe network by the help of Romanian National Committee¹²⁷ at the beginning of the 50s¹²⁸, the real question lies elsewhere: how is it possible to differentiate, within an exile community harboring intense patriotism, the type of nationalism pernicious to the country's democratic revival? And where are the boundaries between RFE's "garden" and RFE's collaborators and sources? We could attempt to give partial answers to the two questions by saying that one should make a distinction, although it is not an easy one, between a metaphysical ethnocentric nationalism and a progressive democratic ethos, acquired by exposure to the Western culture. Monica Lovinescu, Noël Bernard, Mihai Cismarescu, Vlad Georgescu

¹²⁶ Nicolae Stroescu-Stînișoară, *În zodia exilului* [Under the Sign of Exile] (Bucharest: Jurnalul Literar, 1994), p. 19.

¹²⁷ The Romanian National Committee is the government of the "democratic parties in exile" after 1945. It emerges in New York on the 6th of April 1949, being confirmed by the King Mihai. It is composed of ex-officials of the National-Peasant Party and the Liberal Party; they are charged with "representing the Romanian nation until liberation" and with "indulging into activities which should lead to the re-imposition of democracy in Romania. In this sense they collaborate with the National Committee for a Free Europe and the US State Department. The frictions inside the organization cause a double rupture until 1955, attracting the Americans' disapproval. See Florin Manolescu, *Enciclopedia exilului literar românesc 1945-1989* [The Encyclopedia of the Romanian Literary Exile 1945-1989] (Bucharest: Compania, 2003), pp. 180-183.

¹²⁸ On the 13th of February 1951, Horațiu Comanciu addresses a letter to Grigore Gafencu, ex-foreign minister and member of the Romanian National Committee charged with the relations with American government and with the National Committees of Émigrés to allow the legionnaires to join the Free Europe network on the grounds of their repentance, patriotism, anti-Communist resistance and loyalty to the national-peasant leader Iuliu Maniu. See Ion Calafeteanu, *Exilul românesc. Erodarea speranței. Documente 1951-1975* [The Romanian Exile. The Erosion of Hope. Documents] (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), pp. 58-59.

are top RFE personalities illustrating the second category, while some of the employees or the collaborators gravitating around them might illustrate, in different quantities (and in different combinations with a type of spiritual universalism), the first category. A possible challenge in this sense would be to corroborate a non-extremist and mixed national-peasant party ideology with the positions and the percentage of its adherents within RFE (Mihai Cismărescu, George Ciorănescu etc.).

The mild and intricate political predispositions and their fitting into the anti-Communist or/ and the anti-Soviet framework are more problematic and intriguing than the identification of extremist views. As we will see in the next chapter, Monica Lovinescu's cultural broadcasts from Paris do not exactly fit into the framework of progressive liberal modernism despite her heritage as the daughter of the interwar critic Eugen Lovinescu, who was a vivid promoter of modernization and synchronization of Romanian culture with the West. Her case disrupts dichotomist habits of classifying (Left/Right orientation), showing how a liberal mood can be draped in anachronistic Westernizing patriotism. Appraising dissidence in the 70s, after Solzhenitsyn's publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1973 in France and after Helsinki agreements from 1975, means adapting an international idiom to a local protectionist discourse, which disguises its national cultural imperatives in the political terms of the totalitarian paradigm. Reflecting and constructing cases of dissidence bears the legacy of a cyclic cultural revival and the moralizing mood of an elitist conservative discourse continuously fueled, after the discovery of Hannah Arendt's works in the 70s, by the same totalitarian paradigm born out of the European apprehension about the "volatility" of the masses, easily to be subdued by "total control".

4 Reflecting/Constructing Dissent

Static and moralistic understanding of communism as an alien phenomenon disrupting local authentic values is not the only problematic aspect of an institution which is supposed to forge grand-scale societal change. The situation is even more complex, as the diplomatic relations with the United States are amicable during the 70s, the time of official national revival and of articulating dissent. One of the Romanian dissidents, Mihai Botez, criticizes American policy towards Romania while benefiting from RFE's support in his solitary resistance¹²⁹. At the same time, RFE editors have to maintain their critical objectivity towards the Ceausescu's domestic oppressive rule, while his diplomatic services are considered useful by the American diplomats, especially because of the breach of Warsaw Pact solidarity¹³⁰. In his turn, Nicolae Ceausescu takes care not to spoil his relationships with the Americans while staging a defamatory and criminal attack against RFE staff¹³¹. RFE reports do not hesitate to record the discrepancies between Jimmy Carter's positive assessment of Romanian politics and the disturbing conclusions of the surveys conducted by Amnesty International concerning violations of basic rights¹³². In this case, patriotic advocacy takes the turn of human rights discourse

¹²⁹ His essays are read at RFE microphone in 1986. See OSA, *The Relations between US government and Romania 1968-1984(IV)*, Domestic Bloc Nr.804/ 13.02.86, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 3, Box 6.

¹³⁰ Gelu Ionescu testifies about the frictions between the director Vlad Georgescu and the American authorities with regards to Ceausescu's politics (interview with Gelu Ionescu, 7.06.2008).

¹³¹ "In order to destroy our enemies", Ceausescu went on, "we have to discredit them. That's what I want to do with Free Europe. I want to discredit it as a CIA operation that has its spies inside Romania undermining our sovereignty and independence. But I don't want the words to come out of my mouth. I don't want to say that the American Congress is lying about Radio Free Europe, because I need the Congress for the most favored nation status. I don't want to say that Carter, Vance and Brzezinski are lying, because I need their political support and money." See Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons. Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief* (Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1987), p. 307.

¹³² In his semiannual report in 1980, Jimmy Carter appreciated Romania's willingness to deal with human rights questions and friendly attitude towards RFE (which is not jammed). On the other hand, Amnesty International reports reveal that Romanian authorities were using a wide range of legal and extra-legal penalties against human rights activists. Imprisonment, corrective labor and confinement to psychiatric hospitals are some of the measures applied to the members of the unofficial free trade union SLOMR or to

for the RFE journalists who try to differentiate themselves from the nationalistic supporters of the Ceausescu regime and who borrow the new international idiom of Helsinki agreements (which benefited from Jimmy Carter's administration stormy romance with human rights). We would argue that all these conditions amplify the belligerent attitude of Romanian broadcasts, replacing open dissent with its standardized phantom which finally produces results in the form a constellation of individual attitudes, vertically coordinated.

This is not to say that they hindered rather than stimulated existent islands of discontent. It is more implying that in a society devoid of a tradition of intellectual networking, the over-reliance on pervasive external media support facilitate a vertical communication, keeping low the potential of a horizontal one. It also reproduces the gap between interwar elites and society, when the spiritual reborn of the nation is promoted by an urban elite on cultural grounds¹³³. Vladimir Socor also notices in one of his RFE reports that all known dissent figures and groups emphasize values that relate to the individual rather than to the community and that the disastrous economic situation is interpreted as the degeneration of the "moral fiber of Romanian society"¹³⁴. We might continue the argument by saying that in the absence of real economic reforms, Cold War modernizing drive through local elites continues a modernization trend of reflecting upon political problems from an ethical and cultural point of view, draped in democratic discourse. These are critical points because, when comparing opposition movements,

the miners going on strike in 1977. See Romanian Situation Report/ 10, 22 July 1980, in ANIC [Romanian National Historical Central Archives], "Gabanyi" Funds, File 159, pp. 59-61.

¹³³ Marius Lazăr, *Paradoxurile modernizării. Elemente pentru o sociologie a elitelor românești* [The Paradoxes of Modernization. Elements for a Sociology of Romanian Elites] (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2002).

¹³⁴ Vladimir Socor, *Dissent in Romania. The Diversity of Voices*, RAD Background Report/94, 5 June 1987, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 4.

there is the tendency of pinpointing only the quantitative aspects of dissenting communities (how many dissenters, how big were the social upheavals). Qualitative differences, concerned with intellectual traditions, structural conditions and international positioning through RFE are overlooked in most studies. The Russian case proves that the flourishing clandestine circuits of books and political leaflets can collide with an overemphasis on broadcasting dissent because of the breaking the rule of locally resolving conflicts¹³⁵. For the Romanian case, the radicalization of protests from above over-imposes the discourse of emancipation and the morality of dirty politics on a community of atomized audience, familiarized with cultural abstract advocacies. What is even more telling is that the over-imposed style of “counting revolts” is still perpetuated, regardless of the latest acquisitions of explaining underground movements by underground structures¹³⁶.

From its early years of existence, the Romanian editors of RFE and the researchers within the Romanian Research Department have been struggling to detect, count and advertise the Romanian oppositional cases not necessarily for being productive on the “market of loyalties”, as Monroe Price would suggest, but for gaining symbolic status on the “market of anti-communist belligerence”. Their impetus is fueled, as we suggested, by having or by inheriting an involvement in a public arena imbued with

¹³⁵ “One of the first principles of soviet politics is rather that conflict and grievances are not aired publicly except where criticisms of individuals can be used to serve the goals of political socialization. The results of political conflict between the leaders are publicized selectively only following their resolution. It is understandable that the Soviet civil rights activists would be strongly influenced by this tradition.” See Howard L. Biddulph, “Protest Strategies of the Soviet Intellectual Opposition”, in Rudolf L. Tökes, *Dissent in the USSR. Politics, Ideology, and People* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 104.

¹³⁶ Cristina Petrescu, for example, amalgamates, when it comes to discussing the Romanian resistance to communism, the local peasant partisan grouping with the workers’ unrest, the attempts of human rights protest and the syndicalist petitioning to Radio Free Europe or to political and cultural leadership. See Cristina Petrescu, “Romania”, in Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgoths (eds.), *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004) pp. 141-160.

spiritual activism. So, beginning with the 50s, it is acknowledged that “it is difficult to speak of possible opposition to the regime.[...]The majority of intellectuals and writers is also opposed to the regime, but the latter have to make certain concessions to the Party on which they depend for their living.¹³⁷” In 1963, when the signs of liberalization begin to appear, it is first signaled that Evtushenko’s and Nekrasov’s nonconformism is spreading throughout Eastern Europe, but that in Romania “such gestures are just at the beginning because of the regime’s determinacy in suppressing any nascent dissent.” It is also recognized that the so-called revisionism “is present only in literary works, not in writers’ attitudes” and that the general opinion is nevertheless that “nothing will remain out of the recent literature¹³⁸”. In the same year the RFE researchers conclude that in Romania, *unlike in other countries*[my underlying], liberalization is not accompanied by criticism and position takings, but only by diverse attempts such as “de-politicized literary evasion, formal style and modernist fictional formula, import of Western literature, first subjected to a negative assessment¹³⁹”. In 1964, on another very concerned close scrutiny, it is observed that Romania has an “independent position within the Soviet bloc and certainly not due to any notable changes on the domestic scene comparable to those which have been observed in Czechoslovakia or Hungary, for example”. The exceptional status of Romania’s liberalization is further promoted: “Indeed, some Western observers have considered it something of an enigma that the Romanian regime could in so many important respects break sharply with its own past – openly defying the Soviet union COMECON plans, adopting a neutral position in the Sino-Soviet conflict, [...] and yet retain the tightest controls to be found almost anywhere in the bloc over all areas of the

¹³⁷ See Item No. 4545/ 1958, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 110.

¹³⁸ See Item No. 2625/ 1963, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 109.

¹³⁹ See Item No. 2537/ 1963, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 109.

life if the people, including culture¹⁴⁰”. In 1972, after Ceausescu indulges a “cultural revolution” destined to diminish liberties, confidential reports confirm for the RFE broadcasters on an alarmist tone that Romanian intellectuals (referred to as a compact body) are wearied and convinced about the hopelessness of any mobilizing endeavor. The apocalyptic style of the presentation involuntarily discloses the emotional participation of the analyst as well as an inhibiting sense of a lost cause which could only enter in resonance with the general estate of passivity. It also forges an association between the regime’s harshness and the fossilized mentality of the whole mass of intellectuals: “Intellectuals are thus profoundly disheartened, without any ideal or target. They are convinced that there is nothing to undertake against the regime and that they will receive no help from anybody. [...] There is no passive or manifested organized resistance.[...] one thing is sure though: after so many years of Communist indoctrination, most part of intellectuals are fundamentally hostile to the regime. This fact evidently constitutes a failure for the regime, but there is no way to exploit it¹⁴¹”.

The outcry for help is assumed. RFE does not only advocate for liberties, but becomes specialized in constructing “cases” of dissent. One cannot imagine the fate of Paul Goma’s, Mihai Botez’s, Doina Cornea’s, Dorin Tudoran’s different actions without the agitation created around them by RFE broadcasters, which sometimes exceeds the expectations of the dissidents themselves. If these are the most prominent and survive in all contemporary inventories about Romanian dissent, one should take notice that they are not rarities at that time. The desire to have a constellation of subversive cases drives

¹⁴⁰ *Winds of Change on the Romania Literary Scene?*, 4 Dec. 1964, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 110.

¹⁴¹ *The Evolution of the Romanian Intellectuals’ State of Mind*, 3 May, 1972, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 2, Box 1.

RFE journalists to advertise and conflate more obscure situations, on the basis of epistolary dissent voiced through the radio. Teodor Briscan's or Ion C. Bratianu's letters addressed to Romanian authorities or that of Aurel Dragoș Munteanu sent to the president of the Writers' Union constitute, in the rough competition against communism, precious evidence which is carefully considered and displayed¹⁴². When broader Eastern movements find echo in the Romanian literary field, the urge to find similarities is fully legitimated and therefore largely satisfied. A case like that of Paul Goma¹⁴³, the famous promoter of a movement of adherence to "Charter 77", is constructed by multi-level activism: RFE reads Goma's censored novels, broadcasts Goma's declarations, mediates the dialogue between the signatories and keeps them informed about each other, participates (as a witness endowed with "doubtful subjectivity") to the manifestations held in Paris in favor of liberating Paul Goma, obtains legitimating testimonies from prominent French intellectuals and, last but not least, insures multi-faceted concentrated coverage of the event¹⁴⁴. Making Paul Goma the engine behind which a human rights movement began is all the more exciting as his first personal letters are disregarded as too common and general since the American authorities tend to close their eyes to Romanian

¹⁴² See OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 1, Box 4. Ion C. Brătianu acknowledges that his critical letters addressed to the Communist Party did not draw on him the attention of Security Police because their contents, but because they were read at RFE microphone.

¹⁴³ Paul Goma (born in 1935) is a Romanian writer and leading anti-communist dissident. Several times arrested for subversive acts, he is excluded in 1971 from the communist Party for having published his novel *Ostinato* in West Germany. In 1977, his public letter calling for respect for human rights in Romania and for Romanians to sign Charter 77 was read on Radio Free Europe. As a result, he was excluded from the Writers' Union from Romania and was arrested by the Security Police. On November 20, 1977, Paul Goma and his family left Romania and went into exile in France.

¹⁴⁴ Monica Lovinescu acknowledges that in 1977 RFE transformed into "Radio-Goma". Within one day after the confirmed arrest of Paul Goma, he is dedicated an editorial by the director Noël Bernard and a political analysis by Emil Georgescu, stressing the lack of judicial criteria for arrest. See Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului* Vol. II [On the Banks of the Vavilon] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), p. 237.

acts of disobedience¹⁴⁵. After he is imprisoned and released, it is generally realized that “it is very important that a Romanian dissidence appeared after all, in a country which, under the rule of communism had not developed before revolutionary traditions or movements of political renewal. Even the moderated Eugen Ionescu compares Goma with Solzhenitsyn, placing his individual protest within the range of collective upheavals like the Hungarian revolt from 1956 or the Czechoslovakian Charter 77¹⁴⁶. Monica Lovinescu reinforces this elective proximity, adding to the moral scope of Goma’s movement an aesthetic dimension. Because the Romanian literary field expels him from the Writers’ Union and denies the artistic quality of his prose, Monica Lovinescu doubles his moral capital with a symbolic artistic one¹⁴⁷. She defies in this way any value judgments proffered by an inactive intellectual milieu, taking pleasure in promoting a cause with all the theatrical devices required by a good story¹⁴⁸. Finally, Paul Goma himself will discard the “David against Goliath” dramatic myth forged around him¹⁴⁹.

Mihai Botez’s trajectory is also sustained and influenced by RFE. A successful researcher and mathematician, director of a university institute in Bucharest, he loses his professional privileges (including the right to travel) after refusing in 1979 to perform the

¹⁴⁵ “The broadcasters’ will to support all those who spoke against the Ceausescu regime was all the more powerful since those dissident voices were not so numerous. To its part, the agency wanted to close its eyes more than in the case of other East European regimes when it was about Romania’s bad human right record, since the American administration supported Ceausescu’s independence from Moscow. In this respect, it is telling that the Voice of America, which as an agency financed by the government reflected indeed the official view, paid no attention to the Goma rights protest”. See Cristina Petrescu, *From Robin Hood to Don Quixote. Resistance and Dissent in Communist Romania* (Budapest: CEU Thesis, 2003) p. 78.

¹⁴⁶ Political Program No. 417, 21st November 1977, *loc. cit.*, Box 129.

¹⁴⁷ “His talent can be proved by the publication of his novels in the West. His lack of talent is testified by the the Romanian writers’ bad consciousness”. See Monica Lovinescu, *Puncte de vedere* [Points of view], broadcast from 16 December 1977, in OSA, *loc. cit.*, Box 129.

¹⁴⁸ In May 1977, Monica Lovinescu realizes a program in which she chronologically narrates all Paul Goma’s misadventures as a dissident. The final image is that of besieged fighter cleverly and heroically facing all insults, injuries and traps. See “Theses and Anti-Theses in Paris”, No. 460, 4 May 1977, in OSA, *loc. cit.*, Box 129.

¹⁴⁹ Monitoring of French press, 24 November, 1977, in OSA, *loc. cit.*, Box 129.

ordinary ritual of agreeing with the party theses. He draws attention to him after sending a critical letter to RFE (which is thoroughly read at RFE microphone but only partially published by the French review “L’Alternative”). He is interrogated by the Security Police and offered a passport, but he constantly declines to emigrate, preferring what he calls “steady and solitary dissidence *within* the country” to an appealing exile. His case is unique because it is covered by the radio station for almost 10 years on the grounds of a special friendship with Vlad Georgescu, who has been director of the Romanian Department in the period 1983-1988. The epistolary fashion of claiming one’s rights is conveniently and artfully played by the two distant interlocutors in order to convert a private conversation into a public dialogue/ monologue voiced through RFE, for the benefit of Romanian audience and for the dissenter’s protection. The messages are read as private letters, not as public criticism, on a program called “Listeners’ Mail”¹⁵⁰, in order not to offer to the Romanian authorities the evidence of accusing Botez of directly sending texts to RFE. On the other hand, Mihai Botez skillfully defends his cause by orchestrating his case in both legal terms and psychological impact. He does not want to belong either to the camp of those who leave or of those who stay passively accepting the situation. He does not challenge either the authorities by indulging in illegal actions. Rather, while continuing to live in the country, he gives instructions to the RFE journalists about how to be advertised (“try not to cite me directly”¹⁵¹), about what to say (“please, insist on the problem of free circulation”¹⁵²), congratulates them and asks them to keep on defending him (“it is for your own good, too, to pronounce my name because people could keep up morals by hearing that I did not fail”, “please, don’t sabotage

¹⁵⁰ See “Listeners’ Mail”, 13 Jan. 1985, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60 Series 3, Box 6.

¹⁵¹ Letter from 8 Oct. 1985, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵² Letter from 18 July 1985, in OSA, *idem*.

me¹⁵³”) and other solitary oppositionists (he tells Vlad Georgescu to resolve Dorin Tudoran’s or engineer Puiu’s situation¹⁵⁴). He measures the increase of rating (“my audience is growing¹⁵⁵”, “you were fantastic, the bomb has exceeded all expectations, the indirect answers continue to flow in the party press¹⁵⁶”) but he always specifies that this is not for rendering him a star, but “to make our dear cause triumph¹⁵⁷”.

Unlike the male dissenters who can sturdily stand upright, Doinea Cornea enjoys the symbolic status of a fragile (but morally outstanding) human being engaged in a biblical fight with the Goliath regime. She is presented in an emotional reportage as a tiny creature timidly approaching two foreign journalists in Cluj and handing them over two letters wrapped up in a hand-made plush doll, one to be broadcast by RFE, the other to reach the League for the Defense of Human Rights¹⁵⁸. The RFE editor in charge of the subject, Emil Hurezeanu, grows more and more attached to it and takes a paternalist-protective stand, sometimes sarcastic and ultimate (“there is no judicial sentence Against Doinea Cornea; it is high time that Constitutional noninterference in the domestic business of people should stop and the interference of the rule of law should begin¹⁵⁹”), sometimes annoyed and revengeful: “the regime wages war against Ana Blandiana and Doina Cornea, isolates them and deprives them of their civil and intellectual existence, it also intimidates them; a dignified and faithful pensioner and a poetess who respects her talent have become the public enemies of the regime. We’ll talk about these cases at the microphone whenever needed; in Doina Cornea’s case, whose physical disparition

¹⁵³ Letter from 4 Aug. 1985, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵⁴ Letter from 13 Aug. 1985, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵⁵ Letter from 6 Febr. 1980, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵⁶ Letter from 4 Oct. 1979, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵⁷ Letter from 4 Aug. 1985, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁵⁸ *Doinea Cornea’s case in Actuality*, in Hurezeanu’s Program, 21 Dec. 1988, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 3, Box 7.

¹⁵⁹ Hurezeanu’s program, Domestic Bloc, 1 June 1989, in OSA, *idem*.

continues to provoke international indignation, we are determined to resume it daily if necessary¹⁶⁰”. The letters of sympathy are not forgotten either, some of them attaining megalomaniac thrills: “I cannot compare our encounter to that of Kossuth and Bălcescu because we met as two private persons, but I am sure that such Romanian-Hungarian encounters can hinder other tragedies¹⁶¹”.

These few samples stand for what we would consider an ethical policy of making dissent by all means, but in a highly motivated posture, conditioned by an internalized culture of denunciation, by Romania’s paradoxical relations with the united States and, last but not least, by the RFE’s own internal competition for counting and comparing. In 1989, in a RFE “Annotated Survey of Independent Movements in Eastern Europe” written by Jiri Pehe, Romania figures with only 3 items, one being Hungarian, while Bulgaria has 13 movements and Czechoslovakia 27¹⁶². Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan cite the same study in order to prove the combination of sultanism and totalitarianism in Romania¹⁶³. Consequently, they reproduce the same vulgate about the harshness of the regime without going beyond a tautological discourse. It is worth mentioning that in the same year, Monica Lovinescu makes her own inventory, which is larger, but which is still impregnated with the tone of paternalistic rebuke¹⁶⁴. In a dramatic narrative style, she counter-poses to the writers which are woefully supporting the regimes those who, in different ways, indulged in forms of resistance.

¹⁶⁰ Hurezeanu’s Program, 3 January 1989, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁶¹ Letter addressed to Doina Cornea by Eva Cseke Gyimesi, 11 March 1989, in OSA, *idem*.

¹⁶² *An Annotated Survey of Independent Movements in Eastern Europe*, by Jiri Pehe, RAD Background Report, 13 June 1989, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 3, Box 5.

¹⁶³ Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Consolidation, Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 352.

¹⁶⁴ Monica Lovinescu, *Dignity and Intellectual Degradation*, in OSA, Funds 300, Subfunds 60, Series 3, Box 7.

Is there any need to remind, within the opposition, Doina Cornea, who has become an emblematic figure? Or Dan Petrescu, who declared that he is supporting her to such extent that if she is anymore subjected to any vexations he is willing to protest energetically? [...] Of course, Doina Cornea, Dan Petrescu and Liviu Cangeopol are not the only signatories of the protest. We should not forget Radu Filipescu, who is the leader of the “Libertatea” syndicate, or the courageous tenacity of Mariana Celac-Botez. Or, how would it be possible not to mention the recent case of the three journalists from “Romania liberă”, who were arrested for preparing a manifest against Ceausescu?

We can take her words as emblematic for a casuistic militancy, which constructs the objects of its own investigation. In terms of communication theory, this pattern fits within the cognitive turn which subverts the “hypodermic” theories about the indoctrinating power of the message alone. The significance of the source transgresses the simply informational input, denying media’s informational or rational message¹⁶⁵. RFE is an emancipating agent, but not in the way envisaged by the “psychological warfare” theories. Its impact is due to its authority (historically preserved and induced) as well as to its active networking which transforms it from a domestic reflector to a full-engaged agent, thanks to whom, an *ethereal opposition*, not a civil society, is taking shape.

In the next chapter we shall analyze the social intellectual background of the development of Monica Lovinescu’s militancy. In the present chapter we wanted to establish the institutional framework of her activism, which we understood as a factual account about the Romanian department (programs, broadcasting time, audience and staff). We tried to cover the Romanian section not in a descriptive way, but in an insightful manner, reading the data as symptoms of a complex interaction with the Romanian public (ranging from mass audience to dissidents and Security Police agents)

¹⁶⁵ James Curran, “Mass Media and Democracy Revisited”, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.) *Mass Media and Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

which renders the Romanian Department an interesting case among other departments. It is not something to be overlooked the fact that the Romanian Department, despite the small funds which are allocated to it, succeeds in appealing to an audience much larger than those of other sections, even though, as far as the dissident movements are concerned, Romanian editors do not have the chance to advertise international popular figures like Solzhenitsyn or authentic collective upheavals such as “Charter 77” or “Solidarity”.

Chapter 4. Advocating Democracy on A Cultural Basis.

Radio Free Europe between National and International Militancy

It is one of the paradoxes of Romanian cultural history that the Romanian cultural broadcast within Radio Free Europe was the largest in comparison with the cultural programs of other departments¹⁶⁶, while the dissidence from the Romanian intellectual milieu was the smallest in the whole Eastern bloc. After 5 years of 10-15 minute programs, Monica Lovinescu persuades Noël Bernard, the director of the Romanian Department at that moment, to allow her to increase the space of her comments about the cultural actuality from inside and outside Romania. In 1967 she is granted the permission to do so because her motivations in using culture against cultural corruption seems convincing to the American authorities¹⁶⁷. The efficiency of her endeavors is appreciable if one considers that in 1980 Monica Lovinescu is considered public enemy number three by the security police, after the dissident Paul Goma and the playwright Eugen Ionescu¹⁶⁸.

It is worth therefore discussing the discursive parameters of this unusual cultural militancy, arguing that it is embedded within a political-intellectual tradition which still

¹⁶⁶ Gelu Ionescu confirms to us that the Romanian elite cultural programs were the largest in RFE. “Theses and Anti-Theses in Paris”, “Romanian Cultural activity” (realized by Monica Lovinescu), “European Perspectives” (realized by Gelu Ionescu), “Povestea Vorbei” [The Tale of the Word] (realized by Virgil Ierunca) constitute the rich high-culture offer of the Romanian Department. Gelu Ionescu’s collaboration starts in 1983 (interview with Gelu Ionescu, 7.06. 2008).

¹⁶⁷ “For the communist regime culture was supposed to be the most efficient propaganda tool.

¹⁶⁸ Mihai Pelin, *Operațiunile „Melița” și „Eterul”*. *Istoria Europei Libere prin documente de Securitate op.cit.*, p. 281.

shapes the interaction of public communication in Romania and the writing of history. Our undertaking has therefore several aims: we want to exemplify, by this concrete and relevant case, the interpenetration between Cold War rhetoric and local cultural perspectives, to disrupt the preconceived ideas regarding strict delimitations between right/left, autochthonism/ cosmopolitanism and to draw a correlation between an *ethereal opposition* (existing through air-waving) and an *ethereal war* fought on cultural basis. We argue that RFE's cultural message does not only emerge *against* the immobility of the masses, but *on* the authoritative mandate historically constructed in this way and grounded on the distance between elites and people. The conservative and progressive elements merge within RFE's cultural message, showing that a Cold War radio cannot impose liberating values (media as domination) on the Eastern people, but interact with them in a conceptual and political way (media as interaction). Moreover, it can reproduce a type of intra-elitist public communication reminiscent of a modernizing era, by being involved in the construction of the national canon and in the literary mundane affairs contingent to it. If we sociologically delineated in the previous chapter the institutional way in which an interacting medium can construct (rather than reflect or impose) subversion, we would like now to disclose the *intellectual ethos* behind it because we consider that there is more to an anti-Communist discourse than the redundant homogenizing references to dissidence, freedom and evil application of Marxism. We shall proceed by re-launching the question of the transformation of totalitarian paradigm by a liberal patriotic drive, then we shall contextualize Monica Lovinescu's position within the intellectual milieu of Paris and the exile community. We shall discuss the features of her nationalism as it is refracted by her entourage and her "close-distance"

from the country and, from that perspective, we shall be able to understand the tensioned relation between nationalism and internationalism (as an internalized urge of being synchronized with the Western world). We shall see that, under the described conditions (Cold War, double exile, interwar intellectual modernizing credo), *the cultural broadcasts from Paris do not constitute either an interface between Romania and France (as perhaps Noël Bernard would have wanted when he thought about the program) or a Cold War weapon, but a third party of a political-literary game from within the country*¹⁶⁹. From reasons of space we shall give only some glimpses of the literary war developed from late 70s and continuing in the 80s. As this literary fight is rather pedestrian in its real deployment and as it has been analyzed before us¹⁷⁰, we contend that it is more important to disclose its discursive roots (going back to the 60s) which will reveal the fact that the battle between Westernizers and autochtonists do not follow the dividing line of nationalism/internationalism. We acknowledge therefore that the contextualizing part prevails over the analytical one, which is hard to be thoroughly undertaken (from bibliographical reasons as well¹⁷¹).

1. Questions: Reshaping Totalitarian Paradigm

It is easy to guess why Monica Lovinescu adopted the totalitarian paradigm in her broadcasts; the problem is to see how she adapted it across time and space, from the

¹⁶⁹ Ioana Popa intuits the same thing, but she does not analyze the intricate “nationalist” character of the broadcasts. See Ioana Popa, “« L’impureté » consentie. Entre esthétique et politique: Critiques littéraires à Radio Free Europe”, *Sociétés et Représentations*, No. 11 (février 2001), pp. 55-75.

¹⁷⁰ See Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Communism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu’s Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Alexandra Tomiță, *O istorie glorioasă. Dosarul protocronismului românesc* [A Glorious History. The File of the Romanian Protochronism] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2007).

¹⁷¹ Our “sources” are the published transcripts of the broadcasts, edited by Monica Lovinescu herself after 1989. They also constitute a “case” and are therefore problematic, as the five volumes of the *Unde scurte* [Short Waves] represent a retroactive way of building an identity (they are not serial reconstructions, but selective collections). They are nevertheless relevant if one considers them as a unitary corpus embodying someone’s ideological evolution.

tribune of passionate observer who is doubly exiled (from Parisian leftism and from Romanian communism), but who eventually becomes an “institution”, gaining intellectual authority and consecrating power. The intriguing questions that will be answered in this thesis are: how modernist ethos survives in a community peopled with agents with anti-modernist drives in their past and how progressive synchronicity with the West is voiced out of a Western hostile milieu. By determining the nature, the conditions and the evolution of her militancy we can find answers and we can also launch some hypotheses about the unintended consequences of this type of literary activism. Last, but no least, we can relate it to Carlo Ginzburg’s reflections about *distance* in historical understanding.

The intellectual embodiment of the crusade for freedom¹⁷² demonstrates that culture is a/the vulnerable spot of communist politics. From another point of view, it introduces undifferentiated imperatives for the intellectual elites (political and artistic) and fosters an ethical and non-contextual perspective upon actions and texts. Within a literary tormented exile divided between patriotism and cosmopolitanism and lacking sociological training, the urgency of the mission and the contingency of history experienced as daily commentators frame a type of discourse that becomes a reference for the contemporaries, but also for present interpretations of the past. Therefore it is worth circumscribing and underlying the complexity of a militant message which still influences the understanding of communism in Romania. The persistence of the totalitarian paradigm in which it is inscribed is one of the effects of the static cultural

¹⁷² When he hears about the constitution of a National Committee for Free Europe in 1949, Virgil Ierunca notes in his diary that a political crusade for freedom devoid of an intellectual dimension would be a failure. See Virgil Ierunca, *Trecut-au anii...Fragmente de jurnal. Întâmpinări și accente. Scrisori nepierdute* [The Years Have Passed...Diary Excerpts. Statements and Accents. Non-lost letters] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), note from 31 June 1949, p. 64.

criticism advocated from the RFE microphone, at a time when the idea of “total control” of society by an overimposed power is fashionable thanks to the inflow of testimonial literature in the West and to the changes which occurred in American academia after the assimilation of European exiles. As Enzo Traverso suggests, “totalitarianism” as a theory flourishes between 1947-1960, being not just a critique against communism or Fascism, as in the 30s, but an apology of the Western order¹⁷³. In subsidiary, totalitarianism paradigm brings back the familiar theme of the “volatility” of the masses¹⁷⁴, making possible the revival of modern aesthetics and the repositioning of a bourgeois intelligentsia.

Situated within the interval between literature and politics, Monica Lovinescu’s programs do not necessarily go beyond aestheticism in order to militate for political freedom, but integrate fiction writing or, more precisely, artistic performance and artists’ behavior within the ethical perspective of the unconditioned determinism between having an untarnished conscience and writing well. Physical distance as a RFE journalist in Paris joins her literary heritage as the daughter of the interwar critic who promoted modernism and autonomy of literature, thus creating the spatial and conceptual prerequisites for a critical detachment from the contemporary literary scene and a passionate spiritual proximity to a set of values outside the framework of communism, in both space and time. The combination of the two attitudes invalidates the notion of distance as objectivity and enhances a complex discourse in which the modernizing ethos takes its framework of reference from the past and democratic concerns are transposed in a Manichean way or cyclic projections. National and international advocacy intermingle in

¹⁷³ Enzo Traverso (ed.), *Le Totalitarisme: le XX siècle en débat* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), p. 51.

¹⁷⁴ Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe. Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy and Diplomacy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 93.

a way to promote synchronicity as Europeanization, but with retroactive comparisons, extracted from a time which is considered to bear the authentic identity of the nation. Later, when the idiom of human rights requires a strong connection to the present, culture is still seen as the milieu of salvation, but its productions are no longer submitted only to the test of modern aestheticism. The case of Monica Lovinescu shows, from the perspective of the history of ideas and sociology of intellectuals that the defense of “art for art’s sake” can attain the features of national moralism¹⁷⁵ when literature is perceived as threatened by an alien retrograde phenomenon. The defense of the autonomy of literature acquires, as in the case of some of the French writers under Occupation, the garments of political involvement. What is interesting is that her professional evolution undergoes the same paradoxical evolution: she reproduces the symbolic capital and the centrality of her father¹⁷⁶ within the literary field, but she betrays his esthetical orientation¹⁷⁷. Having arrived in Paris in 1947 as a young researcher destined to an academic career, she radically embraces journalism with an interwar trust in the urgency of confronting a history which is doubly felt as *traumatic* (on the personal¹⁷⁸ and collective level). Her activism is provocative because it shows how, under a regime seen as imposed from above, progressive conservatism and critical intellectualism turn into patriotic political aestheticism without embracing pastoral nationalism or contempt for a

¹⁷⁵ In France under Occupation those who advanced “art for art’s sake” as a reaction to the moralists from the South zone, later defended the autonomy of literature by re-appropriating the language of national moralism and the fight for the French spirit. See Gisèle Sapiro, *La Guerre des écrivains 1940-1953* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), p. 207.

¹⁷⁶ Eugen Lovinescu (1881-1943) is the Romanian literary critic and historian who theorized modernism and the idea of a literature freed of militant imposition. Although he had never gained academic recognition, he is one of the pylons of interwar criticism due to his adversarial stand against religious traditionalism and due to his leadership of the “Sburătorul” [The Flying Spirit] literary club (1919-1921, 1926-1927).

¹⁷⁷ Ioana Popa, *art. cit.*, p. 58.

¹⁷⁸ Her mother dies in communist prison in 1960, being arrested in order to force her daughter to return. Her parents’ house is nationalized and her father’s library is devastated by the communists.

certain self-centered intellectualism. It also uncovers, by better exemplifying, the internal logic of Carlo Ginzburg's paradoxical reflections on distance because it shows how spatial distance is inversely proportional with empathy. The exile configuration during the Cold War complicates the superposition detachment-distance, empathy-proximity¹⁷⁹.

2. Double Exile...or More

It was not easy, for two Romanian immigrants in Paris after World War II to engage in an obstinate and distant fight against communism, within an intellectual milieu which preserves his leftist affinities until the revelations brought by the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in 1973. It was not easy either to be a collaborator and then a journalist working for an American propagandistic radio while European anti-Americanism is continuously rising from 1952-53 on. McCarthyism and apprehension towards mass society required even in an anticommunist organization such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom (whose second edition is held in Paris in 1952), "to challenge communist art but also the disdain in which West Europeans tended to hold American culture"¹⁸⁰. The swift dissociation from the Vichy regime and the deep seated cultural reservations about Americanism, as the embodiment of degenerative capitalism and modernism, enhanced, within Jean Paul Sartre's entourage, a largely appealing and contradictory association between existentialism, anti-academism and Russophilia. While a whole generation embraces existentialism as a bohemian cure against disillusionment with the war and academic conservatism, Sartre breaks up with his friends from the

¹⁷⁹ By bringing together Aristototele, Balzac, Chateaubriand and David Hume, Ginzburg reflected upon the moral implications of distance, reaching the conclusion that moral indignation is circumscribed to a sense of proximity. Yet, by looking at the self-destruction potential of the second half of the XXth century he realizes that indifference is devastating even when it is concerned with closeness. See Carlo Ginzburg, "Killing a Chinese Mandarin: The Moral Implications of Distance", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 21, No. 1. (Autumn, 1994), pp. 46-60.

¹⁸⁰ Volker R. Berghahn, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

“résistance” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Albert Camus) because his utopian dream about a classless society does not transform him into a counterrevolutionary even after he acknowledges the existence of *gulagi*¹⁸¹.

During the 60s, disillusionment with communism is still rare or controversial. It is recognizable among those intellectuals whose actions are either honorable (Pierre Emmanuel) or hypocritical and still repulsive (Pierre Daix, who in 1950 does not believe in the existence of Soviet camps and in 1963 signs the preface of the French translation of Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovici* in 1963). In contradiction with Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca, for whom Marxism and communism belong to the same matrix, in France even those who acknowledge repression in USSR are prone to make the difference between an autonomous Marxism as critique of the existing world and a distorted one¹⁸². Even in 1975, in Andre Glucksmann’s *La cuisinière et le mangeur d’hommes. Essai sur l’Etat, le marxisme, les camps de concentration*¹⁸³, one can still detect the tension which was at the heart of the debates in the 50s between the repressive aspect in the USSR (the camps) and the future of the Revolution (the critique of capitalism and imperialism). From one point of view, that of schematization, the situation remains unchanged in later decades. The recognition of atrocities in the 70s provides French intelligentsia with a universalistic rhetoric of genocide which makes possible the comparison with Nazism, but which overshadows peculiarities and tends to exhaust, as

¹⁸¹ Sartre went so far in saying that “it would be wrong to speak out against injustice in a Communist state because to do so would provide ammunition for use against a cause which is that of proletariat and thus, in the long run, of justice itself”. *Idem*, p. 120.

¹⁸² See, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Humanisme et terreur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

¹⁸³ André Glucksmann, *La cuisinière et le mangeur d’hommes. Essai sur l’État, le marxisme, les camps de concentration* (Paris : Seuil, 1975).

Jospeph Amato put it, the reserves of indignation and to give way to another type of “indifference and apathy”¹⁸⁴.

In contrast with the generalized trend of stereotypical denunciations, the two RFE journalists preserve, by the nature of their “close distance” to Romanian realities, a never ending concern, focused on particular matters, as the format of the weekly broadcast as well as their diligence in being informed require. Their dedication singles them out among the other broadcasters¹⁸⁵ and distinguishes them within the broader Parisian landscape from other couple to which they seldom relate as to the most evident sample of Western hollow militancy. Driven by unconscious intellectual rivalry, Monica Lovinescu declares Jean-Paul Sartre “outdated” and excluded from History before the events from May ’68, and sees Simone de Beauvoir as entangled in the rigidity of (anti)-bourgeois criticism. Monica Lovinescu’s marginality within a glamorous intellectual milieu is therefore converted into a lucid centrality on the stage of historical criticism and even action, condemning all the others to a symbolic confinement and exile due to the blindness of their abstract or purely literary activism¹⁸⁶. Her biographical capital (her mother dies in communist prison in 1960), cultural heritage (her father is the literary critique Eugen Lovinescu) and her professional mission as RFE journalist, entitles her to discard French leftism as having whimsical pretensions and to mock ’68 revolts which

¹⁸⁴ J. A. Amato, *Victims and Values* (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 175-201.

¹⁸⁵ “One hour and 20’ of weekly transmissions meant reading 2-3 books (from both French and Romanian actuality, a lot of journals (from both hemispheres as well), going to concerts, spectacles and movies. And at home afterwards, it meant typewriting the texts of broadcasts for several hours, recording and editing the round tables. [...] Working at home did not represent a luxury, but a necessity. By their length and technical complexity, our programs vexed the Russians, who were used to be the first everywhere.” See Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului* Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p.206.

¹⁸⁶ “Through them, a certain figure of the intellectual numbed by history beyond recognizing his own identity is perfected within the Western intellectual landscape in which being a *leftist* censor is neither a profession, neither a risk, but only a throne, the most comfortable of all.” See Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte* [Short Waves] Vol. I, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990), broadcast from 14 January 1967, pp. 218-220.

are based on a “total lack ideological imagination”¹⁸⁷. In this context, the only reference to Julia Kristeva becomes caricatured, as she is altogether the “textualist-psychoanalyst-semiotician who shall wait for the implosion of communism in order to remember that she came from Bulgaria where her father suffered under communism”.

The estrangement from the French intellectual scene is felt by the majority of personalities gravitating around Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca. Mircea Eliade does not understand why he is awarded a *honoris causa* doctorate in 1976 by Sorbonne University since he “has no academic connections in Paris and he is neither a Marxist nor a structuralist in a moment when all French culture is dominated by leftists, Marxists, Freudists etc.”¹⁸⁸. Emil Cioran preserves his ambiguous apocalyptic anti-modernism preferring in the 50s as well as in the 70s a Romanian shepherd to a French intellectual, seeing Sartre as the symbol of Western decadence and explaining May ’68 as an absurd revolution generated by welfare¹⁸⁹. It is noticeable that Monica Lovinescu uses almost the same language when she compares the Prague spring to the French student uprising¹⁹⁰. From another perspective, Eugen Ionescu is no less virulent when he publishes an article in “Le Figaro littéraire” (19 May 1973) in which he draws resemblances between leftist French intolerance and totalitarian censorship. Sanda Stolojan does not overlook either the fact that French intelligentsia is bewildered in 1975 when Saharov is awarded the

¹⁸⁷ Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal* [Diary] Vol. II, Edition coordinated by Mircea Handoca (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), note from 13 february 1976, p.220.

¹⁸⁹ Emil Cioran, *Scrisori către cei de acasă* [Letters to those from home], Edition coordinated by Dan C. Mihăilescu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995), pp.55 and 208.

¹⁹⁰ “While in the East youth’s revolt is rooted in a socio-political intolerable reality, in the West we assist at a contestation driven by luxury and gorging.” See broadcast from 9 June 1968, p. 284.

Nobel prize and mentions Dumitru Țepeneag's difficulties in being assimilated as a political refugee¹⁹¹.

In Virgil Ierunca's and Monica Lovinescu's cases, it is not just conceptually that they feel exiled from Paris. In 1960, when Khrushchev comes to France on an official visit, Virgil Ierunca packs his things as he expects to be deported to Corsica together with another 800 political immigrants¹⁹². In May 1968, Noël Bernard comes especially from München in order to persuade them to move there¹⁹³. Only after 1975, does the Romanian exile become what they hoped in the 40s: a reiteration of 1848. The moment is emphatically recorded, making transparent the internalized complexes of a peripheral culture. It is as if, for an instant, Romanians are ahead of their time, going beyond the imperatives of synchronicity. "In their times, Romanian fortyeight-ists were within History's flow. Now, History itself will arrange to be at the Romanian exiles' disposal."¹⁹⁴

The victory of ideological synchronization is nevertheless eclipsed by the moral corruption inside the exile community itself or by the difficult communication with American authorities. In 1973, Virgil Ierunca and Ioan Cușa assume the directorate of a new cultural periodical "Ethos", which is designed to bring together within an ethically rigorous space a smaller immigrant group self-entitled "second exile", cleansed of invertebrate and opportunist elements enmeshed in "vanities, businesses and petty nationalisms"¹⁹⁵. "Ethos" is also an attempt to enforce solidarity among those who would

¹⁹¹ Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste balcoane* [Clouds over balconies] Translation from French by Micaela Slavescu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996), pp. 8-10.

¹⁹² See Virgil Ierunca's diary from 1960 published in "Ethos", No. 1 (1973), p. 215.

¹⁹³ Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p.137.

¹⁹⁴ *Idem*, p. 160.

¹⁹⁵ See the manifesto opening the first issue from 1973, p. 5.

refuse to publish in the new cultural magazine¹⁹⁶ created by the Romanian officials to strengthen the communist patriotic lobby outside the borders. Relying on American support is not always easy as well. During his sporadic collaboration with RFE in 1960, Virgil Ierunca is censored because he is believed to still harbor socialist sympathies. Monica Lovinescu's texts are sometimes voiced through air only with Noël Bernard's support, in a collaborative effort resorting to all kinds of strategies in order to break American rules¹⁹⁷. During the 80s, Mihai Cismărescu expresses his disappointment regarding the American directors' indifference towards a real reversal of power relationships within the psychological warfare¹⁹⁸.

Even from the point of view of supportive collaborators and positive networking, the circle surrounding them does not necessarily fit into the profile of a pro-Western democratic modernizing homogenous group or lack the political motivation that animates Monica Lovinescu or Virgil Ierunca. Among their closest friends, some belong to a generation which had a conflicting relation with the outcomes of modernity and even occasionally sided with extreme right movements. Emil Cioran and Mircea Eliade are the most prominent cases, but we can also find in their entourage figures like Horia Stamatu, who wrote odes to the legionnaires in the 30s, Antoine Zigmund-Cerbu, who defends all the positions of a traditional right¹⁹⁹, Theodor Cazaban²⁰⁰, a member of the Legionnaire

¹⁹⁶ It is called "Tribuna României" [Romania's Tribune] and it is led by Paul Anghel.

¹⁹⁷ She has to threaten at least twice the Americans with her resignation in order to get her message through after she has been attacked in 1977 by two Security Police agents in front of her house in Paris and after an interview with Eugen Ionescu, when the playwright addresses an ironic invitation to Nicolae Ceaușescu to become an emigrant.

¹⁹⁸ Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste balcoane*, *op. cit.*, p.140.

¹⁹⁹ Virgil Ierunca, *Trecut-au anii...*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²⁰⁰ In the security police files, Theodor Cazaban is associated with Jean Pârvulescu as members belonging to the old fraction of Paris group and having been legionnaires in their youth. These sources are not wholly trustworthy, though. See Mihai Pelin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

brotherhood in 1938²⁰¹ and close collaborator of RFE from 1958 to 1987, Alexandru Busuioceanu, a founder of the traditionalist revue “Gândirea” and a promoter, from Spain, of the “Dacian myth”. We should not forget Vintilă Horia, a sympathizer (but never member) of the Iron Guard and a persistent critic of Eugen Lovinescu’s modernism during his collaboration at the rightist “Sfarmă-Piatră” review. Paradoxically or not, Monica Lovinescu is one of his supporters when a whole campaign is staged against him after winning the Goncourt prize with *Dieu est né en exil* in 1960. An interesting case would be that of Constantin Amărieuței, Ierunca’s collaborator for the review “Caete de dor”, who is a social-democrat in the interwar period and in exile emerges as the theorist of “transcendental nationalism” in order to defy Sartrian existentialism²⁰². All these affinities attest that the alleged liberalism of the two RFE journalists is rooted in a national protectionist credo, which is brought emphatically to the surface by the need to challenge the decadent universalistic allegations of the Parisian intellectual field and to build an identity nourished by the values attacked by communism. A cosmopolitan Trotskyite in his youth, preferring Michaux and Montaigne to Nichifor Crainic, Virgil Ierunca discovers Lucian Blaga in exile and publishes in the 50s a poetical nationalist review which almost disrupts his friendship with Eugen Ionescu, the most detached of all in terms of patriotic nostalgia. As we shall see, Monica Lovinescu’s campaign during the 60s favors the rediscovery of an archetypical Romanian identity, impossibly to be defiled by the communist plague. It is not a coincidence either that Leonid Mămăligă, the author of a novel depicting, as in Eliade’s and Vasile Voiculescu’ prose, the insular spaces

²⁰¹ Florin Manolescu (ed.), *Enciclopedia exilului literar românesc* [The Encyclopedia of the Romanian Literary Exile], (Bucharest: Compania, 2003), p. 138.

²⁰² See Constantin Amărieuței, “Caete de dor”, *Caete de dor*, No. 4 (1951). He argues there that the Romanian people represent an “ontological reality”.

which escaped from modernity's aggression, hosts in his house a literary circle destined to bring together a small part of the exiles and to allow everybody to participate, through any kind of narrating performance, in a perennial mythical experience²⁰³.

Reclusionary meetings are vividly attended, but they do not satisfy Monica Lovinescu's and Virgil Ierunca's proactive appetite. Virgil Ierunca notices at the beginning of his exile that the meetings with Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Lucian Badescu, Horia Stamatu, Octavian Nandriș, Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, Morcovescu are "too soft" and that the atmosphere resembles too much a literary circle. He abhors any kind of routine because he feels he entered under the sign of "essential settling of accounts"²⁰⁴. What will seal his affective and ideological companionship with Monica Lovinescu will be precisely the common sense of "total dedication for the cause of others"²⁰⁵. When her mother dies in the communist prisons in 1960, Monica Lovinescu decides that it is high time to be "integrally devoted to the study of this horrific century with its two totalitarianisms"²⁰⁶.

3. Ideological Orientation

Which are - then - the theoretical coordinates of her devotion in a period when Hannah Arendt's work are not available in French? She first pays attention to the authors who heroically denounced in the 60s the discrepancies between Marxism and Communism (Jean Duvignaud, Raymond Aron, Edgar Morin, Pierre Fougeyrollas). The

²⁰³ The first gatherings (1950-1953) are patronized by Mircea Eliade within the framework of the Romanian Center of Academic Research. Mircea Eliade's idea is that "our only solution is to discover new myths", so he encourages any type of performance in between 1953-1958. L. M. Arcade [Leonid Mămăligă] revives Eliade's initiative since 1963, inviting also visiting writers from the country. See Rodica Palade's interview with L. M. Arcade, in "Revista 22" [22 Review], No. 17 (1995), p.3. See also Cornel Ungureanu's comments on L. M. Arcade's literature in *La Vest de Eden* [West of Eden] (Timișoara: Amarcord, 2000), pp. 29-45.

²⁰⁴ Virgil Ierunca, *Trecut-au anii...*, *op. cit.*, note from 16 February 1949, pp. 20-21.

²⁰⁵ Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului*, Vol. I (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1999), p. 208.

²⁰⁶ *Idem*, p. 195.

theoretical part is thus destined to prove that the revisionist trend is not foreign to the French intelligentsia at the beginning of the 7th decade. At the same time, she attempts to legitimize her own critical perspective and to place Romanian thinkers at the core of a feeble, but honorable international debate. Mircea Eliade and C. G. Jung are seen as the “nonconformist” prophets of an unknown yet “royal path of contemporary thinking”²⁰⁷. Ideology is seen as the ultimate metamorphosis of an ultra-rational paradigm, to which only a revival of myths would constitute a real alternative. The mistrust in the capacity of logic also brings forth a reconsideration of marginal philosophies which challenge traditional Aristotelian logic through a new epistemology based on the logic of the inclusion of the contradiction. The discovery of Stéphane Lupasco²⁰⁸, the Romanian philosopher who perfected a philosophy of contradiction from the 30s until the 60s, fills the gap between the aberrations of a political reasoning which pretends to be rational, scientific even, and the deep mists of Romantic and Existentialist thinking. Moreover, it cautions native exiled values which, though marginalized, attain the status of revelations for French intellectuals²⁰⁹ (for Edgar Morin, for example).

One can detect, though, in Monica Lovinescu’s ardent condemnation of ideology and in her appraisal of relativistic philosophies, the same – reversed – credit accorded to the power of totalitarian ideas. In a schematic way, she equates communism with the morbid enchantment of ideas, although she recognizes the opportunism and paradoxes of

²⁰⁷ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte* [Short Waves], Vol. I (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990), p. 34.

²⁰⁸ On his native name Ștefan Lupașcu (1900-1988), he is born in Romania and leaves for France in 1916, where he will spend all his life. Working as a researcher at CNRS (1946-1956), he is forced to leave because his studies are considered non-classifiable. His candidacy at Collège de France is also rejected in 1952. In his *Logic and Contradiction* (Paris: PUF, 1947), *The Antagonistic Principle and the Logic of the Energy* (Paris: Hermann, 1951) and *The Three Types of Matter* (Paris: Juillard, 1960), he develops an energetic philosophy which transgresses the boundaries between the “rational” and the “affective” and posits the reflecting Self as the site of absolute contradiction.

²⁰⁹ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte* Vol. I, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 19 Sept. 1961, p. 27.

many individual trajectories. In her militant idiom she then resorts to the same vocabulary of unalterable belligerence directed against an overpowerful “ideology” and sometimes against the ultimate and decaying promises of modernity. It is not by chance that she counterposes to Soviet realities the Romantic idyllic life in nature, as it appears in Kazakov’s prose, falling prey to another type of pastoral utopianism: “It is only Pasternak who knew to talk to us in this way about the futility of our inessential gestures. Only in his literature, a tree is more important than a revolution”²¹⁰. It is understandable as well why she is interested in a fresh lecturing of Cioran who, becoming disillusioned with the East as well with the West, gives up his megalomaniac dreams about his country’s destiny and bemoans humanity’s fall into a paralyzed eternal present after the thrilling fall in History and in Time.

From the field of sociological theory, the author most quoted by Monica Lovinescu is also one interested in the general idea of communism as a living self-sufficient organism evolving over the years as a monstrous entity. In 1970²¹¹, as well as in 1961, she is still attracted by Jules Monnerot’s acid study on communism published in 1949, in which scientific investigation mobilizes interdisciplinary research, not in a detached all encompassing perspective, but in a belligerent way: “When the spirit is assailed on all fronts at once, it must achieve a kind of ubiquity for its counter-attack”²¹². Monica Lovinescu borrows from Jules Monnerot the distinction between sociology and ideology of communism in the same binary manner, as if to fustigate a concept by the analysis of a practice or as if to beat Marx with Marx. The critical investigation of the

²¹⁰ *Idem*, broadcast from 29 August 1964, p. 125.

²¹¹ *Idem*, broadcast from 9 April 1970, p. 405.

²¹² Jules Monnerot, *Sociology and Psychology of Communism*, Translated by Jane Degras and Richard Rees (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 22.

totalitarian society and the communist “Campaign” is thus bounded to a circular and predictable discourse, although the goal is to depict the dark complexity of a radiant society. The usage at the end of the liberalization of a scheme developed by a French intellectual at the end of the Stalinist period also predisposes to a transnational, yet static understanding of the mechanism of power. Under these circumstances, de-Stalinization is seen as a slight variation of an evil design, while local responses to it are interpreted in relation with exemplary models of subversion. Static understanding of Stalinism as in Zbignev Brzezinski’s and Carl Friedrich’s study of 1956, is followed by a standardized understanding of revolt, which massifies passivity in the search for cases. Communism is referred to in pathological terms²¹³, consecrating a traumatic view about a confiscated past. Monica Lovinescu’s broadcasts, as well as her memories, are then recuperatory enterprises about a period which is nevertheless posted as incomprehensible.

4. Nationalism - the Problem of Lost Territories

The confiscation of space concerns the RFE journalist as much as the loss of time. Mihai Beniuc and Tudor Arghezi are rebuked for their false historical allegiances, materialized either by omissions (Beniuc forgets to mention the Soviets occupying Basarabia²¹⁴) or by emphatical representation (Arghezi considers that the arrival of the Russians can be compared with a second “descălecare” [dismounting] and with the setting up of a Romanian state²¹⁵). The problem of lost territories is approached also by making an inventory of the banned materials (from 1948 on) dealing with this topic, from

²¹³ The clinical idiom that she uses reminds about the interwar apprehension regarding “degeneration”. She talks about “the clinical case of the intellectual who has fallen prey to ideology”, about ideology as the “poisoning of the spirits” and about the contemporary atmosphere which is filled with “miasma” because of the lack of the notions of “justice” and “true”. *Idem*, pp. 44, 58 and 110.

²¹⁴ *Idem*, broadcast from 8 May 1962, p. 38.

²¹⁵ *Idem*, broadcast from 12 June 1962, p. 40.

Eminescu's works to official writers' stories (Mihai Sadoveanu). Constantin Stere, the co-founder of Poporanism, is seen as a fortunate man precisely because he dies before Basarabia is "torn off"²¹⁶ from the motherland. Gib Mihaescu's *Rusoica* [The Russian Girl] is considered an uncomfortable book not for its pervasive eroticism, but for the prophetic apprehension of the fate of the borderland situated on the river Nistru, which used to separate big Romania from Russia. The text is retroactively reinterpreted: "The immense land of the dark secret, Russia's spectrum is haunting throughout the book, with an almost physical presence [...]"²¹⁷. The conclusion is that Basarabia is not only the biggest taboo of those days, but that the interdiction of mourning over its loss proves once again that the communist regime is a foreign one, not a revolutionary one.

Virgil Ierunca and a part of the exiled entourage surrounding RFE share the same concern for the topic. In his diary from 1960, he records, through Mihai Fărcășanu's editorial from "Românul", Iuliu Maniu's famous words when shaking hands with Ion Antonescu during the latter's trial: "Basarabia was and will be Romanian territory"²¹⁸. Mihai Cismărescu recapitulates in 1976 the history of the versions concerning Basarabia in a moment when the official politics becomes more and more critical towards the annexation and draws attention to a chapter which should not be nevertheless forgotten in the middle of a the late nationalist restorative developments²¹⁹.

²¹⁶ *Idem*, broadcast from 2 July 1973, p.79.

²¹⁷ "Pământul imens al secretului negru, Rusia apasă peste întreaga carte, cu o prezență aproape fizică și o unitate, un fel de suflu gătit de animal fugărit, de om la pândă, o exasperare a atenției ca în fața marilor primejdii, care-i asigură un loc aparte în literatura română." *Idem*, broadcast from 30 July 1963, p. 90.

²¹⁸ "Ethos", No. 1 (1973), p. 183.

²¹⁹ The article is published in 1982 in the exile magazine "Ethos" directed by Virgil Ierunca and Ioan Cușa. See Mihai Cismărescu, *Relațiile româno-sovietice și problema Basarabiei* [Soviet-Romanian Relations and the Problem of Basarabia], "Ethos", No.3 (1982), pp. 199-217.

5. *Constantin Noica's Case*

When we ponder over the two journalists' patriotic advertisement of Romania, Constantin Noica's case is relevant in many ways. As a representative of the interwar intellectual generation interested in legionnaire ideology and imbued with a missionary ethos of cultural revival²²⁰, he acquires under communism a political capital as a prisoner in late the 50s²²¹, but also a cultural capital as the mentor of "the Paltiniș school" and as a promoter of Romanian spiritual values at the peak of liberalization. His activity from the late 60s on can be considered resistant from the point of view of challenging the official Marxist ideology by practice and themes, but also non-dissident and even compliant with the regime because he saw the possibilities of self-fulfillment under communism and never took a political stand²²². The relationship between him and the little exile community composed of his generational colleagues (Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran) and the RFE journalists and collaborators (Monica Lovinescu, Sanda Stolojan) bears therefore the contradictory tones of cultural proximity and political dissension, highlighting the distorting or enforcing influence of space and historical time on the disparity of destinies or on the closeness of ideas. In 1957, Cioran accuses him of biased blindness when siding with the distant Western peoples with whom Cioran cohabitates and thus can better criticize in the name of utopian equality and spiritual vitality. When replying to him, Constantin Noica dissolves the dichotomy East-West transforming it into

²²⁰ Constantin Noica (1909-1987) was a member of "Criterion" Association, which counted among its prominent members Mircea Eliade, Mihail Polihroniade, Haig Acterian. In between 1938-1948 he assimilates legionnaire ideas, seeing the spiritual qualities of the movement in bringing redemption to a corrupted society. Even at that time, his communitarian involvement is paradoxical, preaching the elites' distant role in articulating the organic feeling of a nation.

²²¹ In 1949 he is sentenced to forced residence in Câmpulung-Muscel until 1958. He is then imprisoned until 1964.

²²² In this sense, he is loyal to his youth beliefs in the solitude of the participatory intellectual and in the self-discipline and self-centeredness of one who contributes, from within the culture, to the revival of his people.

a concentric space of *ideas* flowing from the center to the margins of Europe. In this way, universality can be achieved even from within a culture invaded by Marxism, but integrated into a broader philosophical field²²³.

It is the ambiguity of “collaborating” with Marxism for the sake of fulfilling a cultural destiny that the Paris community does not understand in Noica’s behavior. In 1970, when anti-communism is conducted in national protectionist terms, Monica Lovinescu salutes his return on the publishing scene with a “fundamental text” that “reintroduces interrogation into Romanian thinking”. In 1974, after Solzhenitsyn’s political destiny becomes exemplary for both his dissent and forced expulsion, she questions his optimistic assumptions of taking part in “major history” only by the disclosure of *apriori* transcendental landmarks. His trust in his nation’s evolution that he envisages to hasten – as in his youth – by self-confined elitist mobilization²²⁴ is deconstructed in the light of the social upheavals of 1956 and 1968. However, the meeting with Noica is filled with solemnity and mutual respect, even though the philosopher continues until the 80s to advocate “resistance through culture”: “I had rarely had so intense fights with somebody and I also so rarely had such a thrilling remembrance of somebody”²²⁵. Cioran agrees that Noica left a deep impression on everybody on his visit to Paris in 1972, although the points that he made were

²²³ “Lettre á un ami lointain” is published by Emil Cioran in “Nouvelle Revue Française” in 1957. Noica’s answer is not published by Cioran for fear not to harm its collocutor. Both letters are republished in Emil Cioran’s *History and Utopia* which is translated into Romanian by Humanitas publishing house after 1990. See Emil Cioran, *Istorie și utopie* [History and Utopia] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992).

²²⁴ There is a conceptual convergence between the Communist ethos of building a new world and interwar generational credo in the creation of a new society through mystical communion. There is also a continuity between Noica’s belief in the redemption of his country and the books that he writes under communism, in which he links the problem of nation to that of personal destiny. See Sorin Lavric, *Noica și mișcarea legionară* [Noica and the Legionnaire Movement] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), pp.37 and 182-183.

²²⁵ Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului*, Vol II, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

debatable²²⁶. Eliade gives an explanation²²⁷ of Noica's puzzling confidence in the political present of his country and expresses his serious doubts concerning the "creative possibilities" within a culture controlled by censorship. After Charter 77 and Goma movement, Noica's letters "seem to come from another world" as well as his arguments about the inauthentic Western life or his diatribes against Paul Goma and Solzhenitsyn. As perhaps Monica Lovinescu would have stated, Sanda Stolojan admits that her correspondence with Noica divides her into two persons, one being the human rights activist and the other Noica's collocutor²²⁸. There are nevertheless signs that Noica finally becomes receptive to the exiles' point of view in 1983, when he acknowledges that "the path of passive resistance, denial and derision followed by the Romanians for over 30 years is harmful"²²⁹. Yet in 1987, in an essay published in "Viața Românească", he returns to his old convictions with fiercer conservatism, preaching the decadence of the Western world in a way that resembles Cioran's views from 1957. Virgil Ierunca is the one to admonish him this time, calling him an "enlightened local intellectual crowned with an imaginary Romania" and exposing his naïveté in lecturing from an ivory tower²³⁰.

The third party involved in this dialogue, Noica's disciples, is not divided by the two perspectives. Liiceanu's reverence towards both tribunes, those of political realism

²²⁶ Emil Cioran, *Scrisori...*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

²²⁷ "In the evening Eugen, Rodica, Marie-France, Cioran, Virgil and Monica come to us. They are all under the spell of Noica's visit. There are so many enigmas that they cannot solve. One thing is sure: Constantin Noica succeeded in assimilating the experience of prison, to reconcile with it and to find a justification for it. He became richer and more profound after this ordeal and – especially – more prepared to accept the political conditions from nowadays in Romania and to concentrate on his activity and creation within those sectors which are tolerated". See Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal*, Vol II, *op. cit.*, notation from 5 July 1972, p. 69.

²²⁸ Sanda Stolojan, *Sub semnul depărtării. Corespondența Constantin Noica-Sanda Stolojan* [Under the Sign of Distance. Constantin Noica-Sanda Stolojan Correspondence], Preface by Matei Cazacu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996), p. 148.

²²⁹ Sanda Stolojan, *Nori peste balcoane*, *op. cit.*, notation from 19 March 1983, p. 162.

²³⁰ Virgil Ierunca, *Dimpotrivă*, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

and apolitical askesis, illustrates the possibility of a merger between the two under the imperative of elitist anti-communism and pedagogical criticism. If his devotion to Noica is unquestionable, his adoration of Virgil Ierunca and Monica Lovinescu, “a human constellation that one can always rely on”²³¹, is characteristic of a type of eulogistic discourse that personalizes the past by transforming it into museal pieces, whose proximity in an ethereal medium dissolves the incongruence between them.

6. *Synchronism under communism*

As the daughter of Eugen Lovinescu, the interwar literary critic retained by the literary history as the zealous promoter of modernism despite his conservative creed, Monica Lovinescu bears a special intellectual legacy and a duty which will be both reconfigured in the postwar decades. Her case dramatically illustrates how a democratic ethos can be wrapped in nationalist terms when advocated from abroad, but with the emotional presence of somebody strongly connected not only to the present, but also to the past of a nation. Synchronicity, in this case, acquires – paradoxically - the flavors of the past and the value of a noble, but retroactive norm. Titu Maiorescu, the conservative critic from the 19th century is considered actual all along communism as the promoter of autonomy of literature²³². A long campaign will be dedicated to the undistorted revival of interwar values, to whom she relates not only theoretically due to their insertion in an international modern field, but also affectively, as she is the conveyor of their distant message, and the witness of their unforgettable performance during the “Sburătorul” literary meetings²³³. Even the ideological enemies of Eugen Lovinescu are remembered

²³¹ Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire* [Love Declaration] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2001), p.86.

²³² *Idem*, broadcast from 5 November 1970, p. 447.

²³³ When she discusses the process of rehabilitation of interwar writers, Monica Lovinescu acknowledges her biased position as the daughter of such a personality, but she promises to act as a defender as long as

as key figures of intellectual debates unfolding in a democratic era. Nichifor Crainic²³⁴ is thus more positively evoked²³⁵ than Tudor Arghezi, for whom she ruthlessly applies the criteria of ethical/ aesthetical unity²³⁶. The traumatic capital prevails over the literary craftsmanship and the interwar mundane civility over the postwar compromises²³⁷.

The memory of the ephemeral human beings is emotionally highlighted by the difficult odyssey of their posterity, bringing additional aura to a normative past which was not influenced by outward models, but was uninhibitedly communicating with them. Mircea Eliade's profile, for example, is evoked in both its European synchronicity (to which he further brings original Oriental themes) in the 30s and in its absolute grace and novelty in the 60s, when he reversely infuses a lost native landscape (that of Bucharest) with esoteric meanings²³⁸. In 1964, when Ion Vinea (the animator of the "Contimporanul" avant-garde magazine between 1922-1932) is republished several days after his death at 79 years, he is considered younger and more actual than any

the recuperation becomes an authentic one. As far as the other writers are concerned (Camil Petrescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Ion Barbu), she remembers them with the naturalness with which images from childhood and adolescence mark somebody's personality: Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu's artificial and monotonous voice, Ion Barbu's fluctuating mood, Camil Petrescu's fighting with her over a felt cat. See *Unde scurte* Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

²³⁴ Nichifor Crainic (1889-1972) is Eugen Lovinescu's ideological enemy as the promoter of traditional religious tendencies and of the idea that Romania should be an "ethnocratic state". After 1945 he is imprisoned (1947-1962) and then released under the condition to assume the leadership of a nationalist propagandistic periodical, "Glasul Patriei" [The Voice of the country], destined to advertise a patriotic communism.

²³⁵ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte*, Vol. II (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), p. 29.

²³⁶ While Arghezi is constantly admonished as a case disfigured by intellectual prostitution, the Iron Guard sympathizers persecuted and then used by the communist regime (Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr and Nicolae Crevedia) are retained as talented poets: "The battles of the past and the ideological clashes belong to history and - electively - to the literary history. The texts - to literature. All we need to know is if Crainic's, Gyr's and Cervedia's poetry pass the test of time as poetry." See Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte*, Vol I, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 27 February 1969, p. 341.

²³⁷ Victor Eftimiu (1889-1972), the last president of the non-communist Writer's Association and the best friend of Eugen Lovinescu, is also nicely evoked, despite his socialist productions after 1945. See *Unde scurte*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 7 December 1972, p. 38.

²³⁸ *Unde scurte*, Vol I, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 4 January 1964, pp. 112-114.

contemporary poet²³⁹. Freshness and youth become the attributes of any innovating current which are supposed to replace the 20 years of “senility, absence and void”²⁴⁰. A cyclic imagery is therefore mobilized in order to account for the fragile modernizing attempts in the liberalizing period of the 60s. In this way, synchronicity and its morally emancipating virtues develop within a traditional pattern of “eternal return”. The battle against Stalinism and its agents (between a “moral youth and a lazy, often premature cowardice”) borrows the features of a mythical rejuvenating process. Mircea Eliade’s generation is expected to appeal to the young generation from Romania in the same tensioned manner under the pressure of time²⁴¹.

It is ironical that, despite her understanding of real literature as a combination of “character and talent”, namely a literature concerned with denouncing the present without giving up the artistic qualities, as in Solzhenitsyn’s case, what she is offered as primary samples of restorative literature is one permeated with myths, not with truths. In Ștefan Bănulescu’s prose, the absence of political value is supplanted by sophisticated fantastic construction of a vital realm which reminds of – at the same time - Lucian Blaga’s conceptual spaces and Julien Gracq’s surrealist semantic magic²⁴². By such referencing, a hyper-Romanian space is re-appropriated, “canceling nobody’s land and relinking with the past”, without renouncing the imperatives of modernism. The process of identity recuperation begins by uncovering a national essential space (“in Romanian and in a Romanian way he offers us unknown realms that we somehow guessed that they always

²³⁹ *Idem*, broadcast from 1st August 1964, p. 119.

²⁴⁰ *Idem*, broadcast from 16 October 1966, p. 205.

²⁴¹ *Idem*, broadcast from 18 December 1966, p. 214.

²⁴² Ștefan Bănulescu is not compared to the compromised contemporary Mihail Sadoveanu, but to Lucian Blaga. See *Unde scurte I, op. cit.*, broadcast from 6 November 1966, p. 206. Later, Monica Lovinescu extends the parallel in space too. He is associated with Julien Gracq, in the same manner as Marin Sorescu is seen in Henri Michaux’s proximity. See the article in “Ethos”, Nr. 3 (1982), p. 302.

belonged to us”²⁴³) and an evolved artistic technique. Although his generational team will in the 70s be accused of corruption and passivity, Ștefan Bănulescu will constitute a case worth being defended despite his invisible anti-communism²⁴⁴. The strange mixture of traditionalism and modernism will be praised in every type of art, whenever the archaic world is treated - as in Mircea Eliade’s theory - as a cognitive universe filled with spirituality, and not as simple decorative forms (Ion Țuculescu’s paintings or George Apostu’s sculpture) confined to a certain geography.

Mircea Eliade’s cultural leadership is thus reasserted in a moment when generational impetus²⁴⁵ is rediscovered as a chance for spiritual rebirth and when his phenomenological universalism is best suited for a kind of non-Marxist Europeanization which should not disregard native spirituality. During liberalization, when his name is banned from the local publishing space, Monica Lovinescu sees him as a model, irrigating from afar Fănuș Neagu’s and Ștefan Bănulescu’s prose, Marin Sorescu’s existential theater and Ioan Alexandru’s poetry of essences. In the same string of wishful appropriations, even Marin Preda’s realist novel *Intrusul* [The Intruder] is interpreted by resorting to a legendary pattern²⁴⁶. Even insofar as Stalinist realities are concerned, Mircea Eliade is uphold in 1981 to have better understood and depicted the “obsessive decade”²⁴⁷ in his fantastic short stories, to the detriment of the writers who are unanimously recognized of having illustrated the respective topic (Augustin Buzura, Constantin Țoiu, D. R. Popescu).

²⁴³ *Idem*, p.302.

²⁴⁴ *Virgil Ierunca deplures his absence from the UNESCO Romanian commission constituted in 1975. See Virgil Ierunca, Dimpotrivă* [On the Contrary] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994), p. 85.

²⁴⁵ She recognizes that the usage of the term is imperfect, but the “urgency” of rebuilding a culture makes it the most appropriate, as in interwar period. See broadcast from 9 December 1967, p. 241.

²⁴⁶ *Idem*, broadcast from 30 January 1969, pp. 333-334.

²⁴⁷ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte. Posteritatea contemporană* [Contemporary Posterity] Vol. III (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994), broadcast from 11 September 1981, p.233.

But being synchronic requires at a certain moment an original transgression of this stage. After Prague spring, Soljenitsyn's publication of *The First Circle* and the multiplication of testimonies about Soviet camps and trials, Monica Lovinescu does not seek anymore the inherent inalterable virtues of fantastic literature in which reality is transparently camouflaged, but the transposition of real atrocities by means of a code which is only collaterally fantastic. After sorrowfully admitting that Romanian literature does not question Stalinism thanks to its refuge in aesthetic writing, she overbids Dumitru Radu Popescu's baroque anti-Stalinist symbols appraising his civic courage and modern style which deviate into fantastic prose in spite of the author's intentions. One year later, D. R. Popescu is held up to be braver than Bujor Nedelcovici just because he questions rhetorically the non-evidence based procedures of the police²⁴⁸. Alexandru Ivăsiuc is minimized too – in comparison with the eulogies in the national literary press – because of its feeble exposure of Stalinism²⁴⁹.

Towards the end of the seventh decade, after noticing the contagious stretch of compromise in the camp of the young generation, she waves more and more the term "evasionism" in order to characterize the leap into the imaginary performed by Romanian writers at the same time when their colleagues from the USSR had already produced a vast mass of testimonial literature. Glimpses of lucidity expressed in poetical-philosophical rhetoric without narrative construction represent therefore the new "transparent" style of writing, even though it is the result of another type of self-confinement into the distant land of culture. Matei Călinescu's *Life and Opinions of Zacharias Lichter* is valued for his modernism (defined as "mistrust in the Word") devoid

²⁴⁸ *Idem*, broadcast from 27 September 1970, pp.428-429.

²⁴⁹ *Idem*, broadcast from 27 May 1971, p.487.

of picturesque images²⁵⁰. Later, the author himself will submit his own text to “post-censorship”²⁵¹ as the victory in publishing it in 1969 proves that he embraced the same faint criticism and evasionism.

7. Epilogue: radicalization of belligerence in a revivalist scheme

The publications (in French) of Hannah Arendt’s study about the totalitarian system and Solzhenitsyn’s first chapter of *The Gulag Archipelago* in “L’express” magazine in 1973 sharpen Monica Lovinescu’s exigencies towards the political stand of literary works. D. R. Popescu, Ștefan Bănuțescu and Matei Călinescu, the authors still featuring in a personal top ten in 1970, are eclipsed in favor of Paul Goma, whose novel about the political prisons was censored in 1971. Old brave experiences are relegated to the generic category of “exceptions based on allusions”, while major changes are still expected to come from literature, not from revisionist communist fractions: “Convalescence, the transition to a classical dictatorship is still something awaited. Doesn’t it depend also on the writers? Or especially on them?”²⁵². Solzhenitsyn’s case and exile endorse the possibility of intellectual opposition which shakes a diabolic system only by the power of word. From this perspective, purely aesthetic diaries are discarded despite the appreciation for the intellectual potential of their authors (“the young author who notes «today I have seen a snail » does not see any of the tragedies horrifying our daily existence”²⁵³) and fictional investigations about the domestic aspects of Stalinism or

²⁵⁰ *Idem*, broadcast from 9 October 1969, p.375.

²⁵¹ Matei Călinescu, Ion Vianu, *Amintiri în dialog* [Remembering through Dialogue] (Iași: Polirom, 2005), p. 380.

²⁵² Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 15 March 1973, p.61.

²⁵³ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde Scurte* Vol. III, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 7 March 1980, p. 122.

communism²⁵⁴ in general are seen as irrelevant. She embraces a univocal approach to social reality recurrently placing herself outside the critical chorus from the country and upgrading the aesthetic criteria with ethical standards of testimonial relevance. Mild sociological interpretations, in critique²⁵⁵ or prose, are not valued if they do not bear the testimony about a traumatic past, in accordance with the totalitarian paradigm.

It is no wonder that her sociological inputs are also schematic and imbued with a poetic flavor when she tries to account, for example, for the Romanian literature's anxiety and lack of prominence. Essentialist classification mingles with the obsession of being international and synchronic, all within the framework of a standardized quest for truth and confrontation with history: "the writers from other Eastern capitals – similarly overwhelmed by history –by the same history – knew how to confront it through their works, thus converting it into an ally. [...] And, as in a fable ending with a moral, art appeared at this encounter with the truth and the history, with her words revitalized by the risk."²⁵⁶ The *belligerent* and *revivalist* scheme is applied to other phenomena as well, failing to comprehend the complexities and to be authentically synchronized with an intellectual context. After overlooking the scientific scope and the impact of a whole decade of structuralism and new linguistic methodologies, Monica Lovinescu salutes the French intellectuals' disenchantment with communism. However, this "awakening"²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Nicolae Breban's *Bunavestire* [Lady Day] (1977), although it stands as a censored work and is deliriously praised by the critics for its depiction of the daily life of a middle-class communist is not appreciated by Monica Lovinescu. See *Unde scurte* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 234. George Bălăiță's *Ucenicul neascultător* [The Disobedient Disciple] (1977) is also minimized because the author does not make transparent "the predominance of fear" in his attempt to describe the transformation of peasants into an urban class. See *Unde scurte* Vol. III, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 19 May 1978, p.32.

²⁵⁵ She admires Nicolae Manolescu, but abhors his resorting to "presumptuous sociocritique" when trying to provide sociological explanations for the literature written under Communism. *Idem*, broadcast from 2 January 1981, p. 176.

²⁵⁶ *Idem*, broadcast from 21 June 1981, p. 210.

²⁵⁷ Monica Lovinescu, *Unde scurte* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 25 June 1977, p. 222.

does not prompt her to assess more closely the “new waves” in cinema or literature, because the tumultuous internal literary affairs monopolize her attention more and more.

The rise of protochronism²⁵⁸, the tensions within a literary field increasingly polarized from the late 70s on, the promotion of cultural amateurism by the festive nationalism demands her total implication. She then bitterly fustigates the protochronist group by uncovering the political and institutional stakes of their commitment to the national cause, reveals the Writers’ Union resolutions against literary plagiarism, appraises the courageous attitudes during the writers’ conferences and updates the listeners with all the machinations from the cultural field. There is a short lapse of time between Monica Lovinescu’s noticing the first explicit articles against her and Radio Free Europe (Adrian Păunescu’s *To the Country’s Betrayers* from 30 December 1975, in “Luceafărul”) and the protochronist writers’ complaint to Nicolae Ceausescu in person about them being caught between the fires of Radio Free Europe and the Writers’ Union official magazine, “România literară” [Literary Romania]²⁵⁹. In 1983, Artur Silvestri, a protochronist writer and a Securitate agent²⁶⁰, begins a three-year serial chronicle against

²⁵⁸ “Protochronism” is an ideological trend developed in Romania in the 70s which seeks to promote the idea of the temporal precedence of the Romanian cultural values in relation with the Western ones. As it assumes the universal priority of the Romanian culture, it opposes Eugen Lovinescu’s synchronism and it criticizes cosmopolitan tendencies. It is ironical that the person who coins the term in 1974 is an erudite intellectual figure (Edgar Papu), who tries to compensate, through his assiduous studies, the years spent in communist prisons (1961-1964). His idea is embraced by less prominent literary critics and sociologists (Pompiliu Marcea, Mihai Ungheanu, Dan Zamfirescu, Ilie Purcaru, Artur Silvestri, Ion Lăncrăjan etc.) who conspicuously adhere to the nationalist-communist ideology and are loyal to the regime. Protochronism is seen by sociologists (Katherine Verdery) as the ideological output of a disguised literary factional struggle determined by the crisis in possibilities for upward movement within the literary establishment.

²⁵⁹ See the record of the encounter between a group of 22 writers and Nicolae Ceausescu on the 26th of August 1980 published in *Adevărul literar și artistic* [Literary and Artistic Truth], No. 757, 1 martie 2005.

²⁶⁰ Gelu Ionescu declares to us that Artur Silvestri came to him in the 70s and told him that he signed the collaboration with the Security Police (interview with Gelu Ionescu, 7.06.2008). It follows that the denigrating campaign (from “Luceafărul”) might have been ordered and paid by the Security Police. Monica Lovinescu refrains from taking notice of it until the serial reaches number twelve. She condescendingly pretends to be unaware of the causes of such a deployment of forces against her. See Monica Lovinescu, *Short Waves* Vol. III, *op. cit.*, broadcast from 29 April 1983, p. 42.

Radio Free Europe from Paris entitled “Pseudo-culture on Short Waves”. All this *interaction* proves that both parts’ points of view are reciprocally taken under consideration by the whole literary community (and not only), despite the rhetoric of minimization developed on both sides. Artur Silvestri’s struggles in demonstrating the little impact of Monica Lovinescu’s programs and the derisory symbolic force of the exile community living in Paris actually proves the contrary, while Monica Lovinescu’s relative indifference towards the tendentious serial is denied by her exclusive focus on the protochronist havoc inside the literary community. What is intriguing is that Artur Silvestri might have a legitimate point in deconstructing the aura of the RFE from Paris by asserting the lack of prominence of the two commentators on the French intellectual scene and by observing the small scale of a redundant activism covered by the same persons from different cultural tribunes (Radio Free Europe and exile magazines)²⁶¹. His concern (and the concern of those whom he represents) shows nevertheless that the competition is a very vivid *internal* one and that the international representativity is a suppressed desire for both parts. Intra-national elitist competition for the monopoly over the cultural canon and for the temporal and spatial definition of the national patrimony imposes different uses of international references (within a timeless time span or under the imperatives of history). The political coverage of dissidence, usually considered to be the main focus of RFE, can be therefore looked at from another perspective. It is the by-side product of Cold War cultural militancy which tries to impose the urgency of being international and historically updated over the abyssal internationalism permitted by an autarkic regime. Rightism/Leftism, autochtonism/ cosmopolitanism are also undermined

²⁶¹ See Artur Silvestri, “Pseudocultura pe unde scurte” (I, II, III) [Pseudo-culture on Short Waves], *Luceafărul*, No. 6-8 (February 1983).

as they constitute stigmatizing labels used within a *national literary competition* only spanned in space in time.

Literary journalism oriented towards the defense of national cultural values seen as endangered through the enlarged lenses of totalitarian paradigm fosters a culturally based militancy. Its retroactive and proactive mood upholds social change without paying attention to societal dynamism. The “Human rights” idiom is appropriated through the filter of individualistic liberal philosophy and through the spiritualist drive of an interwar intellectualism, condemning politics with no regard to socio-economic aspects. Dissidence is sought and sometimes constructed against the background of the “volatility” and passivity of a large mass which is bemoaned as being “disenfranchised” but it is not exempt of the stigma of being an unconscious manipulated body in the name of which intellectuals should activate. Historical cultural distance between elites and masses is thus preserved and dramatized under the conditions of a “close-distant” air-waved advocacy. There is no direct determinism between having the largest cultural broadcast within RFE and having the smallest intellectual dissidence, but a homological relation.

Conclusions: Why Does Monica Lovinescu matter

1. *Museification*

After her death on the 20th of April this year, Monica Lovinescu is unanimously evoked by some of Romania's prominent intellectuals as one of the top figures of anti-Communist resistance. H.-R. Patapievici characterizes Virgil Ierunca and Monica Lovinescu as “the institution of public moral”, Alexandru Solomon acknowledges that “the hierarchy of values created by her will last in time” and Emil Hurezeanu declares that she has “the aura of an illustrious posterity”²⁶². There are also voices which, without contradicting the previous ones, cannot help noticing the paradoxes of the celebration. Doina Jela briefly and sadly observes that when Virgil Ierunca died in 2006 there was no public debate and that nowadays the memory of Monica Lovinescu is tarnished by the preposterous appraisals that she receives from figures who before 1989 also indulged in shameful odes to Nicolae Ceausescu²⁶³. Gabriel Liiceanu sorrowfully stresses that “the one on whose words hundreds of thousands people clang to before 1989 has died in a typical Romanian style, surrounded by our ignorance, indifference and oblivion”. This mournful chorus, surfeited or eulogistic, ironically contrasts with the officials' reactions who, under the civil society' pressures of organizing national funerals for Monica Lovinescu, resort to a third way formal solution of posthumously awarding her as a national hero.

Passionate, sad or cordially reverent, the echoes have in common the “indebtedness” of response. Civil society, literary community, politicians feel obliged to

²⁶² See *Evenimentul zilei* [Daily Event], 22 April 2008.

²⁶³ Doina Jela, “Intolabilul s-a produs” [The Intolerable Has Happened], *Observator Cultural* [Cultural Observatory], No. 420-421, 24 April 2008.

pay their homage to a figure with whom, although the dialogue has ceased because of the fading of a Cold War cause, a pious relationship must be maintained. The broad scope of the museal celebration is indicative of a few contradictory things: Monica Lovinescu has a widely cognized institutional status as a RFE commentator, but her conceptual legacy and her condition as an evolutionary intellectual trajectory mingling human and historical contingencies are overlooked. Cold respect as well as passionate evocation are characterized by a *distant* look onto a phenomenon which is hold up of having an enormous influence over the hearts and minds of a large public.

We argue that the canonization of Monica Lovinescu is the product of a typical relating to an elite pantheon as to a statuary piece which keeps away any comprehensive scrutiny. This is typical of a vertical type of a public communication within a society with a late and institutional (not economic) modernization. What is interesting is that, as we tried to show, Monica Lovinescu's own inputs are elitist, culturally oriented and devoid of social insight even though they are voiced from a microphone designed to appeal to mass awakening. The schematic RFE message, shaped by the Cold War rhetoric, the totalitarian scheme and a cultural-elitist credo fosters its own schematically solemn posterity. As far as its production is concerned, RFE discourse acquires in time the features of a redundant fossilized militancy because, in its attempt to fight against an omnipotent ideology seen as evil, promoted a type of inquiry as if the societal field on which the persuasive battle was waged was more or less stable. As far as its reception is concerned, RFE's distinctive "noise" retroactively emerges later as an unchanged voice due to its incorporation of universal values – resembling those made transparent by classical literary works - and its propagation of an ethereal medium of civilized public

interaction²⁶⁴. The classicization of the message joins the perennial status of the couple from Paris: in Gabriel Liiceanu's view, they constitute a "human constellation that one can always rely on"²⁶⁵.

One could argue that any solemnization posits a sacralizing distance between object and subject and that there is no connection between the two beside a post-factum ritual of celebration. We contend however that in this particular case the object influences its own posterity because of catalyzing factors such as transcendental media-capital, schematizing Cold War habits, distancing and missionary intellectual ethos. There is an *interaction*, although it is conceived as *domination* and although it is obscured by forensic museification, between a standardized cultural Cold War discourse and the present attitudes towards the past. There is moreover a correspondence between Monica Lovinescu's dual attitude towards history (benevolent in interwar period and malevolent in postwar period) and the present dualistic discourse about the past (either glorified through some personalities, either viewed as traumatizing).

²⁶⁴ Emil Hurezeanu, who was in the 80s a RFE journalist, points out the undisturbed naturalness with which listeners tuned in to the American radio, without receiving a message through "the filter of ideological constraints". The flow of commentaries, information, explanations which constituted for years the body of RFE broadcasts always landed on a field of "personal normality built on the platform of reciprocal politeness and nourished by freedom instincts and a common set of values and friendships". In this way, he adds, listening to "our radio" during communism resembled to the intimate exercise of reading Chekhov, Knut Hamsun or Cesare Pavese, no matter if it happened in 1955 or 1987. See Emil Hurezeanu, "Memoria lungă a unei scurte" [The Long Memory of the Short Wave], *Dilema Veche*, no.212, 2008.

²⁶⁵ Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire*, op.cit., p.86.



Figure 8: Monica Lovinescu in 1957, aged 34. Source: Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire*, 2001.

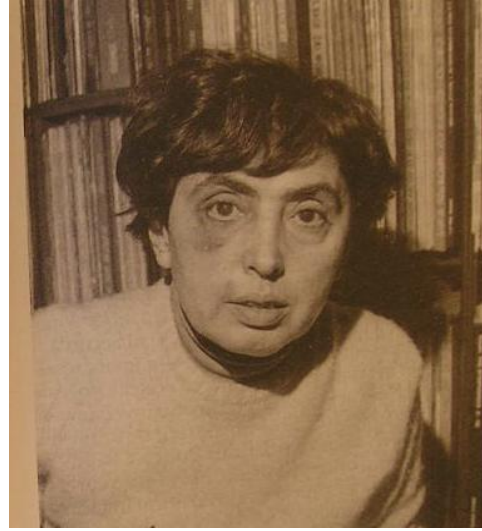


Figure 9: Monica Lovinescu in 1977, bearing the marks of the Securitate criminal assault. Source: Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire*, 2001.

The two pictures (Figures 7²⁶⁶ and 8) of Monica Lovinescu (from Gabriel Liiceanu's canonizing book), of her majestic and untarnished youth and that of polluted maturity physically recording the assaults of an aggressive history (immediately after her being attacked in 1977 near her house in Paris by two Securitate agents) are symptomatic in this sense: they symbolize two obsessive ways of objectifying, which can be converted into Freudian language: erotic museification versus thanatic dismissal or annihilation. Monica Lovinescu attains the dimension of a purified and transcendental museal piece because of her militancy understood as an absolute belligerence against evil. The worshipped image is thus insulated from the historical flow despite or precisely against

²⁶⁶ The first picture is chosen by the author, who is also the editor of her memoirs *La apa Vavilonului* Vol. I-II [Near Vavilon Waters] (1999-2001), as a picture cover for her book. Despite Monica Lovinescu's protests ("Gabriel, don't you see, it looks like a Hollywood picture...We'll make ourselves the laughing stock of everybody!"), Liiceanu posts the picture on the front cover of the second volume. In *Love declaration* we encounter the description of the image and - indirectly - the explanation of this choice: "a mature beauty, intellectually ripe, which produces in me an intense joy, by looking at her effigy, as if she were my great love from *another* [Liiceanu's underlying] life." (from *Declarație de iubire*, *op. cit.*, p. 107)

its slowly temporal as well as swiftly traumatic blows. The victimizing image conversely conveys the message of an overwhelming and fatidic history. Abstraction through idealization or through victimization spares the need of minute reconstruction of the past. Manichean RFE views about communism are perpetuated within local Manichean eulogistic and historiographic texts because they both develop inside a specific cultural tradition and are both enhanced by an internalized Cold War belligerent ethos. It is not a coincidence that the Romanian historian who upholds a widely consecrated and traumatic vision about an ongoing Stalinism²⁶⁷ in communist Romania is also the only person who posthumously dedicates an appraising serial to Monica Lovinescu in one of the political dailies²⁶⁸. It is no coincidence either that Gabriel Liiceanu, a passionate admirer of Monica Lovinescu, is also the fervent disciple of a school of thought promoting self-achievement through cultural abstraction from history. There are very rare voices, against these light or dark sacralizations (abstracting or immersing her in a fierce history), prone to acknowledge - *cum grano salis* - the key influence of Monica Lovinescu on cultural matters. Interestingly enough, one of them is also one of the few analysts of the Romanian communism who favor a pluriperspectivist approach to this epoch (sociological, economic and political)²⁶⁹. His “reactionary” stand against a worshipping majority can be attributed to an internalized complex as an ethnic minority (he is of Jewish origin) or to his broader insight in social phenomena. He addresses the question of the absence of Romanian dissidence from a non-ethical point of view and he also can

²⁶⁷ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate. O istorie politică a comunismului românesc* [Stalinism for Eternity. A Political History of the Romanian Communism] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2005).

²⁶⁸ See Vladimir Tismăneanu, “De ce contează Monica Lovinescu” (I-VII) [Why Does Monica Lovinescu Matter], *Evenimentul zilei*, 22 April 2008 - 4 June 2008.

²⁶⁹ See Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economics and Society: Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1985).

perceive the “omissions” (Norman Manea, Iordan Chimet)²⁷⁰ in the cultural canon forged by Monica Lovinescu. Last, but not least, he contributes to the serial evocations of Monica Lovinescu with a set of articles revealing the errors in reflection and interpretation of Monica Lovinescu’s interventions after 1989²⁷¹.

2. *Salt in Food*

We place ourselves within a similar analytical trend when discussing the role of Romanian RFE cultural programs for the construction of the literary national canon and for the support accorded to anti-communist actions. Without embracing a total revisionist or a virulent tone, we acknowledge the importance of RFE’s constant and assiduous advocacy (be it more cultural than political), but we try to relate to it in an *interacting*, not in a passive eulogistic way. Our *cum grano salis* attitude can be understood as a contextualist comprehensive approach which is intended to make the subject emerge as a living piece of history, not as a fossilized item of an antagonistic debate. The interactionist theory and the socio-historical circumscribing serve our purpose in making vivid again a phenomenon underpinned by a set of paradoxes whose tensioned proximity resulted in a rather static polarized picture. So, instead of looking at Cold War discourses and institutions from within their own standardized images, we uncover the stakes, the metamorphoses and the interpenetration of messages. The resulting reconstruction stands as a moving image, in which labels about “the other” reveal their dynamism and their actuality. We can better understand how international politics are filtered through national traditions, how being synchronic is dependent upon being also anachronistic, how authority is actually constructed when being transcendently claimed. We can also

²⁷⁰ Interview with Michael Shafir, 29 April 2008.

²⁷¹ See Michael Shafir, “Paradigme, parademonstrații, paratrăsnete” (I-IV) [Paradigms, Parademonstrations, Lightning Rods], *Sfera politicii* [The Sphere of Politics], No. 84-88 (2000-2001).

position ourselves in a much more friendly way in our own and worldwide history without the complexes exacerbated by a peripheral position and a traumatic view about the past. By disclosing the roots of the perpetuation of a totalitarian, Manichean and elitist discourse we have the chance of stepping outside of a vicious pattern of communication, we can get closer to the inner motivations of social interactions and we can also enter a larger scientific debate. As far as the obsessive condemnation of communism is concerned, we could refresh a ritual of dry classifying or listing²⁷² (reminiscent of an anterior epoch) by adding a new seminal familiar flavor. History is not an accident requiring the usage of sweet palliatives, but an appealing banquet with a mandatory garnish: salt.

²⁷² We can speak about a fervor of static display, in which reenactment of the past as a living past is absent despite its ghostly omnipresent figure. There is a contradiction between the numerous institutions charged with the memory of communism and the quality (not quantity) of their achievements. Publishing descriptive accounts (books of documents) of repressive institutions is their main focus. The institutions have as a main target “the process of communism” and can be catalogued as actions of “symbolic delimitation from “neo-communists”. See Florin Abraham, „Rezistență”, „Gulag”, „Holocaust” și construirea memoriei democratice după [“Gulag”, “Holocaust” and the building of Democratic Memory after 1989] 1989 in „Caietele Echinox” [Echinox Notebooks] (Special Issue: Gulag and Holocaust in Romanian Consciousness), Vol. 13 (2007), p.48.

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Figure 2: Cartoon from a book of anti-Western cartoons called *A Shattering Blow* by Boris Efimov, Plakat, moscow, 1985. the Caption reads: "Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, these two old toads love croaking loudly. Their base is in an old rubbish bin containing provocations, lies, slander, inventions." Source: Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain*, 1963 (p.44).

Figure 3: Caricature from the Romanian daily “Urzica”, 11 April 1959. The caption reads: “The tube is burnt. We have to produce the sound ourselves”. Source: OSA, Bulgarian Unit (p.45).

Figure 4: A poster attacking Russian listeners to Western radios. The caption reads: “Bad enough you should believe that rubbish, ears flapping. Worse still, that you should swallow the lies and sing a foreign song”. Source: Allan A. Michie, *Voices through the Iron Curtain*, 1963 (p.45).

Figure 5: Audience and Broadcasting Time of RFE’s Departments. Source: Paul Lendvai, *The Bureaucracy of truth*, 1981. (p. 52)

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Figure 7: Figure 8: Monica Lovinescu in 1957, aged 34. Source: Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire*, 2001 (p.110)

Figure 8: Figure 9: Monica Lovinescu in 1977, bearing the marks of the Securitate criminal assault. Source: Gabriel Liiceanu, *Declarație de iubire*, 2001.

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