

**Mircea Iorgulescu To Adrian Marino:
A Correspondence**

Edited by Mariana SOPORAN

Librarian

“Lucian Blaga” Central University Library

The “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library holds the archival stocks of the literary historian and critic Adrian Marino, comprising the manuscripts of his works, his notes, the large bibliographic material used for the elaboration of his vast literary production, as well as the rich correspondence he undertook with several outstanding personalities of literary criticism, Romanian and foreign. Year by year, this open archival stock is being enriched with new titles and documents, as the author donates material on a regular basis, carefully gathered, and organized in thematic folders.

In the year 2001, the **Adrian Marino** stock was enriched with 28 folders, bearing exciting titles for the researchers of Adrian Marino’s bio-bibliography, as well as for those who wish to get acquainted with the opinion of certain contemporary personalities regarding the state of Romanian culture in the last decades of the 20th century.

A title of special interest is *Mircea Iorgulescu*. 34 letters are collected under this title, addressed by Mircea Iorgulescu to Adrian Marino in the period between 1982-2000. Mircea Iorgulescu is a literary historian and critic having a rich activity as a journalist, materialized in several articles and studies, critical essays, as well as anthologies and pamphlets. Thanks to his convictions about the “ethical implications of writing”, being “a literary historian endowed with imagination, open to critical revision and innovating interpretation”¹, he faced a number of difficulties while active at home. We find several details about his troubles and problems in these letters, details referring not only to the problems of an individual, but also to the condition of an intellectual and to the status of Romanian culture within the communist politics of the 80s.

Not long before December 1989 Iorgulescu moved abroad and became the collaborator of “Radio France International” and “Radio Free Europe”. At the “Radio Free Europe”, he was the editor of the **Daily Comments**, a program of political journalism. His correspondence

¹ M. Zăciu, M. Papahagi, A. Sasu, *Dicționarul scriitorilor români: D-L* (Dictionary of Romanian Writers), București, 1998, pp. 621-626.

following December 1989 illustrates the daily life and moral decline of Romania, as he perceived it as a journalist.

The sense of trust in the exposure of his personal opinion regarding the cultural and socio-political realities of Romania, as well as the references to certain personalities, past and present, of Romanian culture discloses a stable friendship, based on admiration and professional respect.

I believe that the complete publication of the content of the letters contained in this folder is both necessary and welcomed for the history of Romanian literature, since it brings a great deal of information about moments, persons and policies of an unclear or insufficiently known period of Romanian culture.

The folder entitled *Mircea Iorgulescu* is found under accession number *Fond Marino 424*, in the *Special Collections* service of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library, and was inventoried with number Don. 9082/2001. The folder was ordered according to archival rules, the letters being numbered and organized chronologically. The folder contains 44 archival units.

In the transcription of the letters, for sake of fluency, some periodical titles, as well as some names were spelt out in square brackets. The letters were numbered, with the indication of the number of the archival unit to which it pertains. The archival units not appearing represent either the envelopes of these letters (archival units 24, 26, 29, 31), or the envelopes of letters that are not contained in this folder (archival units 42, 43, 44).

The title of the folder was decided on by Mr. Adrian Marino. On the reverse side of the folder Mr. Marino also noted:

- “1. The moral condition of the critic, Tribuna, XXX, 15, April 10, 1986.
2. The problem of biography, Tribuna, XXX, 42, October 16, 1986.”

Bucharest, March 19, 1982.

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino,

Your letter has pleased me greatly: it shows that (after all!) our deeds, as many as they are, and the way they are – despite the general indifference, disinterest, boredom, somnolence –, are received by the few people who, and I am only repeating a truth unfortunately forgotten, constitute the spirituality of a nation at a given time. This authentic echo is of my interest, why would I not admit to it; yet, the superficial “echoes” of the “fans”, fellows who applaud or swear with the same vehemence as they rapidly change their opinions, are indifferent to me. I was, I confess, enchanted by your presence in the emission I made (others weren't!). The collaboration at the radio¹ is but a substitute: I am doing there what I have been struggling for years to do at the review² that I work at (!), and where, systematically, am “pulled” on a blind siding, considered “uncomfortable”, forced in the situation of a collaborator, who is asked for “materials” to fit in a scheme thought out by others... As any “columnist”, I confess, proudly perhaps, not to the ambition to create a review, but to the ability to do it; completely, or at least partly (a certain field, for instance). But I am permanently refused this possibility at the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”. The Radio, I do not know how, thought of asking me to put out a broadcast (interestingly enough, the request came from the news editorial, not the cultural one!); and I accepted not because of too much spare time (I do not have any!), but to make, as long as I am allowed, a demonstration of veritable (sonorous!) literary journalism, on matters which are serious, elevated, even stiff. When it becomes impossible, I will give up. For the time being, however, my hands are free. How I wish to be given the task, at the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”, to edit, independently, the pages of criticism! But independence frightens; and I am beginning to be too old to change (I turn 39 in the summer – an age that scares me).

I am, Mr. Marino, among those who find in the international assertion of Romanian criticism one of our few real possibilities to truly penetrate the cultural conscience of the civilized world. Thus, your

¹ *Radio România 1.*

² *România Literară*

success, besides the high enjoyment that it gives me, means also a confirmation of this belief. I wish therefore the journey you prepare to be most fruitful; and I am waiting, on your return, for a sign. Allow me to envy you, even for the simple fact of the trip. If I say that I have never passed the “iron curtain”, you will understand! I have wished for myself for a long time, a journey of at least a few months in a German-speaking country (even the German Democratic Republic), to complete in a serious and profound environment what I have learnt by myself (for you can probably imagine what the University meant between ’61 and ’66, when I studied there); it was impossible. I sometimes meet a “colleague” of ours: literary historian, University professor, PhD, etc.: he has lived for four or five years in the Federal Republic of Germany, and he talks with nonchalance about the city Kiolo, not troubled for not even learning to at least pronounce the name of the city where he lived ... and the time passes, and I feel it is getting too late. But enough of complaints! I again thank you for the good thoughts and nice words, and I am looking forward to seeing you on your return.

Best regards
M. Iorgulescu

2. Archival Unit #2

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino,

You have caused me great pleasure, a true “Santa Claus gift” I really needed Todorov (besides the fact that I discovered with discomfort that some of the same ideas or fragments of ideas, intuitions etc., that I expressed, 5-6 years ago, in connection with Dinicu Golescu and the period between 1780-1830, from the viewpoint of a literary critic who “reads” history, I found, in a more systematic and different order, at Todorov!!!). I hope it will not be too late if I return your book around January 15 (I would like to make some detailed notes, and my time, unfortunately, is very tight). About the radio presence: I have found out that the man in Cluj is quite incompetent (euphemistically and neologistically speaking); therefore, in agreement with the editor, we have settled that when you come to Bucharest, you should sacrifice half an hour to record, and then to broadcast (I need, however, to know one day before recording). I have announced for the “R.[omânia] L.[iterară]” the intent to write about your book; I cannot say when, since the review will have, for a while, an – how should I put it?! – “event-like” aspect

I wish you a fruitful and nice '83, as was, I reckon, '82.
(I am typing to be more legible).
December 12, 1982.

M. Iorgulescu

3. *Archival Unit #3*

Bucharest, March 25, 1985.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Although I am not superstitious (or rather I am ... with measure and sense of humor!), a short time after I wrote you I laid hands (brought by a friend) on no. 2 of the review "Vatra"; since in Bucharest the publications from Romania are almost impossible to find (on the other hand, the "R.[omânia]L.[iterară]" is also rarely found), I almost gave up their systematic reading; well, and in this number of the "Vatra" I found you. On the coordinates of the ... "German Journal", so that, for a moment, I was inclined to believe in who knows what mysterious crossings of the stars on which – still! – our destinies seem to depend.

Because, as you probably do not know, in August-September 1984 I myself was in Bavaria, doing something which seemed incredible for my "colleagues": I "caught" a modest stipendium offered by the Goethe-Institut, and for two months (5 weeks, in fact), I intensively improved my precarious German learnt by myself, with dictionaries and grammar books, in the little spare time left by daily preoccupations. I stayed at about 90 kms from München, on the edge of the Chiemsee lake, alone in a small room (bed, wardrobe, table, chair, a double shelf for books, a sink), in a "studentheim", I played schoolboy, enjoying it, at 41 years of age; I also took a final "Prüfung" (though it was not compulsory, but my Balcanic side – in the sense of Cioran's Histoire et Utopie – was willing of a success of mere spiritual value), I passed it, and I must admit that, often, I remembered your "student years". Eager, informed, and stimulatingly described in the European "Journal", which you began on this occasion. Many asked me here: how come, at your age and preoccupations, that you were not ashamed to sit in a school desk along with youngsters of 22-26?! They seemed idiots to me, and I ignored their outrageous disinterest to (still) learn more, at any age. By chance, I was in Munich for the Oktoberfest, it was – do you remember? – a cold day, it was raining all week; otherwise, I wandered through all the great

museums of the capital of Bavaria, one of the most favorable -- culturally speaking -- cities that I have ever seen so far. Well, then...

The "Supplement" I have not read, but I thank you for the note. I have mostly isolated myself from the "murmur" -- faded, deadly, stupid -- of "literary life", of reviews, etc.; I am absorbed in my work on the book about Istrati (I started the whole documentation all over, because the late Al. O[prea] worked with slaves, when not forging, and the Romanian slave is still ... Romanian, that is, lazy, superficial, thief, steal from his own "master" who pays him -- the Barbu case is otherwise quite edificatory.) Hopefully I shall finish before the summer, and in the fall towards the end of the year, in October or November to be able to leave -- Das hängt...! --, again, to France (where this year a new, yearly "Cahier" appears, of 200-250 pages, as the "Cahiers" published by Gallimard, and in Germany, in Frankfurt am Main a 6 volume edition of Istrati is to start written by an expert, Heinrich Stiehler, from the University here). As you can see, I separate myself more and more from my "brethren", and for this separation, your applied, creative "model" remains the only one to follow, the only valid one. And maybe our "dialogue", started years ago seemingly by chance, syncoated as it was and is, remains the expression of a chant which shows that, still, "the thought shall win!"

Best regards,
M. Iorgulescu

4. Archival Unit #4

Bucharest, December 26, 1985

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino,

I have noticed quite surprised that I have not sent you my volume, published this fall, "Prezent": I was certain that I mailed it at the beginning of October! But, still, it did not happen. I was preparing then for a trip to the Federal Germany; and as the book was printed in Galați, I only had the presentation copies, and I started to send some, but in a great flurry (I presume you know the phenomenon!), so that, on my return, I did not know to whom I sent. Well! I hope you will not mind this lateness: I am also mailing a copy today.

I read, not regularly, because I cannot always manage to get hold of it, the review "Tribuna", and your articles in it, when there are any. Even if sometimes I do not agree to their letter (the "bad" notes -- not

unjustified! – about E. Simion), I always agree to the spirit that emanates from these notes. Unfortunately, in the context they mark a rather robinsonian position; they are notional, not metaphoric, exact, not figurative, competent, not “artistic”, rigorous, not “literary” – and so on. This is what constitutes, I dare say, their profound Europeanism; but, as uncle Iancu¹ says: “I don’t want, honorable Sir, to know about your Europe...”: this is the slogan of the notional literate, whether he is a poet, a prose writer, a critic ... I admire you, and in my way (otherwise, I have considerably withdrawn from journalism for about two years) I sustain the same orientation – which cannot be expressed, I think, “monolithically”, but on the contrary, only through a convergent plurality.

I wish you a good year, in which your desires come true, and, if possible, even more! And again Caragiale’s words, this time seriously: Be healthy and cheerful!

With constant friendship,
M. Iorgulescu

5. Archival Unit #5

Bucharest, January 11, 1986.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Thank you for your intention to write about the “Prezent”, although I did not send you the book thinking of such a possibility, but simply as a sign of the existence of certain ... intellectual feelings. I myself being a critic, though more and more rarely, almost not at all for a year; still! as much as I am present in journalism, I allow myself the luxury of not sending books in order to be criticized; I, for instance, have not sent any books to the “Orizont”, the “Convorbiri literare”, the “Cronica”, nor to the “Luceafărul”, or the “Săptămâna”, the “Supliment”, the “Argeș”, the “Tomis”, the “Astra”, the “Transilvania” u.s.w.! Not for conceit, God forbid! Nevertheless, I am convinced you understand, without excess of explanations...

And I must admit that I am very curious about your reading, even more so because the volume, apparently heterogeneous (a moderately “semiotizing” essay about Camil Petrescu, not as much in terminology, as in spirit, three texts, each of a different structure, on

¹ A character in I.L. Caragiale’s works; also referring to Caragiale himself.

Istrati – it is of my duty to tell you that the third, “Fiul cărții” (The Son of the Book), is in fact a chapter of the monograph in progress, the first volume of which was already handed to the Minerva press, and waits and waits ... for the visa of censorship which does not exist! – some “portraits”, where the characters are, as it is, at least three authors who are to you, literary speaking, anti-political – not without a cause, I believe! – , then serials about different books [even about D. Popescu, under a – how should I put it? – premonitory title, since it was written several years ago!!!], a certain reconsideration of a Lovinescu text in the “Maiorescu-line”, etc., etc.), despite this variety, it still has – for me at least! – a background unity. Now, since you have told me your intentions, I am waiting with ... thrill, well, we all are (also) authors! Even the harshest critic cannot help having, however small, a heart of an author!

Oh, but all these things are for other times.

I have read your text in the first number of the Tribuna, and I agree, with a few small reservations. The main reservation, if not the only!, concerns the harshness of the attack against the columnist of the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”. I believe that things here should be nuanced; he, this columnist, does what he knows and what he can; worse is something else: that he is ensured, artificially, a privileged place to the detriment of other opinions and critics. For example: if he writes about a book, a further opinion may be expressed only after 2-4 months – and in the “confront pages”; on the other hand, he may take up whenever he wants any book that has been commented in book reviews! Then: he is the only one present number by number and always in the same place, while others, whoever, are a sort of “libero”, as in soccer: they publish once in two or three weeks, here or there, without a stable place and period. And there are even more, quite enough. Thus, by decree, he is projected in the number one position, maintained, supported, well, a whole mechanism. For years on end was I proposing to the honorable leadership (G.Iv.[așcu]) to equally divide the pages 8-9 between three critics, in conditions of identical freedom of selection and opinion – but he obstinately refused. Maybe you know why – because for me he did not offer any explanation. Otherwise it is interesting to observe who holds book review columns at the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”: there is the placid and amorphous L. Ulici (during more than a decade he has not launched anyone, although, thank God! he had the opportunity; he has not done any act of opposition – a muddy swamp!, then there is Ș. Cioculescu (already part of the series of “phenomena”), then Z. Ornea (who does useful things) – and that’s about it! I think it is endlessly little compared

to the real possibilities of the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”, even in the worst of circumstances! A dozen of Manu, Bărbulescu, Podgoreanu, Tuchilă, Zalis, Mancaș, Adr.[iana] Iliescu, Tacciu, etc., etc. are deliberately maintained. Just to have “criticism” without a critical spirit, in the best spirit of the age of imitation, of replacements ...

But, enough of this!

With my best thoughts,
M. Iorgulescu

6. Archival Unit #6

Bucharest, January 16, 1986.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Our letters are practically “crossing”: two days after I mailed what I considered my answer to an answer of yours, I received ... your real answer! But let me be methodical.

About your position: although it is (it seems to be) a “robinsonian” one, as I said, I am convinced that this is the direction to follow. Between a so-called aggressive traditionalism (in fact, an oddly super-self-satisfied situation on the positions of an equally stupid and noxious isolationism and backwardness) and a touching avant-gardism, with dental prosthesis and make-up of the “Arta populară” (Folk art) type, the situation of those who fight as much as they can against the lack of authenticity, against mimetism, sufficiency, foolishness, idiocracy, etc., is the most exposed. More and more, I have the impression that the dissolving vein, so specific – and just as specifically disguised in a sort of decency which hides a huge potential of atrocity – manifests itself in the content of both, what should I call them?!, “tendencies”. That is why I detest them – consciously and instinctively.

About E.[ugen] S.[imion]: good Lord, it didn’t even cross my mind to dispute any of your observations; not only is it inadherent, but also impermeable to the German spirit, and even, I dare say, to the concrete life in G.[ermany].

You say that you enjoyed my “impressions” from Frankfurt/Main; in fact, I did not mean to transcribe my “impressions”, for several reasons, among which the one that I lack the “innocence” – on the one hand – for being interested in the essence of that world (or, in the

plural, in its essences), and I do not feel able (at least for the time being) to experiment with a “spiritual portrait”. So, first and foremost out of professional scruple (which E.[ugen]S.[imion] did not have – this is where the “troubles” come from). I reckoned that it would be too superficial to express myself after 20 days of stay in a country (and for a man of culture this “country” means an enormous spiritual “space”) the language of which I only master at an elementary level. Oh, should I refer to contacts, discussions, and people? Yes – but I spoke with publishers (and to describe how a Western publisher works is, isn’t it?!, to go round in circles...), with writers, gazetteers (I visited – they saw I was interested – an editorial office and a printing press) – and I find it really impossible to reproduce all these discussions. Should I sum up books, reviews? Others may do it better. Should I describe streets, people, small (and so significant!) happenings of a day? Here all this would be read from a different perspective, for now at least.

And “literature” – I do not feel like doing it.

About the way I wrote about Al. Piru – about whom, I have to say, I do care, however unbelievable it may seem, because he is a man of letters –, it is quite probable that I overstepped the line. Anyway, I regret it up to a point; although Al. P.[iru] allowed and covered, having the chance not to do it, the ascension of I.D. Bălan, of Ungheanu (PhD!!!, “made” by Piru) and of so many other dangerous nullities about whom he said the truth in the café and then again, officially supported them. Now he is also one of the permanent “targets” of the death team at the “Luceafărul”, where they talk about the “dogmatism of value”, and that N. Dragoș is the author of the best verse volume of '85!!! I was not mean but unfair with Al. Piru; but, at least, I was consistent, and have the excuse that I did it because he had disappointed me (as early as 1961, the first year of the University. I was coming, at the age of 18, elated by the idea that I was going to meet the man who had suffered, who had been close to Călinescu, etc. – and I met a person who wanted nothing else than to be picturesque and liked by ... girls, my female colleagues, generally being some poor geese). I was certainly naïve, but do I pretend too much if, even today, I believe that the man of letters has to be on the height of his role, even if society does not recognize him? Why did Al. Piru accept to supervise the dissertation of Ungheanu? Why, at the department, did he smooth the way for many idiots by birth (the type like Eugen Marinescu, have you heard?) Out of adversity against Manolescu (who, whatever we may think about him, unfairly remained a simple senior lecturer, when the professors are stutterers like Păcuraru

and cretins like I.D.B.[ălan])? Poor reason! There is still a lot to say – and, in this context, the memory of the moment when, at the Conference in '81, A. Marino rushed out to the pulpit to oppose the candidate-ship of M. Beniuc, is still vivid in my mind – a high and bright memory. How should I not (forgive my sentimentalism) care for A. M.?!

M. Iorgulescu

7. Archival Unit #7

Bucharest, March 2, 1986.

Dear Mr. Marino,

You are certainly right when you refer to the difficulties that any intellectual has to face who wants to be no more, but also no less than that: an intellectual. It still seems to me sometimes that no serious discussion of this matter has ever taken place in our culture – look how I stumble in euphemisms! More directly and brutally: if today, for reasons well known, a public debate is almost impossible to imagine, I still wonder on the basis of rumors heard here and there, in collegial conversations, etc..., whether the present impossibility of such a discussion might have what may be called “historical roots”... In other words, I am afraid that it is a procedure easily explained, which only blames the conditions of the moment; for myself, I do not believe that it is all about a fault, or that everything is the product of the post-war period. To cut the knot: I am convinced that here, in this region, to become, to be and to remain an intellectual has always been an act of heroism. Madness, almost. Research from this perspective of the last two centuries of Romanian culture, in fact of the modern Romanian culture, would probably be exciting. The absence of a tradition of superior intellectual life (God forgive me, but our deacons and abbots, recently elevated to the rank of representatives of the ... Renaissance!!! do not constitute such a tradition), the absence of an elementary and collective sentiment of respect of institutions in general (and in particular cultural ones), a natural absence in the case of populations with a constant ancillary status. After all, the absence of a moral culture, regardless of the ways it might have developed (for example: religious), all these couldn't have had any other effect than the one well known. The cause, therefore, should not be mixed up with the circumstances; the effects are, of course, in some cases visible, in others dim; but I see continuity where others see

rupture, and consequently idealize one moment or other, usually distant in time, and thus “smoked”, opaque, and, for many people, impossible to control with documents. I would not list dates, names, events; I am convinced that you can always “fill in” such an idea with the necessary documentary “flesh”. After all, to restrict all this, why should I require dignity from any of today’s authors, with a socio-professional status in the breath of any breeze, when the sad example of so many “masters”, from M. Sad.[oveanu], T. Argh.[ezi], and G. Căl.[inescu] to L. Blaga (indeed, L. Blaga) shows us how precarious the fiber is?! So much so, that the few colleagues (still, not just a few!) of ours who keep up with their role seem to be a miracle. For, here, only miracles are possible... I should write a book about Romanian writers non-verisimilar as Romanian writers!

With best thoughts,
M. Iorgulescu

8. *Archival Unit #8*¹

Bucharest, April 15, 1986.

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino,

I have replied one week late to your letter on March 18, which arrived as late as 2-3 years ago a letter from Paris to Bucharest. Well, the effects of modernization! I only heard yesterday that soon, at least in Bucharest, the number of postmen will be reduced by around 50%; we shall see speed then! Let’s hope they will reach the truly revolutionary idea that we should pick up our mail ourselves from the post office.. Coming back: I have not answered your remarks about the privileged treatment of the “columnist”, not because I found them imprecise, but because it seems to me that there is more to it. I cannot specify though what exactly, and of what nature; anyway, the director protects him as if he would be, how should I say it?!, his heir; one of the partial explanations could be, I believe, the following: to sustain a man permanently threatened constitutes a sort of alibi for posterity. Sure, they would say, he made compromises, concessions, etc., but he “kept” X.

¹ On the last page of the letter, there is a note by Adrian Marino, written in red ink: “(“Condiția morală a criticului” (The Moral Condition of the Critic), *Tribuna*, 15/April 10, '86.)”

there is a certain logic here, or more precisely a certain mentality; among others, Z. Stancu had it also, whose “generosity” (money, acceptance in the US, etc.) was to morally compensate a lamentable chameleonism. It is a “school” which, I think, certain people who have had an important public role in the Romanian culture and literature of the past 40 years have very well appropriated. For the time being though, whether by the implacable effect of biology, or of social politics, we assist – for me, with an inexhaustible curiosity – in the transfer from this mentality (conduct, etc.) to another one: more obtuse, if not directly narrow-minded, with rudimentary shrewdness, of a vaguely peasant sort, but a peasantry passed through the suburbs, almost boorish. It is amazing – for the one who does not have a clear understanding of the history of Romanian culture and civilization – how it was achieved, that in an extremely short time everything (or almost everything) was cleared that was “planted” after 1860 (I mean the Romanian Kingdom; in the case of Transylvania the destructuring of the specific cultural customs began, I think, after 1920). The speed of the demolition is the best proof that it was but a superficial stratum, just gilding. Certainly, it is probable that I am not 100% right; but those few percents of error, should I not say exceptions, would hardly confirm that I am wrong. Hence the lack of moral models, hence the invention of false models, and I was happy to discover in you, once again, a spirit hostile to any idolatry, that is, just and critical. I was referring to Blaga; and I remember an incident I had with a couple of architects 4-6 years ago, who knew from the deplorable memoirs and idealizing prose that he was, was he not, a “hero of intellectual resistance”. Then, without saying anything, I read to them fragments from L. B.[laga]’s journal articles from “our years”. They reacted in good faith, all of them declaring at my question “Who is the author?”, that it cannot be other than some Corneliu Vadim Tudor. When I showed them the cover of the book (the shameful texts had been collected in a volume!), they were perplexed!

You speak, dramatically and movingly, about your experience; as much as you can. From the press of the time (read between the lines), from fragmentary testimonies, I have been trying to create an idea about the reaction of those who, then, at the beginning of the “new history”, were capable at least to record the events. And, so, I got an idea: what if, perhaps, we would propose to create a book of “dialogues”? In the end, why should only Paul Georgescu’s hammed (nevertheless, intelligent) testimony remain?! Maybe in a year or two it may even be published... maybe, when you come to Bucharest, we may visit Bălăiță at the

C.[artea] R.[omânească] publisher, and put forward our proposal. I think it would make a nice and useful book, which might have, why not?, a certain international career, since it would transform, willingly or not, into a book about Romanian culture and literature, freely thought and written, distanced from all the slogans and ineptitudes. You have a lot to say, and maybe this modality would be convenient...

I read the review on the "Prezent". The author in me is delighted – by the attention, by the understanding, by the characterizations. This author thanks you, and not as a simple protocol formality. In a future letter, he will try yet something else: to explain certain options, not on the level of names, but of ideas.

Soon, therefore,

M. Iorgulescu

9. *Archival Units #9-11*

Bucharest, June 26, 1986

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino,

It may well be a month since, enervated by personal, but also general matters, both equally unpleasant, I stopped the line of letters to you, hoping that in a few week's time I will recover. But I do not like to complain, and, on the other hand, I too suffer occasionally from the "boredom syndrome". As the clearer days failed to appear, and the past ones gave me a vague sensation of culpability, or rather of impoliteness, those few weeks turned into more. I was waiting now for my book on Istrati (the first part) to finally "come out", which had been waiting, "printable" since the beginning of May (!), apparently for Mr. Godot: come or go, but do something, for God's sake ...

Still, certain circumstances of literary life (I know you detest both the concept and the reality it denotes) force me to step out, somewhat unexpectedly, from a penitence-silence.

As you probably know, I wrote in the "R.[omânia]L.[iterară]" on June 19 about Cornel Ungureanu's book, "Proza românească de azi" (Romanian Prose Today). I should have said, "I also wrote", but at that time I had no idea of your article; the "Tribuna" reaches to Bucharest with difficulties, and it is hard to get hold of it. Only yesterday, one week after my review had appeared, did somebody bring me the review – and I read your presentation. I will not hide, as a hypocrite, that I was amazed. Not necessarily because our opinions were (are) completely divergent;

but, first and foremost, because – I allow myself to say it openly – I felt that a man of good faith (You) lets himself be deceived by an artful intriguer. No way will I appeal to “details” of literary life; I pick out the arguments only from the book, from its confusing, and at the same time perfectly oriented “texture”. I leave aside what I noted in my review, and I pass directly to what I could not say.

How do you mean that C. Ungureanu does not observe “relations”?! That is exactly what he is doing, all he is doing. He does it when he says about those who were in prison that “they were not angels” (a typical expression, is it not?), and thus justifies their imprisonment; and when he states the nonsense about V. Voiculescu that he had the “chance” (!!!) to prove his “moral valor” by going to prison; and when he destroys the “Stancu myth” (as a former director of a good memory, he had to be destroyed); and when he constructs the new “myth”, of the new one (=the present one) seated on Stancu’s chair, stating that everything he wrote is faultless; he does it when he throws the unfulfilled V. Rebreanu (then why not Alecu Ivan Ghilie also, whose “Cuscri” (The In-laws) is just the equal of the “Corei” (To Cora) in the “heroic” generation of the ‘60s (which includes Lăncrănjan, but Săraru as well – who came out in prose in 1974, and yet C.U. said – in the foreword – that he only deals with authors who debuted before 1965.) Let me add the silent overtaking of ideas and formulas. An example: E. Simion, in the afterword of the second volume of the “Scriitori...” (Writers...) says that he had wanted to entitle the book “Amurgul idoliilor” (The Dusk of Idols), but he gave up, as it sounded too rhetorical. C. U. does not give up, discreetly picks up the discard, and modifies it lightly into... “Amurgul zeilor” (The Dusk of Gods). More about the incognito, M. Sorescu had written a review with the (soccer-like) title “Un roman intrat în prelungiri” (A Novel with Extensions). C.U. himself uses this formula (with extensions), but with no quotation marks. And there is still more to it. The irony of Bogza has a “substratum”, just like the laudations in the case of Bălăiță (no reserve), or Țoiu (I quoted the phrase “the sacrifice of gratitude”). The idea with the European East is, God forgive me, a nonsense. The Romanian writer whether right or wrong, but this is the way it is – does not read Bulatovič to get informed, but reads Borges; does not read Kundera (I like him, but that’s different), but reads Bellow, does not read I don’t know what Bulgarian (translated by mutual consent), but reads Boris Vian. I do not want to refer to E. Simion by all means, but the second volume of the “Scriitori ...” (Writers...), compared to C.U.’s patchwork shows very well all kinds of things: that you cannot write about post-war

prose without M. Eliade, I.M. Sadoveanu, Vinea, and others. Where is Radu Tudoran (more important as a professional novel writer than V. Rebreanu, I. Lăncrăjan, and others...)?

It is – I permit myself to say it out openly in these confidential lines – a “gang book”. A gang lacking amplitude, ratty, of the M. I. Jacoban, and A. Dumbrăveanu type (C.U.’s “boss”, who is assistant secretary of the Association in T.[imișoara], and traveled more abroad on Union money than you and me together). The proof you will have because, it seems, my review has greatly “troubled” the “new gods” who started (they will launch it) a pseudo-press campaign in the serving publications: of “defending” C.U. and (probably) “teaching me a lesson”. I hope that – at least then – you will have the conviction that it is a “sect” much more deleterious than any other known.

Otherwise, I am also curious what will happen. It looks like I “hit” a very sensitive spot without realizing it. How sensitive?! I will know it after the proportion of the staged “echoes”. It is interesting again that in the “Contemporanul”, while not taking any stand on the attacks in the “Săptămâna” and “Lucefărul” against so many genuine writers and critics (with or without defects, but genuine), but, what’s more, entrusting a column to A. Silvestri, the second day after my review came out, a note was printed and thrown in the page about the work of C.U., which read “...the first volume of the ample and prestigious study that he successfully undertakes ...”; that is to say, it has hardly come out, but it is already “prestigious” and “successful”!

So this is why I was amazed by the moral endorsement that you gave him (is it not significant that in the case of Buzura he only “analyzes” and “presents” in detail Buzura’s worst novel, the “Orgoliu (Pride)?!”)

As far as I am concerned, I say with a certain sense of humor “I am waiting for the country!” – referring to my review’s controlled “echoes”!

With constant respect
M. Iorgulescu

10. Archival Unit # 12

Bucharest, July 11, 1986.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Unforeseen meetings, what a curious thing in this world! While I was writing to you, maybe somewhat too “aggressively” (in tone only!) about the “contexts” of my review on Cornel Ungureanu’s book, you write to me about the “Caietele critice”!

I am certainly waiting – I cannot wait! – for our collaboration; this, as the co-tutor of the “Caiete”, is a great honor to me. So – send what and as much as you think right: I understand the reasons why you prefer “critical literature”. I am waiting.

On the other topic of our “dialogue” – the intermittence of which, I believe, reflects something of the arrhythmia of time – you have probably seen that the “Săptămâna” took the defense of Ungureanu!

I finally have the copy of the book on Istrati; the columnist from the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]” was quick to review it, willingly, but somehow superficially (this is where the reproach of “abhorrence” comes from: he does not have a “smell” for serious things, that one cannot write about, still, without getting involved!). I hope to get some copies in a few days (the book was printed in Bacău, and it takes patience to wait till it arrives in Bucharest!), and be able to send you.

Otherwise – it seems that I have become the focus target of the attacks in the “Săptămâna”, “Luceafărul”, etc., and it keeps my spirits high: it means I am not just anybody, am I, since everybody is concerned with me.

With best regards,
M. Iorgulescu

11. Archival Units #13-14

July 22, 1986
Bucharest

Dear Mr. Marino,

I am mailing today the book on Istrati; I will not deny that your impressions, shared in whatever way, are of my highest interest.

About the offer made for the “Caiete”, I have written already: I am waiting for the text.

On the “Ungureanu-matter”, what shall I say? Our positions are what they are, and as long as we are both assured of each other’s good faith, it is very well; we (not the two of us!), we, around here, are not accustomed to respect opinions opposing ours. Therefore, I consider the “matter” closed, meaning that we both remain with our opinion – and an extension of the discussion would give too much attention to the “object”, which I consider insignificant (forgive my insistence, which is nothing else, in fact, than consistency).

I am convinced, otherwise, that the great problem of the moment (problem, without quotations marks) is what I would call a homogenization of mediocrity. Find A. Dumbrăveanu published in the BPT [“Biblioteca pentru toți” Everybody’s Library] (where Baconsky, Dimov, Blandiana, Mălăncioiu haven’t reached yet), see VC Tudor published soon in the “Cele mai frumoase poezii” (The Most Beautiful Poems), and see, also published in the BPT soon ... Ion Crînguleanu! Unfortunately, instead of dealing with something else, criticism will be forced to confront with the “black tide” of impostors and ambitious climbers, of mediocrity and “flatness” – for, if it does not, it will disappear. And if it does confront, it will exhaust its energies, which could be better used in (genuine) “syntheses”: an equation with solutions: lost...

Yet, I may be too skeptical. I remember the words of M. Eliade, who asked for the “accomplishment of the work”, but, at the same time, I read in the “Lucașfăruș” that Ion Lăncrăjan is the follower of Blaga and M. Eliade... You may say that Lăncrăjan passes, Blaga and Eliade remain; it is so; but what if he does not pass?! What if in 20 years’ time whatever today may seem an enormity will be taken as normal?! Are we ourselves not working for the future, as well?!

Questions. Useless?

M. Iorgulescu

12. Archival Unit #15

Bucharest, September 11, 1986

Dear Mr. Marino,

Although I myself have received, read, edited, and followed the kind article of Andrei Corbea, although ... well, in short, I knew about

your anniversary, certain personal circumstances hindered me to be promptly ceremonious. I wish you, therefore, with a lateness that will hopefully have its wits, “Many happy returns!” and “Many happy books!”. The interview in the “Tribuna” is excellent, I hurry to say (I will review it in a comment in the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]”).

Allow me please to congratulate and embrace you from a distance, but with affective and intellectual closeness.

M. Iorgulescu

13. Archival Unit #16

Bucharest, October 23, 1986.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Only today have I managed to get – by borrowing! – a copy of the “Tribuna”; I am unaware whether you know that in Bucharest, it seems, 10 copies arrive at most!

I read your article, so precise and warm at the same time, “with bated breath”, as they say, as soon as I laid my hands on the review, on a street corner. Fortunately, it was not raining. What should I say? The author thanks you and considers himself flattered that his effort did not pass unnoticed. He also adds that, morally, your article came in a moment in which, although used to a certain “criticism”, he was affected (he shouldn’t have been, given his direct and literary experience; yet, he was) by the stupidity and violence of a legionary-like attack published in the “Luceafărul”. Generally speaking, he had the impression that his volume found a good part of the “worthy” criticism unprepared; your observation about somebody’s abhorrence: it seemed, for this reason, more than just “teaching me a lesson”.

The author was especially flattered by the appreciation of his effort for documentation, being himself aware of the incompleteness of the information; unfortunately, as P. Istrati was passed as “political cases”, the few files probably existing about his youth were just as thoroughly sealed as the ones about his later period, which cannot be consulted. An example: there is a “P.I. file”, made by the “Security”; Al. Oprea claims to have seen it, even gave its location number, but did not completely describe it, and only published fragments about the two short journeys that P.I. made to Romania in 1925 and 1929; yet, there is nothing about the period after 1930, when he settled down in Romania! Is

that not mystification?! It is; but I, who do not have the “qualities” of Al. O.[prea], cannot find the source! I have been trying for two years, in different ways – in vain. I was also pleased about the remark regarding the “non-classical” nature of the book; it was premeditated. And, finally yet importantly, the statements about Istrati are important – I will quote them in the second volume. To conclude, I will only confess this much: your article was striking, in a difficult moment. It would be childish and conventional just to thank you; thus I only limit myself to tell you that, even though an exception, the natural still exists, urging us to have courage.

With best regards,
M. Iorgulescu

14. Archival Unit #17

Bucharest, October 2, 1988.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I received, read and gave for printing the new presences¹, for which I thank you (and we thank you). We are certainly waiting for others as well, but also – if you have the time – for articles (essays) for the criticism pages. For instance: wouldn't you be interested to plead for the essay as a literary form in ascension, modern *par excellence*, capable of better representing us abroad (you have already done it in a way or other, but a return would not hurt now, I presume. Anyway, the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]” is waiting for you!) As for the “Marea trăncăneală” (The Great Prattle) (which is not a “Caragian” syntagm, but, let's say, “Iorgulescian”): the title of the book (booklet) was deleted, only the subtitle was left (“Eseu despre lumea lui Caragiale” An Essay on Caragiale's World), and the lack of paper has postponed its publication for more than a month and a half (it is “printable” since August). The circulation is confidential, so it will not be found in bookshops – Uncle Iancu (i.e. Caragiale) would have deserved more. But let us patiently wait for the events, shall we?

Yours steadily, M. Iorgulescu

¹ “Romanian Presences” – a heading of the *România Literară*, containing short informative articles on Romanian literary activity abroad.

October 26, 1988.
Bucharest

Dear Mr. Marino,

I understood you were upset by the “<<Minimum>> incident” – I myself was, at this instant, shocked by the stupidity of the “forums”, or at least those who represent them.

I will try to have a discussion with some of them; but privately. Even if in the making of the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]” I am part of those who actually elaborate the review, in reality I am a sort of slave, since even in the case of my own texts I cannot treat with the “forums” otherwise than the author, and never as “editor”. To be able to discuss “officially”, you have to be “institutionalized”, “mandated”, or in a less gobbledygook way, to have a “function”; and “institutionalized” here are only [Ion] Horia and Roger [Câmpeanu]. Of course, in the case of the content etc., I can (and I succeed to) convince them of what is best in a way or other; but I cannot (and I do not succeed to) “inspire” them how to treat the “forums”.

A great mess, nothing more to say!

You will find the book attached. The title, as I said, and as you can see, was erased. On the other hand, I am afraid that the attempt to describe the spirit of a world will not be understood, due to a characteristic shortsightedness of our commentators. A first echo would be the finding that I do not use ... “the new methods”! A stupidity. Is this a problem? You will certainly notice that I quote Unamuno; well, nobody reproached him for not using any kind of “method” when trying to describe the Spanish spirit through Don Quixote (Marius Chicoș Rostogan also had an obsession with “the method”!) I hope you will see the real objective of my essay about “Caragiale’s world” (and not “Caragiale’s work”!).

With the same best regards,
M. Iorgulescu

Bucharest, November 16, 1988.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Thank you for the confirmation of receiving the book. And for the other lines as well. They come in an appropriate time, of an inner reflux. Two days ago, I was announced that the second part of an interview for the "Tomis" (the first part of which appeared in October) would not be published any more. This, among other things. The deal, flattening pressure. Yes, you are right: I am (we are) provincial, disideologized (from this point of view we probably are at the top not only in Europe, but also in the whole world), "esthetizing" in an ostrich like manner. Yet, I know very well (no matter whether and how you will write) that you are one of the few who will understand my essay, a desperate, bitter (Cioran's "tragic irony"; in fact, in attitude, isn't Cioran in the "Caragiale-line" himself – I mean Caragiale's journalism?) radiographic description of a spirit, of a "world" very coherent, very resistant, very immovable. It is not, I have not "criticized" in the current sense of the word; but is criticism still possible at all?!

I am obsessed with a sentence (an affirmation) of Kundera: "everything will be forgotten, and nothing will be repaired".

Will it?!

With love,
M. Iorgulescu

P.S. Your letter seems to have arrived from (or via) the Moon: it is dated 31.10.1988 in Cluj and 14.11.1988 in Bucharest. 55 years ago, Istrati received a letter from Holland in Brăila in 2 days ... O, tempore ... !

M. Iorgulescu

Bucharest, December 6, 1988

Dear Mr. Marino,

Your letter sent to the editor's office arrived somewhat sooner, but still with an abnormal lateness; or, maybe, this is a new normality – and I have not heard of it yet. Whichever way, it is all the same whether you send it to my home address or to the address of the review; for sake of convenience, though, I would prefer that you write to my home address.

The “Prezența” (Presence) has come out (the one about the “francophonía”). I do not think you are totally right: as far as you are concerned, your “presence” really is a presence, true, substantial, incontestable (only fools and malevolent people allow themselves to ignore it, but what would we do if we took them seriously?). There are, of course, pseudo-presences as well in the column of the “R.[omânia]L.[iterară]” (yes, the rule of helter-skelter), and the unaware, innocent reader may easily mistake them. I have been dreaming for years to do a review not justiciary, but honest, only honest ... and I begin to feel that my dream is getting tired, too. Because the mixture is cultivated not just out of stupidity, but out of wicked stupidity, shrewd imbecility, artful foolishness. Oh, how well I know it! You are right about heroism, which really is here, and not somewhere else. I know, still, that it should be nuanced etc., but in certain situations the line of demarcation becomes brutally clear. And, may the good Lord forgive me, what hole in the sky (in the sky of Europe, in the sky of universality) have our “oilleurs” colleagues made?! In literary theory, you are the only Romanian who matters; in the Italian context Mincu, whatever he is like (and he is of many kinds, insolent, unkind, etc.), has still done honorable things; whatever you may think about Sorescu-the man, he is the only Romanian poet somewhat known here and there. And there are only a few, very few names to quote in this respect – of the heroism here. Mincu has problems, Sorescu cannot publish the play “Vărul Shakespeare” (Cousin Shakespeare), and your interview is drawn out from the “Steaua”. Just for consolation (!), I have to say that the last victim of ... of ... is I.L. Caragiale, a performance of the *O scrisoare pierdută* (The Lost Letter) at the National Theater of Craiova was, simply, prohibited. What an illustrious company!

Mr. Marino, it is useless for me to assure you of my feelings for you, you know them, I have publicly expressed them so many times. Something else is important: that now, in such a confused and difficult moment, we both try to resist degradation, declaration, waste, sinking, homogenization, amorphization. It is an essential point, solidarity with destiny – which will be – of a culture, which cannot be reduced to a miserable kitsch, no matter how much some would strive for it. I feel close to you. It is a great thing.

With the same feelings,
M. Iorgulescu

18. Archival Unit #21¹

Bucharest, January 27, 1989

Dear Mr. Marino,

It is not out of impoliteness or some other similar reasons that I have not written you for such a long time: since January 6, I have been hospitalized, had another operation, followed by some annoying complications ... and thus it happens that I am writing to you from ward 401 of the Emergency Hospital, where I have no idea how long I am going to stay. Luckily, still (“luckily” – in an absurd sequence of ill-luck), I am alone. For a couple of days I have been able to get up more often and for a longer time from bed, I have started reading again, and, as you can see, I am even writing (letters). I cannot manage, unfortunately, to adapt to the situation, I cannot play “sick-psychology”, I feel (=I think) healthy, even if, for the time being, quite exhausted; the same way as I cannot play, on a wider plan, “victim-psychology”.

All my correspondence is being brought from home, and I was very glad that you sent me your text on Zarifopol – I have read it with an enormous intellectual pleasure (I underline: “intellectual”, since I would not like you to suspect me of hyper-affectivity provoked by my temporary, and so enervating, new hospitalization!) Yes, Z. was an “ideologist” (= a man of ideas), a Romanian-European, a true patriot (and how necessary and sharp your observation is, that he is neither “protochronist”, nor “nationalist” – I congratulate you for the courage to

¹ On the first page, in red ink, Mr. Marino wrote the following note: “[arrived Febr. 7, ‘89] 10 days...”

have said it). Mr. Marino, the text on Zarifopol has done me good. And maybe, one day, we may not only be the *franc-tireurs* of a cause that so many others of our “guild-colleagues” are comfortably ignoring.

With best thoughts,
M. Iorgulescu

P.S. If you have not posted the “presences” yet, please mail them to the address of the editorial office, with the name of Roger Câmpeanu (or G. Dimisianu): I am “on the touch-line”.

M.I.

19. Archival Unit #22

Bucharest, February 20, 1989.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Congratulations, once more, for the “Japanese” presence, and for the interview occasioned by the event: unfortunately, I think, neither the “saddle” nor the “horse” are receptive, no matter how insistent, how significant the “beating” is¹. It looks like in our cultural region (or, rather, “cultural”, quotation marks are often compulsory!), “militantism”, “dynamism”, “innovation” etc. are terms which denote exactly ... their opposite. By the way, I increasingly feel the need of a specialization in ... linguistics, as the alterations, declassifications, degradations reveal themselves on the level of language in such a devastating, nightmarish way that, perhaps, we should start to re-integrate the problems of language into culture, after those years in which the problems of culture, following a direction that I will not discuss now, were attached to the trailer of linguistics (and of linguists). And our linguists (as many as they are left) behave exactly like the literates that you refer to in the end of your article about my book: they are not “impressionists”, they are “scholars” (no big difference, in fact), in other words, not implicated. Morality+ideology: their absence from our present culture is felt, I think, on all levels.

For this reason have I liked your article on the Essay: the engaging (and solidary) situating on the authentic coordinates of my

¹ Allusion to the proverb “*Bate șaua să priceapă iapa*” (“*He who cannot beat the horse beats the saddle*”).

attempt. Now, finally, it is time I gave you some details about the “undergrounds” of my booklet. You should know that, despite the absence of references, it is based on a huge documentation, not only historical or literary-historical, but also involving several works from various disciplines, from political science to ... logopaedia (the 10-20 lines of the final chapter about the bad quality of speech in Caragiale). The time has at its basis the study of a pile of strictly specialist works, its only “visible” witness being my file at the Medical Library in Bucharest (I have such a thing). As for the “Any coincidence...” formula, excellently found, it admirably resumes the precautions in the preface, the excess of which, intentionally, is not destined to persuade, but to arouse suspicion of an attentive reader, of course.

I thank you again, and let us hope that sometime we will leave ... Caragiale's world!

With best regards,

M. Iorgulescu

20. *Archival Unit #23*

February 28, 1991

Dear Mr. Marino,

I received your letter, in which you announced me that you would be in Munich until January 25, only on February 2 – a date when otherwise, the (French) post brought me a considerable pile of Christmas-cards (!) from Romania, being interesting enough that they were not sent from the same city (they were from Bucharest, Oradea, Cluj, and Ploiești), thus the (Romanian) post (still) remembers once in a while that it used to be (is?) a branch, or at least an auxiliary body of the Security

The event irritated me to such an extent that I could not answer you right away. I had the feeling, acutely renewed, that the “guys” are again interfering with my life (the feeling that, back in '89, made me unable to return to Romania, I was overwhelmed with disgust). Fortunately, I have a good radio lately, with which I can “catch” here, in Paris, the “Free Europe”, the “BBC”, and the “Voice of America”. I believe your letters, and I have, once more, the feeling that I have had for years about you: that you are a Robinson in a miserable world. The third number of the review “Apostrof” (to which I dedicated a whole emission on the BBC, on March 4) brought me the pleasure to read your interview – and how should I not vibrate at the fundamental observation, referring

to the autochthonous intellectual's (a notion often identified with that of literate!) lack of interest for ideology. For almost two years, since I have been living in France, I am humiliated (I am a Romanian, after all!) by the quasi-nullity of Romanian contribution to the study, analysis, and understanding of the totalitarian phenomenon of the East – although, thanks God!, totalitarianism has reached in the back-bone of Romanians. “Exile” isn't any better, either.

The confusing spectacle that Romania lives today is not independent, I think, from this life in the region of under-intellectuality. None of the phenomena is original, we find similar manifestations everywhere, from Warsaw to Prague and Budapest; but in our case, they are central, while elsewhere they are peripheral. Moreover, there is our specific instigation, though on the background of an instability that leads to the appearance of a new type of violence – violence with a variable geometry. The “România Mare” phenomenon¹ is, unfortunately, characteristic, “representative”, and exponential. I imagine how difficult it is for you to resist.

I am waiting for you in Paris,
M. Iorgulescu

21. Archival Unit #25

August 1, 1991.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I thank you for the book and what you wrote: it truly is a miracle that it appeared, but, on the other hand, it is very good that it appeared now. The Romanian world, now a world without codes/guiding/norms, has lost its sense (and respect) for values; and even sadder it is that, one could say, it does not feel their need/absence. Your book is among those which keeps up a culture and oxygenates the spirit. I hope I can comment it on the RFE (Radio Free Europe); otherwise, in spite of the journalist “program” into which I have frenetically harnessed myself, I have imposed an exercise of maintaining intellectual vigor, to read at least two books each week. Otherwise ...

It seems that a private publisher in Bucharest will print the second edition of the essay on Caragiale (which this time will have the original title, “Marea trăncăneală” [The Great Prattle]); I have “treated”

¹ “România Mare” – a Romanian nationalist movement

with Dan C. Mihăilescu, an admirable man, who esteems you so greatly that it honors himself too (because there are test-personalities: you can differentiate on the basis of the attitude of one to the other); I will give him a list with the names of those to whom I would have the publisher send a copy.

If you come to Paris, I look forward to meeting you!

Brotherly
M. Iorgulescu

22. Archival Unit #27

August 31, 1991

Dear Mr. Marino,¹

Please count me among the ones who, close or far away, are with you for the anniversary on September 5. Remain, Mr. Marino, the way you have always been: a great symbol for lucidity, exigency, frankness, moral and intellectual engagement.

Happy Birthday!

M. Iorgulescu

23. Archival Unit #28

January 6, 1992.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I thank you for your good wishes, and please let me wish you a ... lucky year. I do not really believe in anything else. I often listen to you (on the Radio), I have news about your interventions, and I can imagine how difficult it is for you to live in that mixture none too innocent or harmless.

The end of '91 found me, in a way, in your company: I wrote a review about your book for "Radio Free Europe", it will probably be broadcast in January. I have not written it, of course, as a review, but

¹ The paper of this letter is the size of a postcard, and bears the header of the institute of Radio France Internationale.

thinking of the “public” and the specificity of the “reception” – two coordinates with which the national press never counts. I am, Mr. Marino, despite all my large reserves of skepticism, terrified by the aggressive non-professionalism of our journalism. Regardless of “orientation”, I must say. I am asked (I have been asked) why I do not return, to do a review, a newspaper, etc.! Even this question seems to betray a frivolity (let me not put it otherwise) of thought.

I am wishing you a “lucky” ’92: may you finish the third volume and see it published (in other words, may the second volume be published!)

Yours,
M. Iorgulescu.

24. *Archival Unit #30*

April 25, 1992.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I received, quite a while ago, the first numbers of the “Tribuna Ardealului”, that you sent me. I was pleased by the publication of this review; even if graphically modest, it is well written (a rare thing today in Romania, where writing is usually terribly bad), and the attitude (firmness + balance) is identical, or at least very close to the one I yearn for. I hate extremities (however they may be colored), political-faced combinations, and ambition – as you well know. Your article in number 53 (received yesterday) comforted me; the culture of the “center” is – I would say – simply culture, while the “culture of the left wing” or the “culture of the right wing” are implemented cultures. The slip towards the right wing, obvious in Romania (too), scares me, even more so that at least here in France the rightists are simply disgusting (and idiots, I would add). I will try to send you, provided I find a moment of liberty (in the physical sense: I have a chronic lack of time), some less sketchy comments connected to this vital topic.

With constant friendship,
M. Iorgulescu

September 27, 1992.
Munich

Dear Mr. Marino,

As you can see, I am answering you on the day of the elections. In a few hours' time (it is morning now, I have become an early riser) I will be at the Radio, where, together with Mircea Carp (an admirable man) and some other colleagues, we secure the special broadcasts, more precisely the transmissions/correspondence from Bucharest.

I have been in Munich for several months now, a time still not enough for "settling down", even more so that my family remained in Paris (my children study there), and this obliges me (and us) to a sort of ... European commute. I have received everything you sent me, and here in Munich I have at my disposal (and I read!) almost all Romanian publications. I am thus familiar with (almost) everything you write, and just like in other times, I am, I feel perfectly sympathetic with you, and just like "in other times", I have to see how very few are those who truly have intellectual, moral, political consistency. The long and old indifference (otherwise rewarded and encouraged) of Romanian intellectuals for history and ideas takes revenge today (also). I am not too "optimistic". I must see, with a depression always defeated, that we are (as a "nation") the same, anywhere and anyhow; in other words, the direct and tighter contact of everyday life with another European society, after the three "French" years, forces me to see how relevant Dinicu's urge remained – "that's the way to the West!". The implicit recognition of the Eastern "dowry" ... I am waiting to see you here, there is so much to say.

The review "happened" to be broadcast on your birthday. It had been written and recorded for a long time, but the programming is slow and I did not want to force it, I hate this procedure. I have remained among those who still read books (!), and I am often blamed of "Stakhanovism". In the conditions in which I acquit myself (!) consciously of my duties as a political journalist, I could also make a weekly literary column, a review of the Romanian and French cultural press, and – at least twice a month – to present a foreign book of cultural/intellectual interest for Romanians. Nevertheless, I realized that too active fellows are not needed in the "Diaspora" either! They end up being a bother ... It is a fact

though that in these three years, also answering probably to an inner challenge, I have covered a huge quantity of historical-political studies, of great profit for my work. And I have not given up literature either!

My address in Munich is the following:

ST. CAJETANSTR. 8
8000 MÜNCHEN 80
GERMANY

I have a phone (at home) – 40.75.44, and at the Radio – 21.02.30.27.

I expect you here, M. Iorg.

26. Archival Unit #33

April 17, 1993.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I have moved*: this is the explanation of my long impolite silence. One of the explanations, in fact. The small inferno of moving (a temporary one) added to the tiredness into which I am settled, it seems, for eternity. I work hard. I prepare my broadcasts, I always have a “basis”, and I refuse – as much as I can – improvisations. I try, then, not to give up reading, writing, I have even settled myself a sort of norm. You know very well, one cannot resist otherwise, no matter how “talented”. I received, I confirm, everything you sent me; about the book, I will write for Gelu [Ionescu]’s emission, but not in the weeks to come (from May 1 I will be left again alone with the two daily editions of the “Actualitatea Românească” [Romanian News]). I realize, with a sort of gloomy sense of humor, that a certain curse is following me here too: I meet truancy and stupidity day after day. I will not insist, since the image of the “small country” – as seen from here – approaches a raving oligophrenia. Some people, like you, here and there, some minds untouched by philoxera, some publications – and that’s about it. I will announce the little anniversary of the “Tribuna Ardealului” next week (April 19-25), and the review I will indicate in the “Actualitatea culturală” (Cultural news) on April 24 (Gelu is on vacation).

With the feelings known,
M. Iorgulescu

*The new address: HESSELOHERSTR. 4, 8000 München 40, (tel. 336901)

27. Archival Unit #34

Munich, November 2, 1993.

Dear Mr. Marino,

Here are the texts – Gelu’s and mine. I received the book about you, it is indeed, as you have well said, a curiosity for Romania, since normally there should have been around 5-6 books published yearly about living authors.

I used in an emission Dan Zamfirescu’s declarations on the “Caritas”, from the “Tribuna Ardealului”.

Yours,
M. Iorgulescu

28. Archival Unit #35

Munich, February 10, 1995.

Dear Mr. Marino,

I was, indeed, in Bucharest, for a little more than a week (although I wanted to leave only a few hours after I had arrived!), very probably a visit that would not be too closely followed by another one. It seems that the Romanian department will move to Prague around April-May; anyway, it can no longer stay in Munich after June. I refused the offer for Prague; not because it was financially disadvantaged (Raluca Petruian and myself had the most attractive offers, financially speaking), but because of reasons personal (my family in Paris, etc.) and professional (in Prague, keeping though its name, the “Free Europe” will never again be ... “Free Europe”). As I will probably not be too well off in Paris, I cannot foresee a journey to Bucharest on my own account – and why would I do it, anyway?! If the institution does not send me to Bucharest this spring again, and it is hard to suppose that they will, I will not visit Romania soon. The axis of my existence is completely changed (as you probably know, I received French citizenship a year ago): I have

definitively settled down in Paris. With no illusions, but no resignation either.

So then, “Free Europe” is agonizing. The “team” is scattering; it will never ever be restored. We are lost again; alone; very alone. Emil Hurezeanu, now in Cologne, is experiencing a new exile; Gelu, who stays in Munich, forebodes it; I anticipate it; because the disintegration of the “Free Europe” means, for those who invented here a “small Romania”, a new exile, a new throwing in the world. But I would not insist; you can imagine, of course, what it means to live, from the inside, the death of a great institution, of a historic institution, the disappearance of which will leave a huge empty hole in the mind and soul of Romanians, even if they will probably not realize it.

I received the “Biography” and the “Spanish” journal, which I remember having commented enthusiastically on its first edition in the “Rom.[ânia] lit.[erară]”, I believe. Thank you – and, as always, I am impressed by your strength. In Paris, where I will be from July on, I will probably start reading – or re-reading – more literature. At least I intend so!

I shall write down my Paris address, not knowing whether, caught up in the endless bureaucratic duties I will have in May and June, I shall have the time to write you:

23-25, rue LOUIS BRAILLE

75012 PARIS

Tel. 43.07.32.87

With constant affection,
M. Iorgulescu

29. Archival Unit #36

November 1, 1995
Paris

Dear Mr. Marino,

I have had remorse for quite some time for not giving you any life sign; refusing to follow “Free Europe” to Prague (I still don’t know if I did it right...), returning to Paris, I had a troubled summer; confusion, re-adaptation, a world falling apart (the Western democracies feel the shock of the fallen communist world), a little bit of everything, the result being quite hard to bear. I have largely recovered though, I believe.

I don't know if you have heard, I talked some time ago (in July? in August? I cannot remember) about you book, "Pentru Europa" (For Europe) on the "Free Europe", where I kept a correspondence from Paris.

Thank you for the article on "political science", which I intend to present on the "Free Europe" and in the "Dilema" as well; nevertheless, I would be a little less generous than you with Romanian "politologists", many of them improvised, some on the level of second-year student notes, others ("stylish") manipulators of opportunist clichés. On the whole, there is a "model" here that I have never really felt close to. And I do not believe in its short-term change – for the better!

With constant admiration and affection,
M. Iorgulescu

30. *Archival Unit #37*

April 23, (1996)

Dear Mr. Marino¹,

I have returned to the "Free Europe", because it seems I cannot free myself from journalism. Anyway, it is an experience out of which I am trying to profit from this settling in the middle of Europe. Otherwise, I am doing a sort of continental commute, between Prague and Paris, where my family is. I am reading you and I am pleased any time when I find your texts in the press.

Mircea Iorgulescu

31. *Archival Unit #38*

December 8, 1997, Prague

Dear Mr. Marino²,

I received and broadcast the information about the publications in Belgrade. Thank you for sending them, and congratulations. I re-transmitted the conversation with you, in the emission on Saturday, December 6. I completely share the observations about the "cultural"

¹ Illustrated post card.

² Illustrated post card.

emission made in Bucharest, but there is nothing I can do – flatness protects itself through servility, and against this shield, so it seems, there is no weapon.

Yours,
M. Iorgulescu

32. *Archival Unit #39*

Prague, December 14, 1998.

Dear Mr. Adrian Marino¹,

I received, by kindness of Cristian Teodorescu, the two books you were so kind to offer me; thank you and I am greatly honored by your attention. I am also impressed, as so many times during the years I have known you, by your intellectual and cultural effort, miraculously constructive in the space of the reign of “nothing”.

I wish you happy holidays, and I assure you, from merely a physical distance, of my admiration,

M. Iorgulescu

33. *Archival Unit #40*²

M. Iorgulescu
11 rue Taine
75 012 Paris
France
Tel. 01 43 41 75 84
E-mail: M.Iorgulescu@Wanadoo.fr

Dear Mr. Marino,

Thank you for the *Cenzura în România* (Censorship in Romania), I received it a couple of days ago and, although I had read some chapters published in different reviews before, I (re-) read the whole thing. It is a good start, yet I am skeptical about how to continue. It seems to me that

¹ Congratulation card

² The text is computer-typed.

research attracts nobody any more, and each time I receive and read Romanian “cultural” reviews I cannot help being amazed how easily different authors (some quite honorable in their way, or at least considered as such...) refer to data, facts, ideas that they, at best, have heard about with quarter of an ear.

May dilettantism be the compulsory companion of post-communist culture?!

With constant admiration,

M. Iorgulescu

July 22, 2000, Paris.

34. *Archival Unit #41*¹

M. Iorgulescu

11 rue Taine

75 012 Paris

France

Tel. 01 43 41 75 84

Dear Mr. Marino,

Chance made me unable to answer as soon as I had received your letter. Nevertheless, there is a good thing about it too: I have just read the editorial of our colleague N. M.[anolescu] in the “Rom.[ânia] lit.[erară]”, in which he refers to your book on censorship, delimiting himself from it, a book he calls, not in an innocent and tender way, “booklet”.

Several times have I realized that his judgments in matters of cultural history, or simply history are of a surprising frivolity, if not, still, the expressions of a late and very regrettable scanty “ideologisation”. Why, why not, he insists to conjugate his political identity of an anti-communist, and the only and almost obsessive form of doing it is to identify communism with the absolute evil. I do not wish to defend communism, I believe you understand that, but this repetitive and flat explanation of anti-communism that seems to characterize him relates exactly to a dullness perfectly comparable with the dullness of the primitive communist propagandists of the ‘50s. Whatever he says about censorship bears the mark of unliberty of spirit, trained by any ideological proselytism, regardless of its sense.

¹ Idem.

This is why your project of writing about “free thinking” seems like an initiative under the mark of urgency.

Moreover, I will try to write about your ... “booklet” a text that I will send exactly to the Rom. lit.!

I am also amused that I live on Taine Street. The street continuing is called ... Proudhon! It’s just that there are many Frenchmen who have no idea who Taine was...

The book arrived quickly because somebody from my family lives at the address where it was sent.

Yours,
M. Iorgulescu
August 7, 2000.