

RECONSTRUCTING THE SELF AND EXPLORING THE ONEIRIC UNIVERSE OF CORIN BRAGA'S NOVEL *LUIZA TEXTORIS*

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Abstract This study aims to analyse the imaginary universe of the novel *Luiza Textoris* by Corin Braga, with a focus on the traumatic complexes of the characters and the drama that *Luiza Textoris* experiences. In addition to the impressive journey of the characters in the world of dreams, the psychological dilemmas of the *Textoris* family, which were projected onto *Luiza* and marked her destiny, are gradually revealed. We are able to see that this is a voyage of discovery, one that is crucial for restoring *Luiza*'s inner balance, freeing her from the traumas of her and her family's past. Using the tools of hermeneutic analysis, we trace the deep substratum of *Luiza Textoris*, noting the literary and artistic value of Corin Braga's oneiric prose.

Keywords Oneiric, dream, imaginary, trauma, unconscious, representation.

In the following paragraphs, we aim to analyse, starting from Corin Braga's oneiric project, the specifics of oneiric prose and the manner in which it succeeds in creating a different world, albeit one that remains consistent with conditions and events that may sometimes transcend the confines of empirical reality. It is widely acknowledged that the oneiric prose explores the reality of dreams, which is distinct from the objective reality, and creates an alternative world comprising elements of reverie which complement it. By constructing a fictional world in which the boundaries between the real and the imaginary become fluid, oneiric prose also depicts a parallel universe composed of that which sustains the unconscious. Unlike other types of prose, the oneiric prose is clearly detached from the framework of reality, whilst imposing a reality of

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convention, which facilitates our delving into a complex imaginary universe. In this sense, Corin Braga states, in the introductory study to the *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România. Imaginar Literar* (*The Encyclopaedia of Romanian Imaginaries. Literary Imaginary*), that “fictional worlds represent versions of reality that augment the primary world with novel meanings, thereby amplifying our perception of the outside world, creating an ‘enhanced reality’.”¹

In the context of literary analysis, oneiric literature is defined as a genre that engages with the fantastic, offering a new perspective on the understanding and valorisation of irrational phenomena (but not meaningless ones). Dumitru Țepeneag further elaborates on this point, stating that “oneiric literature is a literature of infinite space and time, it is an attempt to create a parallel world, not homologous, but analogous to the ordinary world. It is a perfectly rational literature in its means and manner, even if it chooses an irrational phenomenon as its criterion. And, in any case, oneiric literature is not a literature of delirium, nor of sleep, but of complete lucidity.”² Thus, in oneiric literature, the dream functions as a conduit for an artistic process that suggests that the particular unfolding of events or the representation of certain chronotopes is dictated by a logic of the inner world that is different from that of objective reality. It can therefore be concluded that the function of the dream goes beyond its role as a tool for poetization or narrativisation, serving as a means of exploring alternative worlds or as a malleable reality in which the boundaries between the possible and the impossible begin to blur.

Since the creation of the oneiric group in 1959, centred around Dumitru Țepeneag and Leonid Dimov, Romanian oneirists have been preoccupied, as Alina Ioana Bako states, with identifying that “ferment of imagination strong enough to resuscitate Romanian literature, which was then in a dark period of socialist realism.”³ Despite being marginalised, after 1990, the group published anthologies and studies dedicated to oneiric literature. Corin Braga’s research focused on this literary phenomenon, which he approached from several perspectives: his anthology – *Momentul oniric* (*The Oneiric Moment*; Bucharest: Cartea românească Publishing House, 1997); studies/theoretical reflections on oneirism and imaginary universes; oneiric accounts in dream journals; and, finally, novels that test the possibilities and limits of the oneiric world in the imaginary plane. In this sense, the present introductory explanations have been provided in order to clarify our approach, which is implicitly focused on the analysis and exploration of the oneiric imaginary in Corin Braga’s novel *Luiza Textoris* (Iași: Polirom Publishing

¹ Corin Braga (ed.), *Enciclopedia imaginariilor. Imaginar literar* (vol. I) (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2022), 17, original text: “Lumile ficționale sunt versiuni ale realității care îmbogățesc cu sensuri noi lumea primară, amplifică percepția noastră asupra lumii exterioare, creând o «realitate îmbogățită».”

² L. Dimov, D. Țepeneag, *Onirismul estetic*. Antologie de texte teoretice și prefață de Marian Victor Buciu (Bucharest: Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2007), 80, original text: “Literatura onirică e o literatură a spațiului și timpului infinit, e o încercare de a crea o lume paralelă, nu omoloagă, ci analogă lumii obișnuite. E o literatură perfect rațională în modalitatea și mijloacele ei, chiar dacă își alege drept criteriu un fenomen irațional. Și în orice caz, literatura onirică nu e o literatură a delirului, nici a somnului, ci a deplinei lucidități.”

³ Alina Ioana Bako, *Dinamica imaginarii poetice: grupul oniric românesc* (Cluj-Napoca: Eikon Publishing House, 2012), 34, original text: “ferment al imaginației suficient de puternic încât să poată resuscita literatura română aflată atunci într-o perioadă sumbră de realism socialist.”

House, 2012), which constitutes the third of the four novels that make up the *Noctambulii* (*The Sleepwalkers*) series. The representation of the oneiric universe becomes, for Corin Braga, something akin to an existential condition, in which he demonstrates certain premises of the dream and the way in which some images can establish a dimension of fantasies, an autonomous imaginary universe, capable, still, of telling an impressive story. Thus, the dream becomes a mechanism for constructing an alternative reality, as elucidated by Corin Braga himself in his reference to Leonid Dimov's creation, calling him "a great taster of nocturnal phantasms, an explorer of the dream world. He developed a real 'art of dreaming,' which he went on to theorise and instrumentalise in the poetics of oneirism (...) the poet claimed to be an inhabitant of the enchanted world, to which he had access through the windows of dreams. This world revealed itself to him as a place of great fascination, beauty and consistency, incomparably stronger than those of everyday life."⁴ The oneiric project of Corin Braga, which is theoretical, diaristic and literary-artistic in nature, can be considered a reconfiguration of oneiric literature from a variety of perspectives. It offers a comprehensive view of the oneiric images recorded in dream journals, their ordering, as well as their transposition into his literary creation (narrativisation), on which he touches on in *Oniria. Jurnalul de vise* (*Oniria. The Dream Diary*; 1985-1995), stating: "My novels are an attempt to piece together the oneiric images that have obsessed me, to make a continuous movie. Following its thread, it should be possible to descend into the realm of the otherworld."⁵ The heightened interest in dreams, namely in oneiric realms, is reflected in Corin Braga's artistic text, which transports the reader into a fascinating fictional dimension, alike a projection of images and behavioural paradigms which define the depth of the human being. Psychological conflicts and dilemmas emerge from that inner world, which is frequently repressed or inhibited. Consequently, our approach to reading this novel is more inclined toward contemplation than toward confrontation with certain theories or literary directions. It is an applied analysis of *Luiza Textoris*. This will be the direct object of our investigation, with the aim of conducting a psycho-critical research on the imaginary universe of the novel. The article meticulously traces the itinerary of the protagonist, with a discerning focus on the underlying connotations of the text. The analysis is carried out in the wake of an exploration, where our demonstration will attempt to centre, for the most part, on the *fictional setting of the novel*.

In this oneiric literary project, Corin Braga aims to create narratives that are thematically and structurally interrelated, yet autonomous as representations of different levels of *fictional reality*. In the novel *Luiza Textoris*, the oneiric dimension prevails both as a way of psychological investigation and as an artistic expression of representing the imaginary universe.

⁴ Corin Braga, *Psihobiografii* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2011), 145, original text: "a fost un mare degustător al fantasmelor nocturne, un explorator al lumii viselor. El a elaborat o adevărată «artă de a visa», pe care a teoretizat-o și a instrumentalizat-o în poetica onirismului (...) poetul se revendica drept un locuitor al lumii feerice, la care avea acces prin ferestrele visului. Această lume i se dezvăluia ca având o putere de fascinație, o frumusețe și o consistență incomparabil mai puternice decât viața de zi cu zi."

⁵ Corin Braga, *Oniria. Jurnal de vise (1985-1995)* (Pitești: Paralela 45 Publishing House, 1999), 6, original text: "Romanele mele sînt o încercare de a pune cap la cap imaginile onirice care m-au obsedat, pentru a alcătui un film continuu. Pe firul lui, ar trebui să se poată coborî pe tărîmul lumii celeilalte."

This dimension is indeed manifesting itself at a different level of in-depth insight, establishing, amongst the other novels – *Claustrofobul* (The *Claustrophobe*, 1992), *Hidra* (*Hydra*, 1996) and *Ventrilocul* (The *Ventriloquist*, 2022) – as an independent, autonomous narrative. The characters Adela and Anir, who featured in the previous novels, become the dream doubles of Luiza Textoris and Fulviu Friator. This is a procedure that triggers the arduous process of reconstructing the female character's being. Luiza Textoris, as the text suggests, is in a state of catalepsy. Conversely, she continues to exist “narratively” within a parallel, oneiric dimension. The following discussion will examine the protagonist's journey towards the totality of her being (*The Self*), focusing on the interpretation of recurring images and the analysis of the character's traumatic complex. This approach will facilitate the reconstruction of the hermeneutic foundation of the psychological abyss. As a result, we will obtain both an analysis of the in-depth substrata and an aesthetic evaluation of Corin Braga's artistic imaginary universe. By using elements of everyday reality, the novel reconstructs an imaginary universe with the laws and phenomena specific to the oneiric world, in which one can also glimpse a parabolic meaning, an allegory of interiorisation aimed at restoring the inner balance of a traumatized individual.

Beyond the opaque matter of the text, psychological depths that need to be analysed through a much broader grid are constantly being revealed, which allows the establishment of dialogical relationships with elements that either go beyond or precede the narrative framework. The novel focuses on states rather than actions. Events in the real world do not follow a certain sequential order, they occur spontaneously, instantaneously, depending on the scenario unfolding in the oneiric dimension. We could consider the novel to be a “participative exploration” of the oneiric world (or of some psychic worlds) full of fantasies and “miraculous glimpses”. The narrator, a *homo doctus*, also proposes an analysis of the abyssal unconscious, inviting us to treat the dream with the utmost seriousness, so that it reveals its deepest meanings. According to Jung, “we must handle dreams with nuance, like a work of art, not logically or rationally, as one may make a statement, but with a small restriction somewhere. It is the creative act of nature which makes the dream, so we must be up to it when we try to interpret them.”⁶

From a compositional point of view, *Luiza Textoris* has a continuous structure, and the narrative plot reflects the characters' experiences in an uninterrupted way. Images from everyday life are unexpectedly interwoven with those coming from dreams, forming a homogeneous narrative corpus. Due to the psychological flux that sustains the narrative, behavioural dilemmas, intense states and feelings are depicted in a way which reveals the inner world of the characters. The discursive planes of reality and dream overlap and intertwine to form a complex diegetic framework.

Luiza's escape from everyday reality and her exploration of the oneiric world occurs initially out of childish play and curiosity, later becoming a necessity for the character. Immersing herself in a dream, she discovers the fascinating world of the oneiric, a universe that takes shape

⁶ C. G. Jung, *Dream Analysis: notes of the seminar given in 1928-1930*, ed. William McGuire (Princeton University Press, 1984), 66.

as the character ventures to *travel* through the anguishing labyrinth of the unconscious. The oneiric position allows her to bring out recurring states and images from the unconscious. Different imaginary levels, recombining fragments of Luiza's *dream images*, form a world distinct from the conscious one. The effect is that a series of dream images are actualised, allowing for inner contemplation.

In the beginning, diving into the dream dimension was harmless and easily accessible for Luiza. This is also driven by the fascination she experiences when exploring the imaginary world, an experience that offers her an impressive feast of imaginative games: "All she had to do was close her eyes and diaphanous worlds came to life in the air around her, like fairy-tale dust. Magical glimmers, like the Christmas trees in the long nights of childhood, sparkled on the objects and furniture. It seemed that nothing could reach her, that a sphere of white velvet had closed around her, alike Merlin's hunting tower. Humming softly during class, Luiza couldn't wait for the school day to end so she could stroll the streets and savour the tangy joy that filled her chest."⁷ It is a common means of accessing unconscious content.

Corin Braga's characters are confronted with psycho-emotional blockages that spill over into the oneiric dimension of their existence, or they serve, at least, a purpose there. Even the psychiatrist Vroclav Vladincki, the doctor who treated Luiza, tries to consolidate a chain of causalities in her damaged psyche that simultaneously reflect both in the *oneiric reality* of her ego and in her immediate reality. Fulviu warns Luiza by telling her that "when the dream collides with reality, every mistake in the dream becomes an accident in reality. If you're drowning in a dream, you might suffocate in bed. If you get lost in a dream, you may become schizophrenic in the regular world."⁸ Therefore, all those scattered images that overwhelm her psyche begin to become recognizable in the behaviour of the other characters, practically taking over the traumatic charge inside the dream. This triggers a process of *individuation* that transforms those scattered images inside Luiza's dreams into something tangible and concrete. It is a process carefully followed by psychiatrist Vladinski during his long dialogues with Luiza and Fluviiu, for his psychoanalytic conclusions and therapeutic indications.

Luiza Textoris is gradually being overtaken by the fantasies of the oneiric world, which makes her find joy and self-fulfilment in her dreamlike escapades, where she would "morbidity fixate on imaginary worlds."⁹ Everyday commitments are ignored, so going to school and interacting with her social environment no longer matter. This triggers in her behaviour a

⁷ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris* (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2012), 16-17, original text: "Era de ajuns să închidă ochii pentru ca lumi diafane să prindă ființă în aer, în jurul ei, ca o pulbere de basm. Licăriri feerice, de pom de Crăciun din nopțile lungi ale copilăriei, sclipiau pe obiecte și mobile. Părea că nimic nu o poate ajunge, că în jurul ei se închisese o sferă de catifea albă, precum turnul de vânat al lui Merlin. Fredonând încet în timpul orelor, Luiza abia aștepta ca ziua de școală să se încheie ca să se plimbe pe străzi și să savureze bucuria acidulată care îi umplea pieptul."

⁸ Ibid., 90, original text: "atunci când visul intră în atingere cu realitatea, fiecare greșeală în vis înseamnă un accident în realitate. Dacă te îneci în vis, se poate întâmpla să te sufoci în pat. Dacă te rătăcești în vis, să devii schizofrenic în lumea obișnuită."

⁹ Ibid., 173, original text: "se fixa morbid asupra unor lumi imaginare."

process of establishing another world that she can imagine differently, a more tangible and real world. It is a world that she creates from fragments of her dreams, and after these projections gain consistency, she escapes there – a kind of narrative fabric that will absorb her into her own fictionality. As such, she creates an alternative to the world in which she lives, in strict accordance with the model that Corin Braga also captures in his theoretical approach when he states that “fictional works are the actualization of possible worlds” or that “the works themselves create possible worlds.”¹⁰ In this way, Luiza is forced to learn step by step the possibilities and new ways of exploring the dream universe, so that it can take shape exactly like a predestined destiny inscribed in her own name: a TEXTOR that creates a world for itself, in which she risks getting trapped. Therefore, the meeting with Fulviu Friator plays an important role, through which Luiza will begin to “master her dream-state body.”¹¹ From that moment on, a rupture occurs in the character's being, leading to an increasing vulnerability in the dimension of reality. Instead, in the oneiric dimension, Luiza begins to have control over her own actions and can even interpret certain suggestions or meanings. Thus, she realizes that her grandmother's death happened first in her dream and only then it happened in real life.

After the death of her grandmother, Emma Textoris, major changes take place in her life, with psycho-emotional blocking effects. Luiza sinks into a space of pain and falls into a deep slumber from which she will not wake up for three weeks (a catalepsy), realizing afterwards that she no longer has dreams:

I got stuck between two kinds of dreams I can't escape. The first is about my grandmother's backyard. Every time I get there, I risk getting lost in other worlds. Every step I take takes me to another time, another reality. I immediately get lost and find it harder and harder to get back. I think that is what also happened to me when I was ill: I couldn't wake up until I finally got out of that cursed courtyard. But I didn't even realize I was trapped. It seemed like a normal dream to me, but when I woke up, instead of one night, four weeks had passed. I'm afraid to go on. What if I never wake up? /.../ The second dream takes place in our city. Until now, ever since I learned to fly, I travelled freely through it and woke up happy. Now I have discovered that the city has been flooded and I don't fly, I swim. I'm afraid of suffocating. I don't know how to go on, so I actually avoid dreaming.¹²

¹⁰ Corin Braga, *Lumi ficționale. O taxinomie a genului utopic*, study published in the collective volume coordinated by Corin Braga, *Morfologia lumilor posibile* (Bucharest: Tracus Arte Publishing House, 2015), 14, original text: “Operele ficționale sunt actualizarea unor lumi posibile”, “operele creează lumi posibile.”

¹¹ Ibid., 26, original text: “în stăpânire trupul de vis.”

¹² Ibid., 69, original text: “M-am împotmolit în două feluri de vise din care nu mai pot ieși. Primul e legat de curtea bunicii. De fiecare dată când ajung acolo, risc să mă pierd în alte lumi. Fiecare pas pe care îl fac mă duce în alt timp, într-o altă realitate. Mă rățesc imediat și mi-e tot mai greu să mă întorc. Cred că asta mi s-a întâmplat și când am fost bolnavă: nu m-am mai putut trezi până când nu am ieșit în sfârșit din curtea aceea blestemată. Dar nici nu mi-am dat seama că eram prinsă într-o capcană. Mie mi s-a părut că e un vis normal, dar când m-am trezit, în loc de o noapte trecuseră patru săptămâni. Mi-e frică să merg mai departe. Dacă nu mă mai trezesc? /.../ Al doilea vis se petrece în orașul nostru. Până acum, de când am învățat să zbor,

The crisis that Luiza is sinking into is an unconscious defence reaction caused by the traumatic experience of losing her grandmother, which triggered a denial mechanism of her own dreams. First, Louisa's dream world changes significantly due to *external stressors* affecting the content of her dreams. Luiza's oneiric experiences are no longer limited to exploring the *diaphanous universe* or a fairy-tale world. Her dreams become unsettling and gain a strong emotional impact, provoking brutal images that transpose the dreamer ego into a dark and disturbing oneiric world. This is due to the dissociative state with significant effects on what Jung calls "dream material."¹³ Luiza's unconscious state anticipates eerie things, her conscious mind is increasingly alerted to the existence of serious problems that threaten to disintegrate her being. Fulviu confesses to Michael Textoris that "Luiza complained a long time ago that her dreams have become more and more frightening and that she does not know what to do. So I taught her a few exercises to control her nightmares."¹⁴ Moreover, the nights after the loss of Emma Textoris are characterised by strange dreams in which Luiza follows her grandmother on her journey to the *afterworld*, trapped in an oneiric block from which she cannot escape. At a certain point, Luiza's dream universe breaks down into parallel images in which she sees her grandmother trapped in a "cubic time", chaotically moving through repetitively overlapping spaces that make her wander "in a labyrinth of continuously duplicated realms."¹⁵

This insertion in the narrative structure of such a complex oneiric image marks a turning point in the character's destiny. Luiza's dream of her grandmother floating among a multitude of transparent cubes that form an infinity of parallel worlds is in fact a subconscious attempt to emotionally detach herself from the person who is no longer alive. She must come to terms with her grandmother's death and realize that no matter how much she wishes to, she cannot follow her to the *afterlife*. Only in this way could she come to terms with the permanent loss of the person to whom she was attached. Unable to accept this, she wanders for a long time in a dream, unable to come out of her slumber.

After escaping from the labyrinth of dreams, in which her grandmother appeared obsessively to her, Luiza begins to explore the dream world with Fulviu, experimenting with different limits. She learns from him to better control the mechanisms that influence the content of the dreams through actions outside the oneiric dimension. This also involves the ability to perceive the boundaries between dream and reality. The two end up even experiencing common dreams, interacting within the same dream, shaping its content. As such, the dream dimension into which Luiza and Fulviu escape changes radically. The dream no longer represents a way to contemplate *diaphanous worlds*, but becomes a "key" with which the two solve certain existential dilemmas.

călătoream liber prin el și mă trezeam fericită. Acum am descoperit că orașul a fost inundat, iar eu nu zbor, ci înot. Mi-e teamă că mă voi sufoca. Nu știu cum să merg mai departe, așa că de fapt evit să mai visez."

¹³ C.G. Jung, 93.

¹⁴ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 109, original text: "Luiza s-a plâns mai demult că visele ei au devenit tot mai înspăimântătoare și că nu știe ce să facă. Așa că am învățat-o câteva exerciții ca să-și controleze coșmarurile."

¹⁵ Ibid., 48, original text: "Într-un labirint de țărâmurii în continuu dedublate."

The dream world ends up adrift; the characters' dreams are increasingly haunted by bizarre phantasms, to the point that the two characters are forced, in order to lessen the impact of the dangerous situations inside their dreams, to create those aforementioned dream doubles. Thus, Adela and Anir, oneiric projections of the characters, have the task of penetrating the "dangerous" dimension of the psyche. Ilona Duță remarks:

The exercise proposed by Fulviu to Luiza, that of projecting doppelgangers («dream doubles») that she can send into forbidden, dangerous psychic areas, is an exploratory act of lucidly facing the unconscious in its own fantastical, oneiric realm, a way of keeping the dangers hidden in the psychic darkness under control.¹⁶

In this way, Luiza and Fulviu take all the safety measures (precautions) so that the events happening in the world where their dream doubles descend to do not affect them in any way, during which time they can safely explore that dangerous universe, signifying the probing of psychological depths:

At first, the two were overwhelmed by the pressures of the city to which the two dreamers had drawn them. The dream creatures, Adela and Anir, struggled in a world that was difficult to control, where events, resembling a fairy-tale, did not follow a logical order, but were in accordance to unfathomable and hard to understand connections. Sometimes they would go through adventures as if guided by forces beyond themselves, without any sense of direction. The most terrifying part was that their adventure had no end, the nightmare in which they lived consisted of a tunnel through which nothing could be seen of the world of those who dreamt of them.¹⁷

The doubles of Luiza and Fulviu explore a strange and dangerous world in their dream, experiencing the sensation of falling into a flooded space, symbolizing the difficult and dramatic descent into the traumatic past of the familial unconscious. They visit the sunken city of Clusium (an anagram for the city Cluj-Napoca). Clusium is the same topos that the dream double, Anir Margus, the character from Corin Braga's previous novels, is meant to cleanse. Fulviu Friator's main task in the novel *Luiza Textoris* is the reconciliation of conflicts that persist in the

¹⁶ Ilona Duță, *Ruxandra Cesereanu: submersiuni creatoare într-un psiho-text abisal* (Craiova: Universitaria Publishing House, 2018), 238, original text: "Exercițiul propus Luizei de către Fulviu, acela de a-și proiecta sosii («dubli de vis») pe care să le trimită în regiuni psihice interzise, periculoase este un act explorator de înfruntare lucidă a inconștientului chiar pe tărâmul său fantasmatic, oniric, o cale de ținere sub control a pericolelor ascunse în tenebrele psihice."

¹⁷ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 91, original text: "La început, cei doi tineri fură copleșiți de presiunea orașului în care îi atrăseseră cei doi visători. Creaturi de vis, Adela și Anir se zbăteau într-o lume greu controlabilă, unde întâmplările nu se succed logic, ca într-o poveste, ci după legături insondabile și greu de înțeles. Uneori treceau prin peripeții ca teleghidați de forțe superioare lor, fără însă ca la orizont să se ivească vreun sens. Lucrul cel mai îngrozitor era că aventura lor nu avea un afară, coșmarul în care trăiau alcătuia un tunel prin care nu se zărea nimic din lumea celor care îi visau."

unconscious depths of the Textoris family and that are projected on Luiza in the form of personality disorders.

The descent into the depths of the unconscious offers the characters the possibility of confronting the fractures of their inner world, which symbolizes a search for the self through the anguishing labyrinths of introspection. If we were to use Jung's expression (*Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*), we could say that at the centre is a *quest* scenario involving the reconstruction of the *divine child* from the darkness of his family, stuck in the unconscious dimension of "infantile trauma," traumatised, with a fractured identity. It is a specific scenario for self-discovery and refers to a traditional fairy-tale pattern, an aspect on which Lavinia Bârlogeanu insists: "The characters and the plot revealed by the descents into the inner universe [...] are the mediator between the individual events that reveal the hero's story and the story as a whole."¹⁸ This is not without significance, because in that inner universe, a world with a myriad of problems affecting the dream doubles is unveiled. The latter are caught up in an avalanche of mind-bending events, but which, in fact, reflect a state of the dreaming character, or a major problem in the dreamer's life. Luiza's double takes over the psychological shock which Fulviu explains in the following way: "Adela is a part of you and her troubles are a symbol for your problems."¹⁹ Even the descent through the floor of the living room into a mysterious gallery – although, logically, there is another apartment underneath her apartment – symbolises a regression into the underworld/ unconscious (*descensus ad inferos*). The *katabasis* into the realm of the unconscious is meant to piece together the elements of fracture, reconstructing the trauma that is eating away at her being right up to the intrauterine level, following the archetypal scenario of the *regressus ad uterum*.

In the dream dimension, Luiza faces her own problems, both psychological and ontological. We use the term ontological problem because, as we have already stated, her mother, Regine Textoris, in order not to accept the death of her father, Joseph Knall, was in a dilemma as to whether or not to accept her birth. In a way, Luiza's birth is associated with death. Regine, as we read in the novel, "suffered a shock she could not overcome. Deep down, she refused to accept death. And then the birth of Luiza seemed to her to be a pressure to leave the past where she had settled and to move forward into the future. Giving birth to Luiza meant accepting that her father had died."²⁰ Regine has reservations about her maternal role also because of the abandonment she had suffered at the hands of her father, which she projects onto Luiza. She, in turn, as Gabriel Coșoveanu says, "is a prisoner of the intermundia, wanting to take control of her unknown side (but also to find out why her mother did not want her, which

¹⁸ Lavinia Bârlogeanu, *Jung îndrăgostit de suflet* (Bucharest: Nemira Publishing House, 2013), 120, original text: "Personajele și intriga dezvăluite de coborările în universul interior [...] fac medierea între evenimentele individuale ce dezvăluie istoria eroului și istoria luată ca întreg."

¹⁹ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 129, original text: "Adela e o parte din tine și necazurile ei sunt simboluri pentru problemele tale."

²⁰ Ibid., 119, original text: "a suferit un șoc pe care nu l-a putut depăși. În sinea ei, a refuzat să accepte moartea. Și atunci nașterea Luizei îi apărea ca o forțare de a ieși din trecutul unde se fixase și de a merge mai departe în viitor. A o naște pe Luiza însemna a accepta că tatăl ei a murit."

is said to be a seed of schizophrenia).²¹ Thus, complex techniques of psychological analysis of traumas are introduced into the narrative, which, instead of being localized, are taken over and become much more overwhelming. Narrative voice amplifies in intensity as hidden details of the protagonist's inner world are brought to the surface. Luiza Textoris takes on the attributes of the classic hero who ventures into the labyrinth of the subconscious in order to reconstitute the identity and integrity of her being. Without realizing the gravity of the situation, as well as the real reason for her attraction to the oneiric dimension, Luiza gathers scattered sequences of her fractured childhood. Through her dreams, Luiza manages to reconstruct the whole connotative (*symbolizing*) picture, which involuntarily accumulates recurring states of childhood, thoroughly explained by Freud: "The deeper one carries the analysis of a dream, the more often one comes upon the track of experiences in childhood which have played a part among the sources of that dream's latent content."²² Luiza's dream universe is also invaded by an almost obsessive image, her grandmother's garden, which unites, in a *convergent point*, all the subtleties and nuances of her development. Ilona Duță claims that it would be "the place of a strange union between oneiric, hallucinatory, and fictional worlds, a space of freedom of exploration of the imaginary."²³ The attractiveness of the grandmother's garden in the dream can be attributed to the presence of identifiable causes in the garden that have triggered and continue to cause disturbances or even neurotic states in Luiza's consciousness. It is like a matrix in which the information, feelings and experiences of the whole family are kept dormant. The garden, as we find in Corin Braga's dream diary, is *a centre for reorganising reality*.²⁴ From within it, a world that has already been shaped or even transformed is projected outwards, into the everyday life. In addition to the dream doubles, which are intended to take over the projection of negative images from the oneiric dimension, another element with a complementary role is identified in the narrative flow – the dream diary. Luiza and Fulviu each maintain a diary in which they meticulously document their "past dreams," without the possibility of anticipating what is to come.²⁵ Keeping a dream diary is not used as a proper psychoanalytic procedure with the function of *taking control* of the oneiric universe. Through the dream diary, the characters explore hidden segments of the unconscious, but also try to put certain feelings or intentions in order: "The effort of remembering everything you dreamed and writing it down on paper fixes your attention on the state of dreaming. It is a way of prolonging your dream while you are awake. And in this borderland between your waking and sleeping consciousness, you can slip lucid thoughts and intentions more

²¹ Gabriel Coșoveanu, "Lumea narcolepticilor," *România literară*, no. 41 (October 12, 2012), 6, original text: „este o prizonieră a intermundiilor, dorind să-și ia sub control partea necunoscută (dar și să afle de ce mama sa nu a dorit-o, aspect despre care se spune că e germenul schizofreniei).”

²² Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 219.

²³ Ilona Duță, *Travaliul creator, schizoidie, himeră în literatura română: de la Mircea Cărtărescu la Mihai Eminescu* (Craiova: Universitaria Publishing House, 2021), 265, original text: "locul straniei comuniuni între lumi onirice, halucinatorii, ficționale, spațiu al libertății exploratorii a imaginarului."

²⁴ Corin Braga, *Acedia: jurnal de vise (1998-2007)* (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2014), 13, original text: "un centru de reorganizare a realității."

²⁵ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 88.

easily.”²⁶ It is a method of reflecting upon and analysing the events of the dream, with the objective of reorganising and influencing their course, as Fulviu claims.

However, this mechanism is compromised by Luiza. Instead of slipping lucid thoughts and rational intentions into the dream, as Fulviu had explained to her, she takes elements from the dream and introduces them into everyday life: for instance, she eliminates from the realm of her oneiric double the issues of periodicals absent from her collection, ***regarded as instruments of the dream***. Moreover, she discreetly incorporates elements from the realm of reality into the dream world. The fact that she takes elements from within the dream that she projects onto reality and vice versa, causes a delirium in the group, keeping Fulviu, Michel Textoris and even Dr. Vroclav “trapped in a foreign nightmare,” the latter having to act in accordance with the events that Luiza projects from her dream world. The world of the oneiric double bursts into the dimension of reality, triggering a state of hallucination.

Within this background, a state of perceptual confusion is created; Luiza's dreams are isomorphically superimposed over the plane of reality. Once the protagonist's oneiric universe is invaded by negative images caused, as we have already stated, by the death of her grandmother, Luiza is caught in an avalanche of real inner turmoil. She makes the mistake of summoning her double to visit her real world and, as a result, the dream world begins to take more and more of a hold on her. Even the confrontation with the torturing evil entity is in fact just a projection of her mind and could mean anything: “a stroke, depression, or the onset of psychosis.”²⁷ The character with the evil attributes is a certain Holom, the one who manages to drive Adela and Anir apart and who rules over the sunken Clusium from Luiza's dreams. In addition to the fact that Holom is the negative mental projection of Luiza (psychosis), and is probably also the maiden name of Emma Textoris,²⁸ he is also the triggering instance for the trauma, acting as “an archetypal traumatogenic agency within the psyche itself.”²⁹ Moreover, due to traumatic imprints and emotional vulnerabilities, Luiza becomes anxious and commits reprehensible acts in her dreams: “I did a terrible thing in the dream. I sent Adela to visit Dorli Vlaia, I was jealous because she had gotten so close to Anir. I dreamt of an aborted fetus hanging from the ceiling by the umbilical cord, it was horrible. And Dorli, I think, killed herself...”³⁰ Because of the negative projections that force the dream world, Luiza ends up trapped in her own fantasies. The inner world of the dream overwhelms her and generates a series of

²⁶ Ibid., original text: “Efortul de a-ți aminti tot ce ai visat și de a-l transcrie pe hârtie îți fixează atenția asupra stării de vis. E un mod de a-ți prelungi visul în timpul treziei. Și în acest ținut de margine dintre conștiința ta trează și conștiința adormită poți mai ușor să strecuri gânduri și intenții lucide.”

²⁷ Ibid., 93, original text: “un accident cerebral, o depresie, un început de psihoză.”

²⁸ Ibid., 226.

²⁹ Donald Kalsched, *The Inner World of Trauma: Archetypal Defences of the Personal Spirit* (London and New York: Routledge 1996), 4.

³⁰ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 108, original text: “Am făcut un lucru teribil în vis. Am trimis-o pe Adela s-o viziteze pe Dorli Vlaia, eram geloasă pentru că s-a apropiat atât de mult de Anir. Am visat un fetus avortat atârând de tavan de cordonul ombilical, a fost îngrozitor. Iar Dorli, cred, s-a sinucis...”

dangerous representations, Luiza's inability to separate reality from the nightmare taking on inflationary proportions.

The imaginary universe in which she used to escape and which she explored together with Fulviu through the dream doubles is dissolving, becoming increasingly hostile; the events taking place there become uncontrollable. This, however, was the opposite of what she had set out to do by creating the dream doubles and the dream diary. Once the dreams can no longer be controlled, all of Fulviu's efforts, as well as those of Luiza, become futile. Even dreaming together no longer makes any sense; on the contrary, it makes things so much more difficult that the boundary separating dream from reality disappears:

He had felt as if the world had cracked senselessly, as if he had shattered an invisible foil of safety separating reality from dream. That he would no longer be able to stop things in their tracks when a hallucination entered his room and began to act like a real person. That he would no longer have the strength to wake up.³¹

In this situation, Fulviu is forced to withdraw from their joint experiment, to abandon the dreams he had with Luiza, telling Dr. Vladinski that "this madness must stop. I am done dreaming in two!"³² Fulviu suppresses his oneiric double, opting for dream interruption. Adele's separation from Fulviu's dream double, Anir, traps Luiza even deeper in the *oneiric fascination* from which she can no longer escape, becoming a prisoner of her own dreams. The dream traps her *diurnal ego* and she goes into a state of paradoxical sleep, "she behaves in the normal world as if she were dreaming. She sees reality through the eyes of her oneiric ego."³³ In fact, Luiza oscillates between *paradoxical sleep* and *paradoxical awakening*, concepts proposed by psychiatrist Vladinski in order to describe her truly strange condition.

By suspending the dreams, Fulviu disappears from Luiza's life and from the narrative canvas of the novel. Once Fulviu completes his mission, the dream is no longer an escape from the day-to-day for Luiza, but rather a means to delve even further into *the inner world of trauma* (Donald Kalsched's phrasing). Losing the link with the dream double and Fulviu's disappearance produces that state of *paradoxical awakening* in which Luiza will undergo another *personality split*. The *night ego* will be taken over by the *waking ego* in order to keep her consciousness awake ("perpetual wakefulness"), a state which will mediate her plunge into the traumatic depths of her family:

³¹ Ibid., 186, original text: "Avea impresia că lumea se fisurase insensibil, că spărsese o folie invizibilă de siguranță ce separa realitatea de vis. Că nu va mai putea să oprească lucrurile în loc atunci când o halucinație va pătrunde în camera lui și va începe să se poarte ca un om în carne și oase. Că nu va mai avea puterea de a se trezi."

³² Ibid., 187, original text: "nebunia asta trebuie să înceteze. Am încheiat visul în doi!"

³³ Ibid., 204, original text: "se comportă în lumea normală ca și cum ar visa. Vede realitatea prin ochii eului ei oniric."

She alone went forward, without stopping, on an unrelenting journey. Now she seemed to understand the despair of Jesus, who had asked his disciples on the last night to 'Stay here and keep watch with me!' No one was keeping watch with her anymore, she was advancing towards an unknown target, leaving behind, along the way, the sleeping bodies of all those who were no longer able to continue the *quest*.³⁴

Reaching a state of *paradoxical awakening*, Luiza begins, in fact, a disturbing and dangerous *quest*, a journey with an initiatory scenario, towards a parallel world that opens up to her akin to *flashes* coming from the depths of the unconscious.

Cursed to wander as in a delirious labyrinth, triggering at the same time a *psychological regression*, Luiza allows herself to be caught involuntarily ("instinctively") in the traps of family psychoses. It all starts with the problem of childbirth. Due to some strange circumstances that have projected the fear of the mother who gave birth to her onto the child, Luiza's mother cannot see her as a natural, ordinary child. She feels repulsion towards her and therefore rejects her. The state of abandonment overshadows Luiza's *diurnal ego*, causing the *nocturnal ego* to explore the abyssal dimension of the psyche, to bring to the surface the elements of fracture that lie dormant. The hallucinatory wandering through the underground tunnels of the city is, in fact, a wandering along a traumatic background in the unconscious depths in order to recover some natural processes interrupted at the stage of the formation of the child's consciousness. Since trauma, as Donald Kalsched states, "constitutes an interruption of the normal processes through which an embodied, true self comes into being,"³⁵ Luiza reactivates, through the mediation and within the dream, the elements that have worn down the being of past generations, in order to then bring them, after the formation of specific competences, under the control of the *diurnal ego* (awareness). At the same time, the unconscious factor, the *nocturnal ego*, begins to recover the disintegrated contents of the *Self*. The family trauma haunts Luiza's being, begging, as if by its own power, for a resolution, practically demanding her right to exist, determining her to penetrate the field of traumatic representations, from which she will extract *cohesive* images of her *psychic nebulae*. In this way, the whole canvas of images and sequences illustrating *the inner world of trauma* is reconstructed. These erupt periodically into the *diurnal* register of reality.

In the reality of the *paradoxical awakening*, mysterious elements linger – an inherited *hubris* and a dummy (a "voodoo doll"), from which the curse, that has become an evil obsession for Regine, must be exorcised. A journey through family memories reveals the drama that has marked the destiny of three generations of women: Emma Textoris (changing her name after that of her son-in-law), Regine Textoris and Luiza Textoris, which concludes the traumatic

³⁴ Ibid., 242, original text: "Doar ea mergea înainte, fără să se oprească într-o călătorie inexorabilă. Acum avea impresia că înțelege disperarea lui Isus, care le ceruse ucenicilor, în ultima noapte, «Vegheați cu mine!». Nimeni nu mai veghea cu ea, înainta spre o țință neștiută, lăsând în urmă, pe drum, trupurile adormite ale tuturor care nu mai erau în stare să continue questa."

³⁵ Donald Kalsched, *Trauma and the Soul: A psycho-spiritual approach to human development and its interruption* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 19.

triangle. The destinies of these female characters converge at the same neuralgic point – Joseph Knall, the figure who indirectly triggered the guilt (or at least its awareness) and within whom the seeds of the trauma might actually hide. It is not in vain that Regine Textoris experiences an emotional disintegration (a descent into schizophrenia). The guilt of a mysterious miscarriage becomes more and more overwhelming for her, and she decides to accept a discussion with Luiza on the already taboo subject of the Textoris family. It is a decision for which she is forced to discover the “possibilities of the mirror:” “You go into the mirror, really into yourself, as if you fell asleep one second and the next one second you wake up somewhere else, somewhere you had imagined or somewhere you had wished to be. Provided you have a mirror handy.”³⁶ At the same time, Luiza retains her “clarity of day vision”, that is, her lucidity. Thanks to this possibility, Luiza initiates an extensive genealogical interrogation in the “hypnotizing mirror”, especially on her maternal genealogy, because she “felt that her destiny was obscurely linked to the family’s past.”³⁷ The manner in which oneiric travel is conducted changes. If up until that moment she could explore the dream universe through the *nocturnal ego*, once she discovers the possibilities of the mirror, she can travel wherever she wants in the awakened state, so *she wanders through dreams in the waking state*.³⁸

Luiza pushes the boundaries of the supernatural and enters the other dimension of human existence (the world of the dead) trying to make contact with her ancestors in order to identify the breaking point. There, he discovers monstrous images and terrifying corruptions, evil phantasms, the cursed obsession of the aborted fetus, which is nothing other than Joseph Knall's odious reflection and which risks being projected onto Luiza. Determining that something was wrong with her mother's pregnancy, which her grandmother could not give her much detail about, she is forced to delve further into this *transgenerational* issue, all the way to Joseph and even to Gregor (her mother's first boyfriend, having “something important to learn from him that only he can tell”). The plot of the novel gradually slips into a zone of the supernatural, of mystery, into a zone of Bulgakovian magic flooded with fantasies in which everything is possible – the other (oneiric) world is just as alive and real (possible). In other words, it is a world of possibilities in which things happen that go beyond the conventional framework of reality, because there is an autonomous universe that is directly related to fiction, an aspect that Corin Braga talks about in his theoretical studies:

A coherent fictional world is a world in itself, autonomous, which has its own space-time frame, its own natural and supernatural laws, its landscapes, its settings and inhabitants, its history and its

³⁶ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 283, original text: “Întri în oglindă, de fapt în tine, ca și cum ai adormi o secundă, iar în secunda următoare te trezești în altă parte, acolo unde ți-ai imaginat sau acolo unde ți-ai dorit să fii. Cu condiția să ai și acolo o oglindă la îndemână.”

³⁷ Ibid., 310, original text: “simțea că în mod obscur destinul ei e legat de trecutul familiei.”

³⁸ Ibid., 305.

adventures. Fictional universes can be mimetic, 'realistic' (but no less imaginary) versions of our primary world, or 'fantasy' versions that invent or 'set up' other worlds, different from our own.³⁹

Thus, in the novel *Luiza Textoris*, the temporal boundaries between the definite and the indefinite, between what *was* and what *is*, between the conscious and the unconscious, disappear at a certain point. Luiza finds that the depths in which she dives reflect the outside world (or vice versa) to such an extent that it becomes a whole, a collective memory that is easily accessible, especially when properly interrogated (the submersion into the unconscious). What was unconscious becomes conscious, something accessible only to a *higher consciousness*, of which Albert Beguin explains that "it is achieved through the integration of the whole unconscious."⁴⁰ Being in a state of continuous wakefulness (*paradoxical waking*), Luiza actually unravels the family's traumatic tangle, tracing through the labyrinth of unconsciousness that thread of Ariadne that should bring her back to the surface. However, this thread seems to have several conflicting knots in it, making the process of regaining self-consciousness much more difficult. Luiza Textoris' looking in the mirror is nothing other than the awareness of the ontic dimension of her being. It is not in vain that the ability to look in the mirror and to travel through it comes after a period of psycho-emotional maturity that makes her capable of piercing and understanding certain family dilemmas and traumas. It is the realization of what is and what could be, a *stage* similar to the one Jacques Lacan speaks on. Looking into the mirror like Alice (Lewis Carroll's character), using it as a portal to another dimension of existence, Luiza reaches that *stage of the mirror* where she can become aware of the trauma that defines her existence. In this way, she enters the subconscious, indulges in forbidden contents and discovers the self with astonishment.

The *quest* of Luiza can be interpreted as a reconstruction of the journey up to the embryonic stage, up to the moment when she can establish a union with her mother, who should have been the axis of her being, not the schismatic element in the child's consciousness. Although the communion between mother and daughter was formally established in front of the mirror in the bathroom of the Herina sanatorium, it was only so that Regine Textoris could "exorcise" her curse and her guilt. For Luiza, however, it becomes the final destination, the realisation of her true ontic nature. Luiza's fate can be interpreted as a parable of human destiny. The stages she passes through and the manner in which she accomplishes her journey, are

³⁹ Corin Braga, *Lumi ficționale. O taxinomie a genului utopic*, study published in the collective volume coordinated by Corin Braga, *Morfologia lumilor posibile* (Bucharest: Tracus Arte Publishing House, 2015), 20, original text: "O lume ficțională coerentă este o lume în sine, autonomă, care are propriul său cadru spațio-temporal, legile sale naturale și supranaturale, peisajele, decorurile și locuitorii săi, istoria și aventurile ei. Universurile ficționale pot fi variante mimetice, «realiste» (dar nu mai puțin imaginare) ale lumii noastre primare, sau variante «fanteziste», care inventează sau «instaurează» alte lumi, diferite de a noastră."

⁴⁰ Albert Beguin, *Sufletul romantic și visul. Eseu despre romantismul german*, translated by Dumitru Țepeneag, foreword by Mircea Martin (Bucharest: Univers Publishing House, 1998), 270, original text: "se obține prin integrarea întregului inconștient."

representative of stages of existential development/return: 1) childhood – the flying-journey through the dream (the oneiric flight); 2) adulthood – the chthonic and underwater journey through the dream double, often with a companion or guide, as Fulviu was for Luiza (Fulviu's "sudden" disappearance from the narrative plot has a symbolic connotation – introspection or the stage of pre-awareness); 3) old age – the journey through the mirror, *the stage of the mirror* or of *awareness*, where the connection with the ancestors is established and where she identifies); 4) death – the journey in the waking state (*paradoxical awakening*) into the dreams of another dreamer (passing into the afterlife and returning (wandering/ "haunting") into the dream dimension); 5) rebirth – the return to the matrix of being, possessing all the abilities to travel, but the preferred one remaining the flight to the "mother" (resumption of the cycle or apocatastasis). Flying above the familiar places, Luiza "had the feeling of an emperor's son who, after having travelled through the mythical lands of the other world, sees in a magic mirror the places where he grew up. She had returned, for a brief moment, to her former life, only to discover that the world had changed and moved on without her. She wasn't allowed to get off the winged stallion, it would have been fatal to touch the ground or the objects of her previous existence (at least until her encounter with Regine in the sanatorium in Herina, n.n.), she had been expelled or had fled the familiar universe out of her own free will, and now she was a lost and demotivated stranger."⁴¹

Even though she is locked in the hospital room, Luiza can transcend not only space, but also time through the mirror. Moreover, still in a state of paradoxical awareness, she can enter someone else's dream, especially Gregor's, and later Fulviu's. She thus enters as an intruder into Gregor's dream world, forcing his *nocturnal ego* to reconstruct the *traumatic affect* that has torn his being apart. She takes the dreamer (*the oneiric actant*) through the "slideshow of his past," turning over the portion of his memory that is directly related to the event linked to the child aborted by Regine Textoris. Luiza Textoris seems to experience the drama of the unborn and aborted child. Moreover, in the delirious play of imaginary fictions, the feeling/idea is insinuated that this character does not even exist as a fictional reality, that, having been *decorporealised*, he would only live in the dreams of others. The fear that she did not "really" exist gnawed at her conscience: "Was I the beast? [...] making a bizarre but overwhelming connection. I actually died then, and my whole life is but the dream of the aborted embryo?"⁴² If we accept the textual suggestion (encountered several times throughout the story) that Luiza was the one who was aborted, then we can conclude that the story reaches a turning point of hallucinatory perplexity. In the fictional reality we have a character who dreams and tells her story, when in fact she exists

⁴¹ Corin Braga, *Luiza Textoris*, 327, original text: "avea sentimentul fiului de împărat care, după ce a străbătut ținuturile mirifice ale celeilalte lumi, vede într-o oglindă magică locurile unde a copilărit. Iată, se întorsese pentru o clipă în viața ei de dinainte și descoperirea că lumea se schimbasese, mersese mai departe fără ea. Nu avea voie să coboare de pe bidiviul înaripat, i-ar fi fost fatal să atingă pământul sau obiectele existenței sale anterioare (cel puțin până la întâlnirea cu Regine în sanatoriul din Herina, n.n.), fusese expulzată sau fugise de buna voie din universul familiar, iar acum era o străină pierdută și demotivată."

⁴² Ibid., 307, original text: "Fătul eram eu? [...] făcând o conexiune bizară, dar copleșitoare. Am murit de fapt atunci, și toată viața mea nu e decât visul embrionului avortat?"

only in a tight network of words, that is, only in a matrix text, an oasis of her own existence (Luiza's corporeality would be the text itself), which struggles and begs the fictional factor to exist in this formula in the oneiric fabric (TEXTORIS).

Although it seems to be only a textual reality, therefore a "psycho-text", Luiza is also a symbol of our inner world, a projection of the *inner child*, who wanders in the unconscious dimension most of the time and only asks (the inner voice) that sometimes we join their *quest*, because only in this way can the terrible fear of abandonment in a disintegrated or even dead world be dispelled. From another dimension, Luiza desperately tries to enter the "everyday", but she remains cleaved in a terrible loneliness towards the world she forced her way into and which has stopped looking for her; she "will forever remain outside, outside the salon, outside her family room and apartment, outside the city, outside the world."⁴³ But in the world where she stayed, she meets her projection, Adela, a resigned double who has accepted her destiny. This odyssey in the dark labyrinth of the unconscious will bring her face to face with the *Self*, with the one she has been running away from (the absent one, the *decorporealised* one). In the end, Luiza Textoris manages to get out of the convulsive state of searching for the *Self*, manages to escape from the labyrinthine circles of the unconscious, which have trapped her in the "Peter Pan syndrome". The stage that the character reaches – which is in fact a regression (a return), is the confirmation of the conclusion of a long cycle of psychological suffering and a full acceptance of the liberating dimension, perhaps even of death. Through the symbolic embrace of the little girl at the end of the novel, which is nothing more than the projection of her double, the psycho-ontological maturation actually occurs. It is an embrace of the *inner child*, similar to the embrace of Filimon after an arduous search for himself in the novel by the Bessarabian author Vladimir Beșleagă, *Viața și moartea nefericitului Filimon* (*The Life and Death of the Unhappy Filimon* – written in 1970 and published only in 1988). Although she remains stuck in the dream, being de facto in the hospital in Herina, her soul or her inner world continues to exist outside her corporeality. Her body remains immobilized in the psychiatric hospital, but her being remains in the mythical world she had always been dreaming (imagining). On the other hand, this *decorporealisation* could mean escaping from the everyday life and living in another dimension of existence, thus ending a cycle of her evolution. It seems to be more like a path to the inner child, in which Luiza reaches a happy final harmony in the midst of an eternal noon (the expulsion from time), the image that swiftly concludes the tumultuous wandering of the protagonist in the suffocating hell of the unconscious. Although the story seems to be over, its ending remains open. The story continues, on a different level, in Corin Braga's fourth novel, *Ventrilocul* (*The Ventriloquist*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2022), from the *Noctambulii* (*The Sleepwalkers*) series.

As complex as it is fascinating, the novel *Luiza Textoris* reconstructs an initiatory path of recovery of a traumatized *Self*. Hermeneutically following the threads of the message of this novel, we found that the main character goes through a journey of rebuilding and restoring her inner balance. The oneiric and introspective "tools" explore the tenebrous realm of the personal,

⁴³ Ibid., 368, original text: "va rămâne pentru totdeauna afară, afară din salon, afară din camera și apartamentul familiei sale, afară din oraș, afară din lume."

familial and even collective unconscious, all strung together in a scenario dominated by torturous fantasies and monstrous projections. This epic journey brings to light the drama of wandering around, as well as that of becoming a child. The road to realization is arduous and rewrites the labour of the “eternal return” to that archetypal image of the *inner child*, trapped in a psycho-ontological block, whose voice has been stifled. Reconciliation with the split and disoriented ego occurs only when the character becomes capable of heeding its caresses and its warm call for inner peace. Yet, the little girl at the end of the novel is the revealing instance that saves Luiza from eternal wandering, from the effects of her abandonment to Herina, and **apparently** succeeds in bringing her (back) into a space from which reconciliation and that integration process of all opposites can be realised. Thus, Corin Braga manages, with a remarkable epic force, to tell us not only the mysterious story of the Textoris family, but to reveal a whole mechanism for probing psychological depths, for reconciling the *inner ego* with its self and for taming personal traumas or recurring family obsessions. What is certain is that this vast oneiric project becomes an assertive endeavour, in which the texts (either the other novels in the *Noctambulii* series, or the dream diaries), although independent, interlock so easily, forming a distinct *narrative polyphony*, capable of painting an impressive imaginary universe