

201). The connections between the highly successful translations in vernaculars and the prosperous book market of early modern Europe are evident: “across the sixteenth century, they were translated into other European vernaculars including French, German, Dutch, Italian, and English” (p. 201).

The book edited by Pérez Fernández and Wilson-Lee is particularly addressed to those interested in the historical formation of European book markets and the evolution of vernacular printings rather than in the pure philological translation techniques. It presents a close analysis of the interconnected relations between the practice of translation, translators and printers in early modern Europe, and the subsequent outcomes that resulted from the printing phenomenon, such as the creation of national correlated book markets. This book makes an interesting contribution to the history of printing by bringing to the fore the multifaceted relations between the circulation of prints and the popularity of translations. The main argument of the book is that the practice of translation did not only facilitate the modern usage of vernaculars, but also contributed in a significant manner to the formation of intellectual and social networks of communication. It also enabled the creation of national identities. Furthermore, even factors such as the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and the phenomenon of censorship played a powerful role for the improvement of the quality of printed texts and the increase of continental book markets.

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DORU RADOSAV, *Istoria din memorie. Încercări de istorie orală* (History from memory. Oral history attempts) (Cluj-Napoca-Gatineau: Argonaut, Symphologic Publishing 2016)

The volume authored by the Cluj-based Professor Doru Radosav compiles a series of studies and articles written and published throughout more than two decades. It includes a substantial and unique contribution to the Romanian historiography: the study that opens Doru Radosav’s book on the concept of oral history, a systematic presentation of the main historiography schools from across the world. Both the introductory comprehensive study and the collection of previously published articles present Professor Radosav as a historian who has introduced a new historiographic subject into the Romanian academic community, as a particular voice of contemporary Romanian historiography. He has also established a school of historiography as the founder and leader of the Institute of Oral History of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.

Professor Radosav’s inclination towards oral history was, on the one hand, determined by his intellectual and professional aptitude for exploring new methodological and theoretical perspectives of general history works in history throughout the 20th century. On the

other hand, the motivation for his inclination towards “first-hand history” must be sought in the professor’s family history throughout the years of communism in Romania. As he has claimed, the reasons of his writing about the origins of oral history “come from beyond this theoretical historiography screen on which oral history is projected.”¹ He was deported to Bărgan in the 1950s together with his family, labelled as kulaks and suspected by the totalitarian regime that was in an ideological conflict with Tito, the leader from Belgrade. In his research, he empathically tried to reconstruct the experiences lived by the people who had been driven away from their homes overnight and whose lives had been changed by force. The cohabitation with the other political prisoners as an extended family opened new horizons in his motivation to explore the forms of repression, violent at the beginning, then later more refined, such as the “peaceful” methods of blackmail and threat, or maintaining a climate of fear and psychological terror. His personal experiences (whose recollection is detached, neutral and at times nostalgic, when invoking a mythical perception of his childhood) and especially his exposure to the silent and secret experiences of his parents and of those around him have, over time, deeply influenced his analyses of the communist past. His connection to this oppressive past is confessed plainly. Professor Radosav’s interest in “history told out loud” by the many was fuelled by a political militancy for the restructuring of the free political and democratic life after the events of December 1989. He thus values liberty in the sense proposed by K. Popper, according to whom liberty is more important than equality. In other words, the transition from equality to liberty also has an ontological role in reinventing the individual and the society within the limits of the human condition and of humanity’s plenary abilities of expression. This transition represents a personification of the world, a way in which the power structures relate to the individual, a situation which, at the level of historiography, reflects the Foucauldian concept of counter-history. Post-history, as a theoretical concept, and counter-history, as a performative experience represent the elements that form a motivation which leads to the research of, and to a historiography discourse focused on, the “immediate history”, since “we are witnessing the discovery of memory in Eastern Europe in the post-communist context.”²

Oral history is considered to be “a branch of the historiography discourse” that has been exploited in the last decades based on a certain methodology and that has a series of autonomous research subjects (the history of industrialisation and its consequences in the evolution of the lives and health of workers, the study of the marginalised individual in industrialised societies, emigration and emigrants, social invalidity, the history of orphan children, the way in which the individual relates to the re-institution of democracy, the study of the Holocaust, the reconstruction of the post-apartheid life, natural disasters, the economical crises and the great tragedies, the relation between biography and history, the landscape and the environment, focused on the relation between place – memory – identity).

¹ Doru Radosav, *Istoria din memorie. Încercări de istorie orală* (History from memory. Oral history attempts) (Cluj-Napoca-Gatineau: Argonaut, Symphologic Publishing 2016), 69–70. “vine dinspre cauze de dincolo de acest ecran istoriografic și teoretic în care ea este proiectată.”

² *Ibid.*, 274. “În condițiile post-comunismului asistăm la o descoperire a memoriei în estul Europei.”

This new type of historiography is positioned at the crossroads between history, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, psychology and narratology. In the spirit of K. Pomian's words, "From history, a part of memory, to memory, the object of history", a statement to which he passionately relates, Professor Radosav considers that the reasons behind "the rediscovery of memory" and the reassertion of oral history studies in the last decades are beyond a certain "modernity of historiography" or a series of studies that had "a major impact on the contemporary historiography discourse."³ Doru Radosav cites and explains multiple causes, that may be: connected to cultural identity ("memory entails particularity and diversity" in the context in which the hegemonic historiography cultural discourse is overridden and the cultural "centre" and "peripheries" are both asserted as equal cultural fields), ethical (drawing on memory in order to reconstruct the great tragedies of the 20th century – fascism, Nazism, the Holocaust, the Gulag, or understood as a "veteran" memory – the memory of the years on the front), epistemological (the use of testimonies in historiography leads to an expansion of historical knowledge, as well as a rediscovery of humanity, individual sensibility given by the uniqueness of each life, a practice that ensures the reproduction of family, traditional, cultural and identity values), ideological (after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, "memory was discharged," a phenomenon which, in the context of a European unification, was associated with a memory transfer manifested as "a combustion of the national feeling" projected by sports competitions and commemorations) and pragmatic (the technology acquisitions, the audio and video recordings created a new type of memory that is "fixed, conserved with maximum accuracy... and it can provide a generous accessibility."⁴)

Comprised of people's testimonies, oral history "is practiced in the field of memory" and, in this case, in spite of the reservations expressed in academic history in this respect, individual subjectivity is seen as a veridical part of a historical fact. From this perspective, Professor Radosav aligns with some of the classic stances on historiography taken in the 1970s and 1980s by Paul Thomson, Luisa Passerini or Alessandro Portelli. In Professor Radosav's words, oral history "as a first-hand history represents a type of history within history."⁵

The history of communism in Romania is approached from the viewpoint of its victims, as a history of their life experiences of the state's violent acts of repression. Therefore, the main focus of Radosav's historical studies of the communist period were the "bandits" (as the regime called them) who were part of the armed anti-communist resistance groups, or the Swabian communities deported to Donbas, as well as the study of the biographies of Romanian dissidents. The historiography forms employed in this endeavour are the historical synthesis (the armed anti-communist resistance), the case study illustrating one example of a phenomenon that took place on a national scale (the deportation of the Swabians to Donbas as an example of the deportations of the people of German ethnicity in the USSR) and the compilation of "voices" in a dictionary of the Eastern European anti-communist dissidence. Another historiography form employed in his oral history works is the biography that focuses

³ Ibid., 291–322. "cu un impact major în discursul istoriografic contemporan."

⁴ Ibid., 279–290.

⁵ Ibid., 263–256. "ca istorie trăită se consacră drept o formă de istorie în istorie."

on the trauma caused by the experience of the communist Gulag or the biography that extends from the interwar period to the communist and post-communist period. The insistence on travesty as a mark of the armed resistance from the Apuseni Mountains shows that the biography is part of a playful cultural destiny (the travesty is characteristic to the carnival setting, a time in which order is suspended and the world is reordered in an up-side-down form), as well as an expression of the individual's personal dramatic experiences in the communist society – deprived of their own identity and forced to adapt to an ideologically approved identity, or risk illegality, exclusion and incarceration. Travesty is thus a playful-dramatic metaphor for the human destiny under a communist regime. Petrea Icoanei symbolises the emergence of the human individual who is deeply attached to the values of the traditional culture represented by Christian piety, but who is obligated to live under an identity that is tolerated by the atheist regime; the Christian values aid survival, conserve humanity and generate the antibodies needed to cure the social body of its “red cancer”.

The author discusses the subject of the fighters and the opposers who represented the anticommunist resistance and the exponents of the pre-modern Romanian culture who could not play the passive role of depersonalised subjects, who could not be *homo sovieticus*; through his work, he sends an activist, performative message regarding the individual's obligation to choose and to make his choices known in history and in politics, in accordance with the Popperian postulate. By presenting the people deported to Donbas, the ad-hoc victims, the author conveys an ethical approach of the past in order to know, assume, and appropriate it.

Professor Radosav's book is an introduction in the Romanian academic world to a new field of historiography, and it also represents a practice of oral history.

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RODICA FRENȚIU, *Limbajul poetic – act creator și actualitate culturală. Modelul cultural japonez* (Poetic language – creative act and cultural actuality. The Japanese cultural model) (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2017).

The volume *Limbajul poetic – act creator și actualitate culturală. Modelul cultural japonez* (Poetic language – creative act and cultural actuality. The Japanese cultural model) authored by Rodica Frențiu is a remarkable achievement in the field of cultural poetics and semiotics, in her attempt to understand the Japanese literature and culture starting from the specificity of certain linguistic acts. Through the coherence and broad overview of the research, as well as through its subject, this volume is a true novelty in the Romanian cultural space and is part of