

A Different Discourse – Adrian Marino

Felix OSTROVSCHI

*“Lucian Blaga” Central University Library,
Cluj-Napoca*

Keywords: Adrian Marino, documentation and scientific research centre, Constantin Noica, internal and international personal correspondence, individual reading notes, manuscript works

Abstract

The present material would like to presentation briefly the newly established “Adrian Marino” documentation and scientific research centre opened in the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library from Cluj-Napoca. In this article we tried first of all to outline some biographical reference points from the life and scientific activity of Adrian Marino, who donated the collection bearing his name. Then we tried to delineate the main elements which form the bibliographic collection, starting with the books and arriving at the personal dossiers which contain either the internal or the international correspondence Mr Marino had with different personalities of the age, then his reading notes and manuscript works; most of them already published. What we wished to underline in this paper was the importance of this area; as area intended rather to the scientific research rigorously based on the unique materials existing in this collection, than to individual reading. We hope that this material will serve as a starting point for some valuable future research.

E-mail: ostrovschifelix@yahoo.com

To find a suitable title for a certain material has always seemed more difficult for me than to prepare the material itself. This always has to be... we everyone knows how without sinking into deontological speculations. The work published in 2001 which contains the dialogues between Adrian Marino and Sorin Antohi, having the title *The Third Discourse. Culture, Ideology and Politics in Romania* justifies its title in this way: “In order to reduce everything to the essential, the aim of the formula is to exceed the relationship of adversity by finding a solution of collaboration and synthesis between the two fundamental orientations of the Romanian culture: autochthonism and Europeanism”. A definition and title, I think, suggestive for everyone. The present material received

the title *A Different Discourse – Adrian Marino* because we shall also be searching for a new formula in it, renouncing both the temptation of homage and mainly that of partial and malevolent criticism. We do not know whether the formula is correct and whether it will lead to the anticipated reaction. Maybe it is more important to present the additives brought to this experiment – Adrian Marino's personality, the space that bears his name in our library and last but not least the "Adrian Marino" collection.

Adrian Marino was born in Iași on 5 September 1921. In 1941–1943 he studied at the Faculty of Letters there. In 1943–1945 he continued his studies in Bucharest. 1939 was the year of his debut as a publicist in *Jurnalul literar* (The Literary Journal). In 1947 he defended his doctoral dissertation in literature entitled *Viața lui Alexandru Macedonski* (The Life of Alexandru Macedonski). After only two years, in 1949, he was arrested because he participated in the *Illegal study circle of the Peasants' Party members university students*. After eight years of political imprisonment he was deported to the Bărăgan, being forced to reside between 1957 and 1963 in the village Lătești. After these difficult years of deportation he settled down in Cluj. His first volume, *Viața lui Alexandru Macedonski* was published in 1966 and it was rewarded with the prize of the Romanian Academy. He had a laborious activity as a literary critic and historian, collaborating with numerous Romanian and foreign periodicals, publishing at the same time a series of books both in Romania and in foreign countries. From among his works we can mention: *Opera lui Alexandru Macedonski* (The Work of Alexandru Macedonski) (1967), *Introducere în critica literară* (Introduction to Literary Criticism) (1968), *Modern, modernism, modernitate* (Modern, Modernism, Modernity) (1968), *Dicționar de idei literare* (Dictionary of Literary Ideas) vol. I (1973), *Carnete europene* (European Notebooks) (1976), *Prezențe românești și realități europene* (Romanian Presence and European Realities) (1978), *Hermeneutica ideii de literatură* (The Hermeneutics of the Idea of Literature) (1987), *Evadări în lumea liberă* (Escapes to the Free World) (1993), *Politică și cultură. Pentru o nouă cultură română* (Politics and Culture. For a New Romanian Culture) (1996), *Cenzura în România. Schiță istorică introductivă* (Censorship in Romania. Introductory Historical Sketch) (2000), *Al treilea discurs. Cultură, ideologie și politică în România* (The Third Discourse. Culture, Ideology and Politics in Romania) (2001).

Of course, to characterize Adrian Marino's personality either in private life or as a scientist is a quite difficult task for us, if not

impossible. This is why we appealed to a subterfuge, selecting from his texts some fragments in which he characterizes himself. "I am not a Thracian, though my family has on my father's side ancestors from the South of the Danube, and I think we are of Macedonian origin. A hypothesis, anyway, quite plausible."¹

"[...] I, who was formed in a society of another type, I, who at 27 years was put in prison, I was already formed – for better or worse. I had a different notion about society, a different conception about social realities, a different idea about writers. Secondly, as I had not found my place in the communist society, I had no impulse to make a career. I must tell that in the beginning it was extremely hard. Extremely, extremely hard. Economically. But, step by step, being more productive, I was able to resist. In the beginning I was so poor that can you see these shelves? – my wife, Lidia Bote had to borrow three thousand lei from a cousin to make some shelves for me. [...] At the same time, this protected me from serious compromises. They could not tighten the screws on me, I have no texts to be sorry for. You won't find me in the summary honorary volumes, where, if you cast a glance – and I think you have already done so –, you will find many persons from the 'good' world. I repeat I do not belittle them. They had to save their positions, departments, well, their hierarchies and their official honours lists" Adrian Marino reminded us in the same work.

"I neither pose as the patriarch of Romanian literature, nor think of myself as a 'lighthouse' of Romanian literature. I have no pretensions for honorary periodical numbers; I do not ask for anything. However, I ask for something else: I ask that the status of the free and independent writer in Romania should be recognized, as I belong to an alternative, liberal and independent culture, which believes in individual initiatives, believes in the middle classes, in economical independence."²

"I am, if you like, a little bourgeois, plain, lacking completely the tragic sentiment of life, I have no spiritualistic experiences. [...] I am, as you can see, a totally 'mediocre', 'average' personality. Therefore

¹ Adrian Marino, *Al treilea discurs. Cultură, ideologie și politică în România. Adrian Marino în dialog cu Sorin Antohi* (The Third Discourse. Culture, Ideology and Politics in Romania. Adrian Marino in Dialogue with Sorin Antohi). Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2001.

² Adrian Marino, *Prezențe românești și realități europene. Jurnal intelectual* (Romanian Presence and European Realities. Intellectual Diary). Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2004, p. 17.

there is a fair chance that some will like me, others will consider me an object of insulting irony and the majority of people will profoundly dislike me", we find in the same work.

"Without conceiving literary life in an idyllic or sentimental-fraternal way, it does not seem exaggerated to me to wish for a collegial, correct environment, respecting a minimal code of honest behaviour. I regret that my personal experience has not confirmed these expectations which I still consider to be minimal and legitimate. I cannot believe in a 'literary life' where the dominant note is envy, careerism, intrigue, 'machinations', lack of collegiality, serious impoliteness. Anyone feels the need of an elevated ambience, certain solidarity and real communication, a moral support in difficult moments, which I, a real misfortune, did not have. Two aspects irritate me in particular, and not only me. In the so-called 'literary life' there is little work done and sometimes nothing at all.

There is too much bohemianism, too much time is lost and there are too many disordered lives. And the talk of these circles is far too much influenced by material preoccupations and star-like attitudes, too insistent open scene applauses. Writing – maybe a prejudice – presupposes discipline, concentration, tenacity, some kind of asceticism and creative isolation. The pleasure of speaking and writing, are two contradictory 'pleasures', as Maiorescu already indicated it. Constructive, serious deliberation is one thing, empty verbal formalism another. Enthusiasm, zeal, dedication and abnegation, and not disgust, cynicism and individualistic egoism define the true spirit of letters. In some circles to discuss literary theories, programmes and messages unfortunately becomes a strident, if not ridiculous preoccupation. In exchange, there are plenty of intrigues, cancons, combinations, material preoccupations. In direct opposition with these negative phenomena I firmly believe in the superiority of organized work done with concentration, tenacity, stubbornness; a work inevitably obscure on long periods, but having a great final benefit.

In exchange, this refuge in study and work tears you away from the infected atmosphere of a 'literary life', where you can find only deception, bitterness and humiliation, and it gives you back to your vocation and spiritual being. Indeed, you are no longer a pleasant fellow of life, a nice fellow for X and Y, but you become a man of books, of study and, what is more, simply an honest man. And – curiously! – the more you withdraw from the 'literary life', the more you gain other sympathies and other adhesions in other spheres, on other levels, which

open to you new horizons and offer you other compensations and satisfactions. But whoever thinks that this spiritual lifestyle is comfortable, he/she is much mistaken. This lifestyle often consists of awful worries, of terrible interior contractions and seisms, of bitterness, repressions and mortal defeats, of truly silent pains, of the sentiments of some atrocious injustices and horrible ungratefulness, which humiliate you deeply and bring you to the brink of fury, despair and revolt. You are only a step from the catastrophic explosion. This life is dramatic, not tragic, and sometimes I knew it..."

"I only claim, if I may say so, some pseudo-*'futurist poem'*. As I am always waiting for something, something new, I am a *modern* man who projects everything in the future, not in the past. My specific state of mind is a dynamic waiting, anticipation stimulated by an increasing and accelerating potential speed of realization. Therefore I am permanently obsessed with the future *'departure'*, since all my spiritual life is projected and orientated towards the future. This is why I was able to leave behind my past (in all its aspects) so easily and for good. It was – objectively – often unpleasant, full of injustice and suffering, but – subjectively speaking – I have forgotten it definitively and irrevocably. Should I recall it? It would mean to go through all that suffering anew. I always look forward and I wait everything, including all that regards me, only from the future, the great future."

"Patriotism also means, among other things, – my definition, I repeat, is far from being complete – to build as solid and fundamental, as enduring and monumental as possible. Patriotism implies resisting and defeating the temptation of empty rhetoric, superficiality, improvisation, approximation, sinister bungling which I detest and combat as well as I can in my little sphere of activity. That such an inconvenient attitude becomes here and there *'disagreeable'*, sometimes even *'odious'*, it is an inevitable fact. We have to pay this price if we are fighting against facility, against the saving of appearances, imposture and intellectual bluff, against ease, which would constitute an inevitable norm of conduct *'at the Gates of the Orient'*. To build rigorously a study, a book, a periodical, a library – apparently an activity *'out-of-date'*, but permanent by its results – presupposes a lot of privations and humiliations, an almost continuous mortification."¹

Dan Chiachir in a letter sent on 14 November 1987 wrote to Marino: "To think freely and sincerely – even to make mistakes

¹ *Ibid.*

sometimes; inevitably – it was Nae's advice that I wanted to realize. [...] We need Your opinion: you and I know that there is no critical opinion of higher instance. [...] I have seen that You are a realist and disinterested person. Not in the sense – or under the aspect – of a man who has nothing to loose – a bitter Balkan-like state of mind –, but in the sense of intellectual attitude.”¹

Adrian Marino passed away in March 2005; in December 2005 the work *Libertate și cenzură în România. Începuturi* (Freedom and Censorship in Romania. Beginnings) was published post-mortem.

In what follows let us try to describe the new space created in the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library where the “Adrian Marino” Collection can be consulted. Situated on the second floor of the mentioned library, the room bears the name of the donor of the collection has 32 seats. Having been totally renovated and furnished with new and modern furniture, the reading room has been being used since October 2005. Because of the importance of the collection students are allowed to visit the room only for the consultation, under supervision, of the “Adrian Marino” book collection. And if we mentioned the book collection, it must be said that it contains at the present time approximately 1700 volumes processed and placed on the shelves. The other few thousand volumes will be added to these as soon as they are processed too. The volumes of book, received through donation, already entered the library stacks in the 1990s. However, the majority of the books entered in the last two years. Here – and anywhere else whenever there is an occasion – we have to underline and appreciate Miss Florina Iliș's contribution, who, as well as being the coordinator of this centre of documentation, selected the volumes personally and even transported the majority of them. We would also like to thank Mrs Lidia Bote (Mr Adrian Marino's wife), who, though she is of an advanced age, helped us to carry the suitcases (lent to us by her) with the donated books, protected us against the occasional attacks of the dogs from the courtyard and kept us in a good humour with her jokes and her energy of life. The great modesty of these two ladies should not prevent us from expressing our appreciation and gratitude.

And as we try to describe the interior of the room, we must remark that on the walls there are important stages of Adrian Marino's life, immortalised in photographs, framed and placed chronologically (childhood, return from detention, deportation, his workshop etc.). We

¹ The letter is to be found in the dossiers of “personal correspondence”, “Adrian Marino” Collection, “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library – Cluj-Napoca.

have even created two mini-exhibitions. In one show case there are different prizes received by Mr Adrian Marino during his life in appreciation of his scientific activity. In the second one we placed a part of the stamp-collection, which was put at our disposal by Mrs Lidia Bote and which we tried to arrange thematically.

I have said somewhere above that the access of students to this room is somewhat restricted because of two interrelated reasons. On the one hand, we wished to create a space for the use of PhD-students and young researchers (young does not necessarily refer to the age), as the rooms used by them had already become quite crowded. On the other hand, we wished that the newly furnished room might be more than just a reading room: a documentation and scientific research centre. And I am going to explain why.

Besides the undeniable importance of the book volumes, the "Adrian Marino" collection contains other documentation sources as well, which can serve as the base of a rigorous scientific research at any time. Let us present only some of these sources. I would like to specify once again, those materials we present are only a few of the whole collection, but I think they will be sufficient for arousing curiosity and intellectual desire. So we can find in these dossiers (there are a few hundred) various documents already processed from the internal and international correspondence to the elements of Mr Adrian Marino's personal archives. Somewhere at the end of this paper I will also give some examples of these dossiers. Similarly, this collection also includes the manuscripts of Mr Adrian Marino's works, corrected and annotated; manuscripts which may offer ways for other scientific researches. Last but not least we should mention the boxes containing the cards with his reading notes – with quotations, notes and bibliographic references – which always remain an information source for any research intended to be rigorous. "In the period when I was a member of the *International Committee for Comparative Literature* I had a quite vast correspondence with foreign writers which I placed entirely in the Central University Library from Cluj. It is a unique documentary collection in the country with all kinds of legal and illegal correspondents. There are so many dossiers that it is easy to find interesting texts in them. For example, my correspondence in two stages with Ioan Petru Culianu. One from the so-called good period of Mircea Eliade and a much more delicate stage from the period when abroad an anti-Eliade campaign began to take shape,

related to his past with orientations towards the Legionary Movement and totalitarianism.”¹

The mere existence of the reading notes in the form they were donated to the library is an example of profound and more than serious scientific work. These notes collected during a lifetime of research work prove that the method of compilation – as a so-called scientific method – used so much these days is perennial. By making available and using this collection in future research we hope to get rid of what Adrian Marino called “the temptation of empty rhetoric, superficiality, improvisation, approximation, sinister bungling”. Having so many original sources of information united in the “Adrian Marino” collection, this space is intended to be first of all a documentation and scientific research centre.

I promised above to present in detail, with examples, the content of some dossiers. Taking somewhat at random one of the dossiers having for theme “internal correspondence” we find:

- 1.) A letter received from Lucian Boia, dated from 10 June 1999:
“As regarding the experience you have gone through it can only emphasize the brightness of a career and a life-work which succeeded in asserting itself in spite of all the adversities.”
- 2.) A letter received from Dorel Vişan on 17 May 1999:
“As an attitude towards the lack of attitude I propose a Symbolic March of Protest... our march is intended to be a respectable, sensitive cultural action.”
- 3.) Easter greetings from 1999 sent by the president of Romania and signed by Emil Constantinescu.
- 4.) A letter from Paul Cornea, Bucharest, 23 March 1999, which also contains an invitation to a colloquium:
“You will be received with warm regard and respect by all participants. I think everyone in our small circle has the highest esteem for you because all the things you have done for the Romanian culture and because all that you represent.”
- 5.) A letter from Ruxandra Cesăreanu, sent on 16 January 1999:
“Please accept my thanks for all the theoretical help you have given to me and for the patience you have showed in advising me to take the bull by the horns regarding my theme.” In the postscript we find Ruxandra Cesăreanu’s signature as “nicknamed by you, I think, Countess Bathory.”
- 6.) A letter from Smaranda Vultur in 1999:

¹ *Al treilea discurs*, op.cit.

"We are always glad when you are present in public life because this gives us some confidence and some courage in these baffling times."

All these letters contained by this dossier are the witnesses of some past years, sources for the reconstruction of some troubled times for the literary activity, documents of collaborations and diversions from the Romanian cultural circle. As an example we can mention the few dossiers referring to what Adrian Marino named "the Noica case". These contain newspaper articles, other materials and correspondence. Respecting their content we can read that in September 1992 issue of the *Carnet literar* (Literary Notebook) an article signed by Adrian Marino announced: "Lately 112 dossiers of manuscripts and documentary materials entered the manuscript collections of the Central University Library. The "Adrian Marino" collection (internal correspondence) contains all the letters I had received from Constantin Noica." Here we can also find letters, which were published by Mr Adrian Marino in different literary reviews too, such as the *Carnet literar*:

– a letter received from Constantin Noica on 10 December 1976, sent from Bucharest:

"Thank you warmly for the book you sent so quickly. I shall read it with the interest always aroused in me by a scholar having your learning and openness. I consider you at the present moment one of the, let us say, first five scholars of the country." [...]

– a letter sent by Constantin Noica from Păltiniș, dated from 25 January 1977:

[...] "In what direction are you going? [cynical question that can be found also at the end of Marin Preda's novel, *Moromeșii*]. I am interested in your scholarly destiny. Mine is being solved in a «metaphysics», under whose pains I stay and write in my seclusion."

– a letter sent to Păltiniș on 19 April 1987, in which Noica answered Adrian Marino's invitation to the presentation of his book *Hermeneutica ideii de literatură* (The Hermeneutics of the Idea of Literature) in Sibiu:

"So I participate gladly at the ceremony but I must decline the opportunity to speak before the public at this event; for this I apologise. [...] Being – in a strange way – timid before a small public. Before a large one I have fewer problems. But between friends I shall know what to say about the interest I have for your activity."

Thus with a small scientific interest and with the help of these materials we can reconstruct a part of the communist mould swallowed by the writers of that period: censorship and exhaustion, the dulling of the elites' mind, the claustrophobia of the literary space. Naturally, each

researcher will know what to use from this material in order to shade his/her study. The last examples concluding this marathon – intended to arouse scientific interest for the presented collection – would be those dossiers which contain Mr Adrian Marino's political activity in the Anti-totalitarian Forum and in the Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD).

"Coming back to the Anti-totalitarian Forum, I realized that the world was not preoccupied by such problems. We were even robbed, ransacked; the technical equipment, the computers we had had were simply purloined by a certain individual. I have only awkward memories about the Democratic Totalitarian Forum. However, it represented something: an embryo, I repeat, a first coagulation form of the opposition in Romania. This can be seen in the seven dossiers which I entrusted to the Central University Library from Cluj. In the dossiers there are all kinds of manifestos, lists of the democratic forums from the country, adhesions, letters, threats, abuses, receipts, everything you want, but they are not classified too well. The dossiers belong to a documentary collection I founded in the Central University Library, the "Adrian Marino" Documentary Collection. At the present time it has already four hundred dossiers. It is a collection – I think – unique in the country, of ideological, political, cultural and literary documentation, writers' correspondences etc."¹ These dossiers contain:

1.) Newspaper articles:

– October 1991, article from *Dreptatea* (Justice) announcing that Adrian Marino had been appointed to the leading committee of the PNTCD;

– article from 3 September 1992 in which Adrian Marino declines the offer to stand as a candidate for the elections from 27 September 1992;

2.) There are dossiers containing Adrian Marino's personal political activity:

– newspaper articles which show Adrian Marino's participation at the manifestations held in August 1990 on the Freedom Square;

– in an article published in the local newspaper *Adevărul în libertate* (Truth in Freedom) on 18 December 1990 we find attacks against the Civic Alliance and the Anti-totalitarian Forum: "The Civic Alliance and the Anti-totalitarian Forum cannot guarantee for the Romanian people by the undemocratic measures they use that the

¹ *Al treilea discurs*, op.cit.

democratic principles and the law and order will be respected." [...] "The actual acts which destabilize the country delay the adoption of the Land Law and of the Constitution, constituting a potential danger for the territorial integrity of Romania."

These are some reminiscences of considered language and behaviour from the press of the age.

3.) other materials such as:

- the first national convention of the Civic Alliance;
- badges and invitations to different socio-political manifestations;
- the programme sketch of the Culture and Art Department of the National Peasants' Party (PNT), having Adrian Marino as a coordinator; the text was published in the newspaper *Dreptatea* on 6 November 1990;
- the manifesto of the PNTCD addressed to the workers;
- constitution project elaborated by the PNT in March 1991;
- different documents which mirror the intestine battles and internal divergences inside the PNT;
- electoral posters;
- election lists either with the proposed candidates or with those who finally stood as candidates.

Thus, with the help of these materials, it is possible to present the agitated state of mind, the cataracts which affected the multitude – a vague term, indeed – of Romanians immediately after the events from 1989.

Any material, any presentation has good parts and, of course imminent risks. We assume the responsibility both for the former and mainly the latter ones. However, this presentation was not intended to be exquisitely profound from a scientific point of view. We only wished to present – and the time will show whether we succeeded or not – the valour of a great personality of the Romanian culture, who created and donated a valuable collection for/to Romanian researchers. We hope we have aroused the interest for valuable and profound researches, so few in the present day Romania. And I believe that it would be the most suitable to finish with another fragment from among Mr Adrian Marino's thoughts.

"But do not forget that I have an immense handicap, I am a permanent social marginal. I have never had an editorial, university or academic position. Therefore everything is transmitted by the means of published materials, to the measure in which these books reach certain readers. But I have neither velleities, nor possibilities to be a 'school

leader'. In '89 my friend, Paul Cornea, Deputy Minister of Education at that time, appointed me as a consultant professor to the University of Cluj. The Faculty of Letters sent the nomination to the Senate, to the Rector's Office where it 'got lost'. Well, how can I feel for a city, a faculty behaving like this? Because this I interrupted every relationship with the University. [...] I am treated with much contempt. Otherwise I also have the sentiment that I belong to 'another' culture. Thanks to the help of my wife I got over many shocks. Cluj is not my city. Here I have a second 'forced residence'! Fortunately, there is an oasis of civility and intellectualism – the Central University Library from Cluj. [...] I must say that I have made a will to the benefit of the library in Cluj, according to which immediately after my death they should come and take my entire library. I do not want my books to be sold to second-hand bookshops by my grandchildren, relatives and so on." Expressing our thanks for the flattering appreciation we hope that we shall be able to maintain this "oasis of civility and intellectualism".

In an article published in *Tribuna* (The Tribune) periodical in December 1992 Adrian Marino said: "I am more convinced than ever before that the critical spirit, such as that of the 18th century Enlightenment's, is summoned to resist at any time and anywhere all the possible myths, fanatic views, fetishizing and censorship. Be they whatsoever. [...] We are for the freedom of research, against any interdiction of any kind. Irrevocably and at any risks. Everything and everyone falls under criticism. We are for the freedom of the mind, of analysis, of research. Let us not lose it once again."