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From Virginia Woolf to Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu: Adaptation, Intertextuality or Zeitgeist?

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Abstract

This article explores several intersections between Virginia Woolf's creation and that of a famous Romanian modernist writer, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu. Since these intersections are at the border between adaptation and intertextuality but also can be placed within the larger context of Zeitgeist, the introductory section carefully makes distinctions between these terms, emphasizing that the question mark in the title of the article signals precisely that Papadat-Bengescu's creation was not always conscious adaptation of Woolf's feminist approach to literature. The second section discusses Woolf's reception in interwar Romania, bringing several valuable additions to Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst's edited volume The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe, which recorded faithfully what happened in countries like France, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, yet ignored anything that happened in Eastern Europe. After briefly introducing the Romanian writer's creation, the third section establishes possible connections between Woolf's and Papadat-Bengescu's works via the two major figures both female writers admired: Marcel Proust and Henri Bergson with whom they shared a heritage; the section focuses more on those

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literary devices that both Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu borrowed from the creator of À la recherche du temps perdu. Section four looks at what can be considered Papadat-Bengescu's adaptations of modernist narrative techniques and starts from several definitions of the stream of consciousness, showing also the way in which the Romanian writer chose to explore the characters' flow of inner experiences. The next section deals with the two novelists' poetic fiction and investigates Papadat-Bengescu's feminist programme as an adaptation of what she learned from other contemporary Western writers like Woolf. This section also includes an extended analysis of a fragment from Papadat-Bengescu short story "Marea" [The Sea] which is compared to Woolf's The Waves. The article ends symmetrically on a reflection upon Woolf's declaration on the universality of her creation that is extended to the findings on Papadat-Bengescu's connections with it.

Keywords: Virginia Woolf, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, adaptation, intertextuality, feminism, modernism

Introduction: From Britain to Eastern Europe, Romania

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), the famous English modernist and feminist writer, conceived women as outsiders who could transcend national boundaries. She declared: "As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world".[1] And indeed, even if at the time she was writing *Three Guineas*, she was not aware of the fame that would be bestowed upon her; her work gained increasing attention in all countries: not only in the West where "a remarkable web of influence and intertextuality has spread" from her work, "stretching across generations of writers as well as national borders",[2] but also in countries from Eastern Europe where she was regarded as one of the most influential modernist feminists.

This article will explore several intersections between Woolf's creation and that of a famous modernist Romanian writer, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu (1876-1955), arguably the first major female writer in the Romanian literary canon, who is less known in world literature, since her prose was published in her native tongue.

Although publishing this research in a thematic issue on "Adaptation", the question mark in my title would signal that one cannot be sure that Papadat-Bengescu was fully conscious of adapting Woolf's feminist approach to literature and the stream-of-consciousness. The article will tackle those common features of the two novelists' works and will endeavour to place

[1] Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: Hogarth, 1938), 313. Woolf's essay was actually referring to the idea of female patriotism and brought arguments against the extension of the social contract between a country and that country's female citizens.

[2] Jane de Gay, Tom Breckin and Anne Reus, "Introduction", in *Virginia Woolf and Heritage: Selected Papers from the Twenty – Six Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, eds Jane de Gay, Tom Breckin and Anne Reus (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2017), xi.

these convergences within a larger context that is neither pure adaptation nor pure intertextuality. Adaptation is "[t]he process by which one narrative form or medium is converted into another, for example a novel to film, a stage play to screenplay, or a classical poem to graphic novel."[3] However, one can include under the meanings of "adaptation" transpositions within the same literary genre, such as transforming a novel into a book for children. The world-renown specialist of adaptation, Linda Hutcheon defined it also as "repetition, but repetition without replication" and included among the possible intentions behind adaptation "the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text".[4] According to Hutcheon, adaptation can be "[a]n acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work", "[a] creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation / salvaging" as well as "[a]n extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work."[5] The third definition brings us to the term "intertextuality" coined by Julia Kristeva in *La Revolution du langage poetique* (1966) in order to counter the vague concept of influence as well as the practice of searching the sources of a literary work.[6] Kristeva's notion denotes an interdependence of literary texts, or of any literary text with all those that have preceded it. Kristeva's contention is that "a literary text is not an isolated phenomenon but is made up of a mosaic of quotations, and that any text is the 'absorption and transformation of another'".[7] Thus, she detects

[3] J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 5th ed., rev. by M. A. R. Habib (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 9.

[4] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 7.

[5] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 8.

[6] See Leon S. Roudiez, "Introduction", in Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 15.

[7] Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 367. For a highly elaborated critical approach on intertextuality see Laurent Milesi, "Inter-textualités: enjeux et perspectives (en guise d'avant-propos)", in *Text(s) et Intertextes*, eds Éric Le Calvez and Marie-Claude Canova-Green (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997), 7-34.

within the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts that "intersect and neutralize one another."[8]

Hutcheon's definition of adaptation as intertextual engagement and Kristeva's notion of intertextuality as permutation of texts will be my guiding theoretical threads, since I will place the similarities between Woolf's and Papadat-Bengescu's works within a larger context of the German *Zeitgeist* ("spirit of the age"), a concept developed in German philosophy at the end of 18th – beginning of the 19th century. *Zeitgeist* referred to "the trend, fashion or taste of a particular period."[9] This definition is very revelatory for the context in which Papadat-Bengescu wrote. One of her mentors was E. Lovinescu, (1883-1943), a Romanian critic who was the advocate of bourgeois liberalism and probably the best promoter and defender of modernism in the age; he was very concerned with Romania's keeping up-to-date with what was happening in the West. His theories of "synchronism" and "the mutation of aesthetic values" from *Istoria civilizației române moderne* [History of Modern Romanian Civilization, three volumes, 1924-1925] were themselves resonating with the concept of "adaptation". They had started from the theory of imitation developed by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde. Lovinescu had rejected the ideals of Romanian populist literary currents and believed that the Romanian culture needed to become synchronous with the Western culture, whose elements of originality it had to adapt. He believed that as a minor culture, Romania had to become part of the spirit of the age. The Romanian culture had to avoid entering a dangerous inertia and borrow from other major cultures which were more evolved, although that did not mean that Romanian writers were to forget their national values. Quite on the contrary, they were supposed to practice a type of imitation which was not entirely "servile" but also took into account national identity. Lovinescu advised all the writers who

[8] Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 36.

[9] Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 783.

were members of the literary society *Sburătorul*[10] (where Papadat-Bengescu practically launched her career as a writer) to create poetry and fiction on a par with their contemporary European literary trends. *Sburătorul* promoted new trends in Romanian literature such as symbolism and the Avant-garde in poetry as well as the urban-themed realism in prose. One of the directions that Lovinescu encouraged was the development of the analytic novel and the intellectualisation of prose via poetic language and modernist literary techniques, which is precisely the direction that Papadat-Bengescu followed. In Lovinescu's view, influence was necessary to model the national culture helping it finding its meanings. Thus, borrowing new literary forms could create the premises of creating original content. As this article will demonstrate, Papadat-Bengescu borrowed many modernist literary devices from Western feminist prose, including Woolf's.

Woolf's Reception in Interwar Romania

The most comprehensive volume on the way in which Woolf was influential in other European literatures, *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe,*[11] includes chapters on French, German, Polish, Swedish, Danish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Galician, Catalan and Portuguese reception but nothing on Romanian reception. The volume indicates only the Romanian translations of Woolf's novels which actually came much later than the fair amount of reviews and studies of

[10] *Sburătorul* was a literary society and a Romanian modernist literary magazine with the subtitle *Revista literară, artistică şi culturală* [The Literary, Artistic and Cultural Review, April 1919-May 1921 and March 1926-June 1927). *Sburătorul* also edited the weekly *Sburătorul literar* (September 1921- December 1922).

[11] Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst (eds), *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008).

her work.[12] What the volume ignores are the first two translations of Woolf into Romanian, translations acknowledged only by Adrian Varga in an excellent analysis of Woolf's reception in Romania: Woolf's sketch "The Lady in the Looking-Glass" (published in *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 1929) translated by Nora Marian in 1938 as "Femeia în oglindă" [The Woman in the Looking-Glass] (incidentally, as I will show in the next section, Papadat-Bengescu titled her 1921 collection of short stories: *Femeia în faţa oglinzii* [The Woman in front of the Mirror]), and *Din beznă spre soare* [From Darkness Toward the Sun], translated by George Sbârcea in 1943.[13]

Actually, looking at the dates of the translations that *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe* records (none before the 70's), one would be tempted to place Woolf's reception in Romania much later, since one should note that there is a time lag between the translation of a work and its literary reception. However, due to Romania's "synchronism" with France that I will deal with in the next section, in Woolf's case, as I previously showed in two monographs,[14] the Romanian reception was immediate and quite rich, in spite of the fact that no translations of Woolf's major novels were published in the

[12] The translations from Woolf's novels appeared in communism, when Western literature was not seen as a model to be followed. In spite of this, Woolf's poetic style was not seen as subversive and thus uncensured translations into Romanian appeared: *Mrs Dalloway* (1968), *Orlando* (1968), *To the Lighthouse* (1972), *Essays* (1972), *The Waves* (1973), *Between the Acts* (1978), *A Writer's Diary* (1980), *Jacob's Room* (1990), *The Voyage Out* (1994).

[13] See Adriana Varga, "'A shadow crossed the tail of his eye': The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Romania: Heritage Transformed", in *Virginia Woolf and Heritage*, 234.

[14] Arleen Ionescu, *Concordanţe româno-britanice* [Romanian-British Concordances] (Ploieşti: Editura Universităţii din Ploieşti, 2004); Arleen Ionescu, *Romanian Joyce: From Hostility to Hospitality* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 47-9.

interwar period. Varga's assessment on the reception of Woolf in the inter-war period (2017) converged with my own (2004, 2014) with a slight difference in the interpretation of Marcu Beza's reception of Woolf, which will be dealt with later on in this section. Part of Varga's title, "a shadow [that] crossed the tail of his eye" (*Orlando*), captures a fascinating detail on Woolf's reception of Romanian history and mythology: Archduke Harry, a character who is based on Vita Sackville West's real-life early suitor, Henry Lascelles (1882-1947), sixth Earl of Harewood, is "rooted in 'the Roumanian territory'".[15] Varga's explanation for this unusual reference in Woolf's work is her attraction to "the 'exoticism' the Western gaze found in this region that may have been enticing – the East is, after all, the place where Orlando finds license to undergo his sexual transformation."[16]

In the interwar period, Romania was mainly a francophone country. Not many literati spoke English, but the majority had education in France and a very good command of French; thus, Romanians would read literature and literary reviews published in the main French literary journals, especially *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. In other words, the Romanian reception of English literature was via the French literary journals and the translations from English into French.

In his "Virginia Woolf among Writers and Critics: The French Intellectual Scene", Pierre-Éric Villeneuve pointed out that "[a]n examination of Woolf's relationship with French criticism must acknowledge that English studies in France during her lifetime focused on the Joycean revolution. To this day French critics continue to refer [or defer] to Joyce, firm in their

[15] Adriana Varga, "'A shadow crossed the tail of his eye': The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Romania: Heritage Transformed", in *Virginia Woolf and Heritage*, 230.

[16] Adriana Varga, "'A shadow crossed the tail of his eye': The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Romania: Heritage Transformed", in *Virginia Woolf and Heritage*, 230.

opinion that he is the guiding light of literary life across the Channel."[17] In Romania, since there were both admirers and detractors of Joyce's work, the emphasis on Joyce to the detriment of approaching Woolf's work was less visible. The Romanian public became aware of both Joyce's and Woolf's works through translated articles published in the French literary journals. Apart from these, as far as Woolf's reception is concerned, they offered brief analyses and wrote mainly comparative literature studies which explored women writers' moving away from traditional and patriarchal notions of literary criticism. Among the main articles, the following can be considered relevant for the 20's: in 1925 Marc Loge's article published in *Revue Bleue*[18] mentioned Woolf's name for the first time in Romania; in 1926, Isabela Sadoveanu's interview with Silvia Stevenson referred to "significant writers" such as H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, Virginia Woof, James Joyce and G. B. Shaw;[19] in 1927 Marcu Beza (1882-1949), a reputed specialist of English literature devoted three articles to several English women novelists (Sheila Kaye-Smith and Rebecca West,[20] Clemence Day and May Sinclair,[21] Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf);[22] in 1929, a fragment from André

[17] Pierre-Éric Villeneuve, "Virginia Woolf among Writers and Critics: The French Intellectual Scene", in *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*, 19.

[18] Anon., "Câteva romanciere engleze contemporane" [Several Contemporary English Novelists], *Adevărul literar şi artistic*, 6.262 (13 December 1925): 7.

[19] Sadoveanu, Isabela, "Literatura engleză actuală. De vorbă cu Miss Silvia Stevenson" [Contemporary English Literature: Speaking to Miss Silvia Stevenson], *Adevărul literar şi artistic* 9.385 (22 April 1928): 5. All translations from Romanian criticism and Papadat-Bengescu's works are mine.

[20] Marcu Beza, "Romanciere engleze contemporane" [Contemporary English Women Novelists], *Propilee literare* 2.6 (1 June 1927): 3-5.

[21] Marcu Beza, "Romanciere engleze contemporane" [Contemporary English Women Novelists], *Propilee literare* 2.11-12 (1 September 1927): 19-22.

[22] Marcu Beza, "Romanciere engleze contemporane" [Contemporary English Women Novelists], *Propilee literare* 2.13 (15 September 1927): 20-21.

Maurois was translated by Romulus Dianu[23] and Demostene Botez published an article entitled "An Impressionist Aesthetic of the Novel" in which he focused on Woolf's work.[24]

By the thirties, Woolf was already known in Romania. D. Faur [25] reviewed Georges Bec's French translation, *Nuit et jour*, considering the novel a traditionalist work. An anonymous reviewers considered that the main innovation of the novel was the "very special psychological introspection".[26] Mihail Sebastian (1907-1944), a famous playwright, novelist and critic of Jewish origin, wrote an extended review of *Night and Day*. He considered that the novel is imbued by "the detailed realism and the solemn sentiment of existence".[27] For Sebastian the difference between French and English writers lay in the critical spirit that, while being the main element of the former, was replaced by the latter with the "creative spirit" and features denoting "insular literature", a type of literature that created not "typical" but "vivid" characters. An anonymous critic who signed with his initials (N.A.) was not preoccupied with what many Westerners were trying to understand in *Orlando*, Woolf's reconciliation with the alterity of her personality, but rather with the way in which the novel suppresses "temporal perspectives", thus relativizing completely "temporal and spatial vision".[28] *Mrs. Dalloway* was reviewed by

[23] Maurois, André, "Prima întâlnire cu Virginia Woolf: Pentru a fi mare romancier" [First Meeting with Virginia Woolf: To Be a Great Novelist], trans. Romulus Dianu, *Rampa nouă ilustrată* 14.3303 (27 January 1929): 3.

[24] Demostene Botez, "O estetică impresionistă a romanului" [An Impressionistic Aesthetics of the Novel], *Viaţa Românească* (6 April 1929): 309-12.

[25] D. Faur, "Virginia Woolf: *Nuit et jour*", *Dimineaţa* 30.9780 (19 March 1934): 3.

[26] Anon., "*Zi şi noapte*" [Night and Day], *Adevărul literar şi artistic* 13.708, 2nd series (1 July 1934): 8.

[27] Mihail Sebastian, "Notă la un roman englez" [Note on an English Novel], *Revista Fundaţiilor Regale* 2.1 (January 1935): 171-7.

[28] N. A., "Virginia Woolf – *Orlando*", *Adevărul literar şi artistic* 9.432 (17 March 1929): 7.

Olga Caba[29] and Arşavir Acterian, for whom the novel dealt with the "most intimate and inaccessible textures of the human soul."[30] *To the Lighthouse* was reviewed by the same Sebastian who appreciated its "escape into subjectivity"[31] and *The Waves* by Izabela Sadoveanu[32] and by Tiberiu Iliescu who called it "the poem of ecstatic loneliness".[33] In another article, Iliescu insisted on the impressionistic and lyrical narrative of the six monologues from the novel that described a plurality of realities, transforming Woolf into a writer of "a literature of nuances of feelings, of precision, of thought that are subtly pulverized by the unknown of consciousness."[34] For Alexandru Bilciurescu, Woolf was a great reformer of the novel who used Woolfian narrative techniques of *The Years* and on the difference between subjective and objective time, calling the former "psychological time" and the latter, "mathematical time".[35]

Apart from the reviews published in literary journals, several books included chapters on Woolf's work, like Marcu Beza's *Romanul englez contemporan* [The Contemporary English Novel] which nevertheless criticised *Mrs Dalloway*, because it gave up plot and objective vision for the sake of the interior monologue which contained too many ellipses.[36] My

[29] Olga Caba, "Virginia Woolf", *Pagini Literare* (15 May 1934): 63-4.

[30] Arşavir Acterian, "Citind…" [Reading…], *Axa* 2.17 (6 September 1933): 4.

[31] Mihail Sebastian, "Virginia Woolf", *Cuvântul* 6.1881 (18 July 1930): 1-2.

[32] Is. Sd. [=Isabela Sadoveanu], "Ultima scriere a Virginiei Woolf, tradusă în limba franceză" [Virginia Woolf's Latest Work, Translated into French], *Adevărul literar şi artistic* 18.875, 3rd Series (5 September 1937):16.

[33] Tiberiu Iliescu, "Virginia Woolf sau Poemul singurătăţii extatice" [Virginia Woolf or the Poem of Ecstatic Loneliness], *Condeiul* 1.10-11 (July-August 1939): 6.

[34] Tiberiu Iliescu, "Virginia Woolf sau Poemul singurătăţii extatice" [Virginia Woolf or the Poem of Ecstatic Loneliness], *Meridian* 5.13 (1941): 43-7.

[35] Alexandru Bilciurescu, "Virginia Woolf", *Timpul* 3.685 (30 March 1939): 2.

[36] Marcu Beza, *Romanul englez contimporan* [The Contemporary English Novel] (Bucharest: Cultura Naţională 1928), 115.

perspective on Beza's approach to Woolf differs slightly from Varga's. According to Varga, Beza saw the value of Woolf as "part of a generation of young British authors – the generation Woolf herself defined as 'the Georgians' – who were dealing with similar questions and problems raised by the modernist, experimental novel."[37] Although it is true that Beza did not disapprove of *Mrs Dalloway* as he did with Joyce's *Ulysses*,[38] the negative perception on Woolf's 'new' fiction prevailed. Beza was trained as a classicist Anglicist and not unlike other admirers of traditional narratives,[39] he could not cope with what he thought was the incoherence of the characters' inner thoughts. He objected to Clarissa's double, Septimus Warren Smith whose appearance in the book destroyed the unity of the novel: "Yet what does one [character] have to do with the other? Where is the link?"[40] Dismissing Woolf's stream-of-consciousness technique, abstract language and lyricism altogether, Beza did not rate the novel as excellent although he inferred its importance for modernism. Yet, unlike Lovinescu, Beza was not a promoter of modernism because he objected to its impressionistic style and subjectivity. He found some ties between Clarissa Dalloway and female characters from French novels like Emma Bovary and Eugenie Grandet. However, he praised Flaubert for knowing "when to intervene" and Balzac for realising that Eugenie Grandet, through her simple character "does not allow a subjective approach, letting her alone to unveil her soul in the patience of her devoted waiting".[41] Beza placed Richardson and Woolf in the gallery of "soul artists" whose fiction abounded in "bursts of emotions, deep perspectives as if thrown in rapid, uninhibited sentences."[42] The other biggest Romanian Anglicist of

[37] Adriana Varga, "'A shadow crossed the tail of his eye': The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Romania: Heritage Transformed", in *Virginia Woolf and Heritage*, 233-234.

[38] See Ionescu, *Romanian Joyce*, 93.

[39] See my accounts on Dragoş Protopopescu and Camil Petrescu in *Romanian Joyce*, 94-96.

[40] Beza, *Romanul englez contimporan*, 115.

[41] Beza, *Romanul englez contimporan*, 116.

[42] Beza, *Romanul englez contimporan*, 118.

the 40's was Dragoş Protopopescu (1892-1948), who did not even devote a chapter to her work in his *Curs de engleză. Romanul englez. Note*, 1945-1946 [Course of English: The English Novel, 1945-1946]. In my opinion, ignoring Woolf's work meant rejection, since he characterized the whole generation of novelists (James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, Gertrude Stein etc) as creators of a "novel that suffered from anaemia because of too much cerebralism."[43] Protopopescu was thus voicing his inability to understand the excessive focus on formal experimentation and the rendering of characters' psychical processes and inner conflicts to the detriment of including their social life in a plot.

Although such reception may seem incomplete if we compare it to what was happening in the West, one needs to take into account Romania's position in Eastern Europe. Many of its neighbours were not following closely the literary debates in the West. From this perspective, the fact that Romanians read English literature (even through French translations) was because Romania was culturally and ideologically close to France and hence to the West until after WW2 when the situation changed drastically. After 23rd of August 1944, Romania became a Soviet satellite and as a Stalinist country it rejected any influence from the West.

Woolf, Papadat-Bengescu and Proust

A first step towards establishing the relation between Woolf and the Romanian prose writer would be to investigate if the latter could speak English in order to be able to read Woolf in the original. Unfortunately, very little is known about Papadat-Bengescu's education. She debuted as a writer at thirty-six, after she had fulfilled her role as a wife and a mother, although, as E.

[43] Dragoş Protopopescu, *Curs de engleză. Romanul englez. Note 1945-1946* [Course of English: The English Novel. Notes 1945-1946] (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 1946), 157.

Lovinescu's letters prove, she wrote poetry in French before (hence her linguistic skills in French cannot be contested).[44] Papadat-Bengescu did not define very clearly her literary views and writing practices. *Autobiografie* [Autobiography][45] and the letters to Garabet Ibrăileanu[46] (1908-1934) show that she strove to achieve technical precision in her prose and that she felt that the conventions of traditional fiction were exhausted.

Papadat-Bengescu left five volumes of short stories. The first three, *Ape adânci* [Deep Waters, 1919], *Sfinxul* [The Sphinx, 1921] and *Femeia în faţa oglinzii* [The Woman in front of the Mirror, 1921] focused on "the value, vitality, and dynamism of the specifically female inner experience."[47] The next two collections were *Romanţă provincială* [Provincial Romance, 1925]

[44] E. Lovinescu was her second important mentor. E. Lovinescu's letters written to Papadat-Bengescu reveal that the writer had given him three notebooks containing her poems written in French. In the 20's some of these were read and then published in the last series of the literary magazine *Sburătorul*, then in *Familia* (1935) and *Revista română* (1941). See E. Lovinescu, *Inedite: articole, scrisori, autografe, prefeţe, cereri şi petiţii, alte documente (1896-1943)* [Unpublished: Articles, Letters, Autographs, Prefaces, Requests, Petitions, Other Documents (1896-1943)], ed. Dan Gulea (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2018), 418. Dan Gulea's excellent edited book based on a lot of archival material unpublished before reveals lots of details about other modernist writers who took Lovinescu's principle of synchronisation very seriously.

[45] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Autobiografia", *Adevărul literar şi artistic* 18.866 (11 July 1937): 5-6 and 18.867 (18 July 1937): 5-6. It was written between 14 November 1930 and 1 February 1931, at the request of G. Călinescu, a reputed literary critic, who required Papadat-Bengescu to write it "with the attention of the novelist, without any journalistic convention". See G. Călinescu, *Scrisori şi documente* [Letters and Documents], ed., notes and index Nicolae Scurtu, pref. Al. Piru (Bucharest: Minerva, 1979), 47.

[46] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, *Scrisori către Ibrăileanu* [Letters to Ibrăileanu], eds M. Bordeianu, Gr. Botez, I. Lăzărescu, Dan Mănucă and Al. Teodorescu, preface Al. Dima and N. I. Popa (Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură, 1966).

[47] Sanda Golopentia, "Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu", in *Women Writers of Great Britain and Europe: An Encyclopedia*, eds Katharina M. Wilson, Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 1997), 350.

and *Desenuri tragice* [Tragic Drawings, 1927]. Papadat-Bengescu also wrote several plays, only one published during her lifetime, *Bătrânul* [The Old Man, 1920-1921], the rest being collected by editor Eugenia Tudor in *Teatru* [Plays, 1965]. In 1923 she published her first novel, *Balaurul* [The Dragon]. Starting with 1926, her four most important novels were published in *Ciclul Hallipa* [The Hallipa Cycle] that contained *Fecioarele despletite* [The Dishevelled Maidens, 1926), *Concert din muzică de Bach* [Concert from Bach Music, 1927), *Drumul ascuns* [The Hidden Way, 1932], *Rădăcini* [Roots, 1938], where she presented "the physical decay and moral aridity" of Romania's urban and suburban life.[48] While completing her masterpiece, she published another novel *Logodnicul* [The Fiancé, 1935]. Her last novel, *Străina* [The Stranger Woman] was published posthumously after it had mysteriously disappeared while in press.

Several Romanian critics (like, for instance, Perpessicius, Mircea Zaciu, Nicolae Manolescu, Dana Dumitriu) drew parallels between Woolf's and Papadat-Bengescu's works. Perpessicius (1891-1971) was the first to mention that Papadat-Bengescu used the Woolfian interior monologue and other stream-of-consciousness techniques in her novel *Drumul ascuns* [The Hidden Way].[49] In *Masca Geniului* [The Mask of the Genius] Mircea Zaciu (1928-2000) analysed common features of Woolf's and Papadat-Bengescu's prose, such as: impressionism, "pointillist" technique, "proustianism", [50] "the temptation to write a prose that feeds on the originary sources of life, not on aesthetic convention."[51]

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[48] Golopentia, "Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu", 350.

[49] Perpessicius, "*Drumul ascuns"* [Hidden Path], in *Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu comentată de...* [Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu Commented by…], ed., Anthology, Intro., Chronological Table and Bibliography Viola Vancea (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1976), 88.

[50] Mircea Zaciu, *Masca Geniului* [The Mask of the Genius] (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967), 220.

[51] Zaciu, *Masca Geniului*, 203.

Like Woolf, in her continuous search for identity, Papadat-Bengescu was interested both in a narrative different from that of classical realism and an elevated language. This is why she rebelled against literary convention. The two novelists' various experimentations could have originated also from their admiration of two major figures, French writer Marcel Proust (1871-1922) and French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) with whom they shared a heritage.

In her diary Woolf expressed her appreciation of Proust:

> The thing about Proust is his combination of the utmost sensibility with the utmost tenacity. He searches out these butterfly shades to the last grain. He is as tough as catgut and as evanescent as a butterfly's bloom. And he will, I suppose, both influence me and make me out of temper with every sentence of my own.[52]

Papadat-Bengescu's writing was seen by many Romanian critics as an example of psychological and experimental work. An affinity with Proust was detected in her fiction, especially by E. Lovinescu who discussed at large the Proustianism of her *Ciclul Hallipa* [The Hallipa Cycle]. Paradoxically, while Papadat-Bengescu's letters and *Autobiografia* offer us the detail that she could not finish *À la recherche*, in an interview published in 1941, she admitted that reading Proust brought her "an almost exclusive and decisive experience".[53] *Ciclul Hallipa* actually resorted "to the sinuous lines of Proust's involuntary memory only in the last volume, *Rădăcini* [Roots], in which Nory attempted to search for 'lost time'".[54] This volume in particular also brings to mind the

[52] Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, eds Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, vol. 3. (London: Penguin, 1980), 7.

[53] N. Papatanasiu, "Popasuri literare cu d-na Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu. Interviu" [Literary Itineraries with Ms Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu: An Interview], *Viaţa* 1.109 (19 July 1941): 2.

[54] Ionescu, *Romanian Joyce*, 49.

Bergsonian treatment of time as duration, which had a huge impact on both Proustian and Woolfian aesthetics.

Papadat-Bengescu's Adaptations of Modernist Narrative Techniques

Without enlarging upon the theoretical grounds of the *stream of consciousness*, the term coined by William James in *Principles of Psychology* (1890), and presenting the various discussions on this term, this article will consider stream of consciousness as a technique denoting the characters' flow of inner experiences that can be rendered by free indirect style or discourse (with an awareness of the differences between the two which is yet irrelevant to the present discussion on Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu), as well as inner perceptions. In his *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, Robert Humphrey suggested that analysis should be carried out on two levels: "from the lowest one just above oblivion to the highest one which is represented by verbal (or other formal) communication", "low" and "high" simply indicating these degrees; to these, two levels of consciousness can be identified, respectively the "speech level" and the "preespeech level".[55] Warning that "consciousness" should not be confused with "intelligence" or "memory", Humphrey disagreed that Proust's *À la recherche* was a stream-of-consciousness novel, because the purpose of deliberately recapturing the past was communicating an experience,[56] which was different from what Woolf did: formulating "the possibilities and processes of inner realization of truth –

[55] Robert Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel: A Study of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, William Faulkner, and Others* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 3.

[56] See Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, 4.

a truth she reckoned to be inexpressible, hence only on a level of the mind".[57] Barry Dainton showed that the stream of consciousness makes "conscious experience" accessible to the reader. By "conscious" he meant "*phenomenal* consciousness", by "experience", he understood "items with a phenomenal character", the phenomenal character of an experience meaning "the distinctive feel the experience has."[58]

Papadat-Bengescu was a technician who grappled with the issues of point of view and narrative structure and who employed primarily the stream of consciousness technique in her prose. Speaking about Woolf's technique, David Ayers considered the term stream of consciousness as documenting "that her style is designed to narrate the content of consciousnesses, but is a little approximate". This is why, for a greater precision, his suggestion was to replace the term with "third person centre of consciousness":

> In general, the narrative of *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* presents the consciousness of various characters in an idiom which sometimes is borrowed from the minds and voices of the characters, and at other times is cast in a narrative voice which is independent of the character(s) even while it narrates according to their thoughts or knowledge. This means that there is a still an authorial narrative voice present.[59]

In Papadat-Bengescu's *Concert din muzică de Bach* [Concert from Bach's Music] the narrator's selective omniscience becomes multiple selective omniscience with the help of Mini and Nory (who were called "reflective characters", helping the narrator unfold the story).

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[57] Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, 12.

[58] Barry Dainton, *Stream of Consciousness: Unity and Continuity in Conscious Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 2, original emphasis.

[59] David Ayers, "Virginia Woolf: Art and Class", in *Modernism: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 100.

Both writers used free indirect style in alternation with narratorial intervention and interior monologue in order to describe the inner world of the characters either via the reactions of the narrator who reflects on their gestures or on the splitting of the characters' selves. Monika Fludernik's monographs[60] offered a guidebook on free indirect discourse in its full spectrum and delineated the features of what she called "the novel of consciousness". In a similar way, Mihaela Mancaş demarcated the features of the free indirect style in Romanian literature.[61]

A theoretical exploration of the main features of the free indirect discourse cannot be included in this essay for reasons of space, yet my analysis will endeavour to highlight a few parallels between the two writers' employment of this method in a few examples.

Both Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu used free indirect style to filter their characters' thoughts through the narrator's voice, without making the narrator intervene in the characters' stream of ideas, sensations, perceptions. Characters' reflections or meditations were reproduced by a narrator who gives up what Mancaş calls *dicendi* verbs and Fludernik *de dicto* distinction,[62] adding instead numerous exclamations, interrogations and ellipses that mark the fragmentation of thoughts.

Free indirect discourse investigates the mind of Mr Ramsay in his permanent search for meaning:

> They needed his protection; he gave it them. But after Q? What comes next? After Q there are a number of letters the last of which is

[60] Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Language of Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1993)*; The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Towards A "Natural" Narratology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

[61] Mihaela Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară* [Indirect Free Style in Literary Romanian] (Bucharest: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1972).

[62] Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Language of Fiction*, 39.

> scarcely visible to mortal eyes, but glimmers red in the distance. Z is only reached once by one man in a generation. Still, if he could reach R it would be something.[63]

Not unlike Woolf, Papadat-Bengescu uses a huge amount of interrogations, exclamations and ellipses, depicting one characters' experience of isolation:

> I se păru că vede ochii lui Mitrică cu pleoapele lăsate, închişi... Închişi pentru totdeauna?... şi nu-i va iubi nimeni!... Închişi...mereu!... Se înfioră.
>
> It seemed to her that she could see Mitrică's eyes, his eyelids closed… Closed for ever? … and nobody will love them? Closed… always!... She shivered.[64]

The ellipsis represents the tie between free indirect style and direct style, being "a mark that the assertion certainly belongs to the protagonist, either as part of an incoherent remark […] or reproduction of the stream of one's thoughts." [65] For Mancaş, the use of the indicative mood instead of Subjunctive reproduces a certain thought/ action in free indirect style instead of marking a hypothetical action.[66] Moreover, "the alternative use of tenses coincides with the alternative way of reproducing characters' thoughts: while Present is the tense of free indirect style, Past or *imperfect* [equivalent of French *imparfait*] are the tenses of indirect style."[67] Thus, using the narrative

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[63] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse,* in *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf: Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, The Waves,* ed., Intro and notes Stella McNichol (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 203.

[64] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, *Femeia în faţa oglinzei, Autobiografie* [The Woman in front of the Mirror, Autobiography] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1988), 345.

[65] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 112.

[66] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 89.

[67] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 88.

Present brings to the fore the character's thoughts and increases the affective dimension of his/ her discourse. At the same time, while in Romanian, where the English category of modality does not exist, hypothetical actions are marked by the frequent use of the tense called *imperfect* which was, as Mihaela Mancaş noted, a tense imported from languages such as French (*imparfait*)[68] and which lost its value as a referent of the past but refers to the present tense:[69]

> Îşi dădea ei singure argumente potrivite cu interesul ei. Pe drum singur!… Între străini? … Când acasă avea la îndemână tot comfortul! …
>
> She gave herself the arguments that were tied to her interests. He… alone on the way! Among strangers? … When he had all the comfort at home! ...[70]

Thus, since Papadat-Bengescu left no proof on how much she read Woolf in the French translations that appeared in the journals she would regularly read and often comment on with Lovinescu, one can conclude only that Papadat-Bengescu adapted to the Romanian context some vanguard techniques which were the main concern of the literary scene in the West.

Most of the existent adaptation theories focus on the adaptation of the content. However, Linda Hutcheon also talks about form and mode of adaptation, as well as of "the elusive notion of the 'spirit' of a work or an artist that has to be captured and conveyed in the adaptation for it to be a success" and the "'tone' that is deemed central, though rarely defined".[71] Papadat-Bengescu was much concerned with form and tone. Thus, her technical experiments always started from other feminist renderings.

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[68] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 84.

[69] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 85.

[70] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, *Concert din muzică de Bach* [Concert from Bach Music] (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1982), 257.

[71] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 10.

Papadat-Bengescu even adapted some techniques which are more specific to Woolf's prose. One of them is known as *shifting narrative point of view.*[72] Gérard Genette used the term "internal focalization"[73] in order to redefine what Georges Blin and Michel Raimond had initially called focalization zero[74] and Jean Pouillon defined as "vision avec" [vision with].[75] In opposition, with external focalization the narrator's perspective shifts to an external event, object, characters' gestures etc. Woolf resorted to shifting narrative in *Mrs. Dalloway*, when the gap between various characters' thoughts is bridged by a series of visual-spatial perceptions which are relativized in time. The noise of a car interrupts Ms Dalloway's thoughts, her daughter's thoughts, then Miss Pym's.[76] Several characters' thoughts are put in parallel, including the collective character, the crowd outside as well as the individual characters Edgar J. Eatkiss, Septimus and Ms Dalloway.[77] The focalization on an external object allows the narrator to penetrate the thoughts of Clarissa and her former lover, Peter Walsh when they meet. The characters' consciousness is mapped minutely through shifting from the two interior monologues to the external world of objects that surround the characters. The interior monologue takes turns with free indirect style and classical narration.

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[72] Mancaş, *Stilul indirect liber în româna literară*, 93.

[73] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Levin, Foreword Jonathan Culler (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

[74] See Georges Blin, *Stendhal et les problèmes du roman* [Stendhal and The Problems of the Novel] (Paris: José Corti, 1954) and Michel Raimond, *La Crise du roman: du lendemain du naturalisme jusqu'aux années 20* [The Crisis of the Novel: From the Day after Naturalism to the 1920's] (Paris: José Corti, 1966). For a presentation of the point of view, see also Jaap Lintvelt's seven types of points of view in *Essai de typologie narrative: le "point de vue": theorie et analyse* [Essay on Narrative Typology: Point of View, Theory and Analysis] (Paris: J. Corti, 1981).

[75] Jean Pouillon, *Temps et roman* [Time and the Novel] (Paris: Gallimard, 1946). "Vision avec" means that the narrator knows as much as the character knows.

[76] Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, in *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf*, 42.

[77] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 42-3.

There is on the one hand a dialogue that takes place, yet, on the other hand, what is much more important is what the characters think. Focusing on their thoughts, Woolf's narrator shifts from one character to the other via focusing on two external objects: Clarissa is mending her dress for the party and uses a pair of scissors and Peter plays with a penknife. The narrative travels through the spaces of Clarissa's and Peter's subjectivities, returning constantly to the objects they are handling:

> "And how are you?" said Peter Walsh, positively trembling; taking both her hands; kissing both her hands. She's grown older, he thought, sitting down. I shan't tell her anything about it, he thought, for she's grown older. She's looking at me, he thought, a sudden embarrassment coming over him, though he had kissed her hands. Putting his hand into his pocket, he took out a large pocket-knife and half opened the blade.
>
> "How heavenly it is to see you again!" she exclaimed. He had his knife out. That's so like him, she thought.
>
> "Richard's very well. Richard's at a Committee", said Clarissa.
>
> And she opened her scissors, and said, did he mind her just finishing what she was doing to her dress, for they had a party that night?"[78]

A counterpart of this fragment appears in Papadat-Bengescu's *Femei între ele* [Women among Themselves] where the narrator shifts from the thoughts and stories of three women, Ms Ledru, Mamina and Miss Mary via the sewing objects that they use and the objects that they make: a cap, a sweater, a cloth or via their moving the conversation when it becomes too personal to external events (the landscape outside the window, the cold outside).[79] However, the objects they manipulate are not cutting instruments

[78] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 62.

[79] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Femei între ele" [Women Among Themselves], in *Ape adânci* [Deep Waters] (Bucharest: Editura Cultura Naţională, 1923), 165-8.

but tools with which they weave their canvas in the same way the narrator weaves their stories together. Their destinies brought them together, not apart as in the case of Clarissa and Peter.

From Poetic Fiction to Feminism

Apart from a constant commitment to technique and composition, Papadat-Bengescu shared Woolf's impressionistic and lyrical imagery. According to Alberto Lázaro, the originality of Woolf's art "resides in the narrative method which consists of placing characters within the context of their conflicting memories and observing them as they try to work out their meaning."[80] The effects of using such a method are abandoning an action-packed plot and lack of real characters. The reader is no longer immersed in the epic but plugged into the characters' thoughts via what scholars often called "poetic" style. Ralph Freedman considered that this style "superimposed upon patterns drawn by novels of human relations and sensibilities, was not an end in itself. […] Rather, her lyrical style – that unique mold of highly physical imagery and elevated diction – was rendered concrete within the confines of recognizably realistic novels."[81] However, as Alex Zwerdling demonstrated, "[i]t is not inaccurate to think of Woolf as a poetic novelist interested in states of reverie and vision, in mapping the intricate labyrinth of consciousness."[82] The example Zwerdling gave to support his argument was *The Waves* where, with the soliloquies of the six major characters, Woolf eliminated all the traditional narrative tools:

[80] Alberto Lázaro, "The Emerging Voice: A Review on Spanish Scholarship on Virginia Woolf", in *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*, 253.

[81] Ralph Freedman, "The Form of Fact and Fiction: *Jacob's Room* as Paradigm", in *Virginia Woolf: Revaluation and Continuity*, ed. Ralph Freedman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 126.

[82] Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1986), 10.

"conversation, observable action, setting, circumstantial reality of every kind."[83]

According to the Romanian translator of *The Waves*, Petru Creţia, Woolf "represented the conscious and subconscious egos of the human person, its fundamental structures and impulses; the closing within oneself and the opening towards others, possessiveness and unrest, the sensorial and intellectual love for the world and the fear of it".[84]

In her collection of short stories *Ape adânci* [Deep Waters] Papadat-Bengescu employed exactly the same method. Her characters are not defined by their actions, but by their reactions and sensations that generate analytical spaces. For James Hafley Woolf's art is "a celebration of the unfinished, of contradiction, of the discontinuous, of something always breaking in and nothing ever getting settled".[85] Indeed, there is nothing final about the testimonies in *The Waves*. The same thing can be said especially about one short story from *Ape adânci*, "Marea" [The Sea]. Papadat-Bengescu made poetic connections between its small parts and the motif of the sea that is interwoven into the texture of meaning and this is perhaps the only work that can be properly called "adaptation" of *The Waves* with which it shares a lot.

Many pages of Woolf's critical essays included in *The Common Reader* (1923), *The Second Common Reader* (1932) and her diary attest to her constant preoccupation to define modernism and to explore reality in a way that was different from the nineteenth century approach. In an essay entitled "Notes on an Elizabethan Play", she stressed the importance of changing the writer's perspective from the external world of the character to his/her feelings and inner thoughts. She criticised the legacy left by 19th century writers:

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[83] Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, 10.

[84] Petru Creţia, Preface to Virginia Woolf, *Valurile* (Bucharest: Univers, 1973), 11.

[85] James Hafley, "Virginia Woolf's Narrators and the Art of 'Life itself'", in *Virginia Woolf: Revaluation and Continuity*, ed. and Intro Ralph Freedman (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1980), 40.

> The reality to which we have grown accustomed, is, speaking roughly, based upon the life and death of some knight called Smith, who succeeded his father in the family of pitwood importers, timber merchants and coal exporters, was well known in political, temperance, and church circles, did much for the poor of Liverpool, and died last Wednesday of pneumonia while on a visit to his son at Muswell Hill. That is the world we know. That is the reality which our poets and novelists have to expound and illuminate.[86]

Inevitably, as female-writers, both Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu wrote a poetic fiction that generally filtered the thoughts of female characters. Both writers not only played an important role in modernist fiction but also are chiefly remembered for their contributions to early feminist discourse. The fiction they wrote can be also taken as a feminist manifesto. Both Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu were concerned with the status of women in society, even though they were situated in different spaces; their fiction refers often to different social circumstances and hence face unalike issues, thus the notion of adaptation needs to be applied here within some limits. As Hutcheon asserted, "[a]n adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context – a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum. Fashions, not to mention value systems, are context-dependent."[87] The condition of the woman in Romania was not similar to that of the woman in England; in addition, Romanian writers were not so theoretically-oriented as British writers; hence Papadat-Bengescu's lack of direct engagement with a feminist politics which was Woolf's main concern. Papadat-Bengescu's feminism was rather intuitive than explicit, while Woolf's feminism was seen not only as "explicit feminist politics" but also as "concern and fascination with gender identities and with women's lives, histories and fictions", a feature that not only, as Laura Marcus rightly put it, "shaped her writing profoundly" but also

[86] Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader*, 1st series (London: The Hogarth Press, 1968), 31.
[87] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 142.

offered significant "accounts of the difference of women's values, in literature and in life." [88] According to Jane Goldman, Woolf anticipated "recent theoretical concerns with the constitution of gender and subjectivity in language when she began by declaring that 'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being […] (call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please – it is not a matter of any importance)."[89]

In spite of these major differences, Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* has its Romanian counterpart in Papadat-Bengescu's *Se ridică vălul* [The Veil Rises]. Here, possibly adapting the concerns of other feminist writers that she must have heard about from the French literary journals that she used to read, Papadat-Bengescu presented women who strove to find their own voices as vehicles for the dramatic modes of speech in a patriarchal society.

Woolf's feminist programme was for Hermione Lee a literary one, "inextricably bound up with her desire to 'revolutionise biography'", because she wanted "to find new forms for 'women's as yet unnarrated lives'".[90] In an analysis of the female characters of Papadat-Bengescu's short stories, Lovinescu wrote:

> the only preoccupation of the heroines is the shiver of the heart that the writer's ear perceives and decomposes, while her eye penetrates the depths of their soul, unveiling the delicate game of emotion. Something from feminine mysteriousness is revealed in these pages of incisive analysis. Although without connection with the claims of feminism today, the literary work of this writer might seem to run

[88] Laura Marcus, "Woolf's Feminism and Feminism's Woolf", in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Sellers, 2nd ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 142 and 145.

[89] Jane Goldman, *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97.

[90] Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage Books, 1997), 13.

> parallel through the convergence of its aim: the stripping of femininity's attribute of mysteriousness.[91]

In Woolf's texts, the female characters reveal their heart throbbing right in front of the reader:

> "Through the chink in the hedge," said Susan "I saw her kiss him. I raised my head from my flower-pot and looked through a chink in the hedge. I saw her kiss him. I saw them, Jinny and Louis, kissing. Now I will wrap my agony inside my pocket-handkerchief. It shall be screwed tight into a ball. I will go to the beech wood alone, before lessons. I will not sit at a table, doing sums. I will not sit next Jinny and next Louis. I will take my anguish and lay it upon the roots under the beech trees. I will examine it and take it between my fingers. They will not find me. I shall eat nuts and peer for eggs through the brambles and my hair will be matted and I shall sleep under hedges and drink water from ditches and die there."[92]

Her feelings of anger and sadness are multiplied in another variant of the same motif of the kiss:

> "I saw her kiss him", said Susan. "I looked between the leaves and saw her. She danced in flecked with diamonds light as dust. And I am squat, Bernard, I am short. I have eyes that look close to the ground and see insects in the grass. The yellow warmth in my side turned to stone when I saw Jinny kiss Louis. I shall eat grass and die in a ditch in the brown water where dead leaves have rotted."[93]

Rhoda's wound provoked by Louis's love for Jinny alienates her from her self in a gap that will no longer be bridged, where ditches separate life

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[91] E. Lovinescu, *Critice, Scrieri I* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1969), 343.

[92] Virginia Woolf, *The Waves,* in *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf*, 340-41.

[93] Woolf, *The Waves*, 341.

(water) from death (dead leaves), where she feels the crisis so profoundly that she thinks she will die.

Papadat-Bengescu's short stories attempted to lift the veil off the feminine characters' mysteriousness. One character, Sephora, the beautiful child-woman has her own secret, since nobody would be able to guess her age:

> Când Sephora va avea patruzeci de ani, alţii vor jura că are douăzeci şi pe atlasul fin al pielei ei de-abia nişte dungi mici, ca trase cu vârful unui ac, vor apărea nevăzute. Trupul Sephorei nu se va împlini niciodată, fiindcă el va trebui să fie veşnic fruptul verde în pofta căruia să se strepezească gustul.
>
> When Sephora turns forty years old, others will swear that she is twenty and on the finely map of her satin skin hardly some small lines, as if drawn by the tip of a needle, will invisibly appear. Sephora's body will never mature, since it will have to be the eternally green fruit that sets one's teeth on edge when tasting it.[94]

The hypnotic state of the woman ready to fall in love is caught by Papadat-Bengescu in its fragmentariness. The writer announces us through her narrator that Bianca Porporata writes to Don Juan, in eternity:

> În grădina noastră de aici, floarea, când e coaptă şi neculeasă, se rupe ea singură de pe tulpină şi se dă drumeţului care a fost scris să vie în pragul porţii, în clipa cea bună.
>
> In our garden from here, the flower when it is ripe and nobody picks it, breaks by itself from the stem and offers itself to the traveller who was to come to the gate at the right moment.[95]

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[94] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Sephora", in *Ape adânci*, 127-8.

[95] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Scrisorile Biancei Porporata către Don Juan, în eternitate" [Bianca Porporata's Letters to Don Juan, in Eternity], in *Ape adânci*, 111.

For both Woolf and Papadat-Bengescu, the mirror, a symbol of duality, is a reflection of the characters' search for identity.

> "This is my face", said Rhoda, in the looking-glass behind Susan's shoulder – that face is my face. But I will duck behind her to hide it, for I am not here. I have no face. Other people have faces; Susan and Jinny have faces; they are here. Their world is the real world. The things they lift are heavy. They say Yes, they say No; whereas I shift and change and am seen through in a second.[96]

Rhoda's soul becomes transparent like water turning into a mirror reflecting life; it modifies the contours of the real and reflects the characters' identity crises. The voice of the female character unveils the moment when she becomes aware of her own self, in a sort of Lacanian mirror stage in which the child perceives herself as an other and defines herself in opposition to the others. However, going beyond the mirror stage towards the Lacanian gaze, the mirror leads the characters into what Emily Dalgarno called the "boundary between seeing and naming, and achieves in significance less as a phase in the development of the subject than as a moment of self-reflection that necessarily involves recognition misrecognition."[97] When Rhoda says "I am not here. I have no face", she distances herself from her self; she idealizes the distant gaze upon herself from a perspective that is very familiar in Lacan: "In our relation to things, in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it –

[96] Woolf, *The Waves*, 358.

[97] Emily Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8.

that is we call the gaze."[98] The others' gaze "alienates the subject from self in a gap which can never be bridged."[99]

Papadat-Bengescu's intertextual response on the motif of the mirror becomes the title of her book *Femeia în faţa oglinzii* [The Woman in Front of the Mirror] which asks the obsessive question who the woman is when she says "Here I am":

> Ea însăşi îşi păru străină. Numele, fiinţa ei în acest loc o mirau şi chema memoria să i le lămurească.
>
> It seemed to her that she was a stranger to herself. Her name, her whole being in this place made her wonder and she called upon memory to understand them.[100]

In spite of the seemingly theatrical discourse, Adriana's or Rhoda's precocity does not falsify the events, but rather transposes them in a different register, that of an age when characters approach maturity yet still before the age when they are real women. Sephora, Bianca or Adriana are heroines who represent, according to Nicolae Manolescu, "variants of the same prototype, without a biography, without an individuality."[101]

Through a poetic style in the short stories and an objectifying discourse in her novels, Papadat-Bengescu had the temptation to identify with the woman only, describing the woman's feelings. This is why her text overflows with blanks, gaps, broken language, sudden eruptions of ecstasy. However, in spite of the seeming disorder and the superfluous narrative, like the soliloquies

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[98] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 73.

[99] Dalgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World*, 18.

[100] Papadat-Bengescu, "Romanul Adrianei" [Adriana's Novel], in *Ape adânci*, 188.

[101] Nicolae Manolescu, *Arca lui Noe: Eseu despre romanul românesc* [Noah's Ark. An Essay about the Romanian Novel], vol. 2 (Bucharest: Minerva, 1981), 11.

of Woolf's six characters from *The Waves*, the narratives that gather these female characters' effusive sensations, perceptions, thoughts, vitalism are far from disorderly and should be read as a radiography of the feminine soul:

> Când ai ajuns pe nisip, lângă ultima transparenţă a apei, pui piciorul încet, îl tragi înapoi. E rece! Şi abia te-ai dezmierdat. Mai încerci – şi nu poţi... tremuri toată. E în fiorul acesta ceva voluptos... Şi reîncepi, fiindcă e şi durere şi deliciu. Faci cu îndrăzneală un pas înainte, te cutremuri... şi dintr'odată te afunzi... Acum te-ai desprins, cauţi jocuri noui, noui bucurii.
>
> When you reached the sand, near the last transparency of the water, you put your foot down slowly, you pull it back. It is cold! And you barely indulged yourself. You try again – and you cannot… you are all a shiver. There is something voluptuous in this thrill… And you start again, since it is both pain and relish. You boldy take one step forward, you are shaking… and suddenly you plunge… Now you detached yourself, you look for new games, new joys.[102]

The narrated interior monologue in the second person reveals the character's duality: she speaks about herself as an other. Papadat-Bengescu confessed to G. Ibrăileanu that her intention in the short story was to see the souls of her characters under a microscope:

> Ceea ce scriu, ce cuget – nu e în principal idei şi sentimente, ci senzaţia lor, de aici chinul şi dorinţa de a reda nu descrierea senzaţiei, ci senzaţia însăşi.
>
> What I write, what I think is not mainly ideas and feelings, but rather their sensation, and from here, the ordeal and the desire to render not the description of the sensation, but the sensation itself.[103]

[102] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, "Marea" [The Sea], in *Ape adânci*, 20.

[103] Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, *Scrisori către Ibrăileanu*, 46.

Such remarks resonate perfectly with the writer's task in Woolf's vision:

> Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this". Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there […] Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.[104]

Following a similar literary creed, Papadat-Bengescu created heroines who felt hyperbolically. Returning to the previous fragment from "Marea", the feminine character's metaphorical reflections ("you indulge", "you shiver") which are abundantly sensorial alternate with the character's contradictory actions: "you pull it back", "you cannot". A whole "myriad impressions", to quote Woolf, is born in this fragment.

In an excellent study on the aesthetics of vision, Claudia Olk discusses the beginning of *The Waves* as follows:

> The momentary impression of this surface […] is structured by an invisible, underlying perpetual rhythm of the waves that not only combines sight and sound, but in its movement of rising and falling, of "pausing and drawing out" […]
>
> The divisions between form and impression, surface and depth likewise fade when the surface of the sea and also the leaves in the garden become transparent in the all-pervading light […] Vision becomes a function of the text that engages the readers in analysing

[104] Woolf, *The Common Reader*, 85.

> their perception. The novel reflects on vision, it teaches us how to see it, and it insists that we see it in several ways at once.[105]

One could argue that Papadat-Bengescu has a similar vision. The young woman's emotions have an erotic nuance that is built upon a series of contradictions that mark the eternal feminine. In the end once the character's foot touched the transparency of the water, the contradictions reconcile: the visible and the invisible, the self and the other. Although the voices remain separate, the sea calls her, she gives up her fears, her vitalism is replaced by melancholy, her melancholy by detachment.

For Woolf, Olk argues, "the privacy of vision marks the transition from aesthetic vision into poiesis, in which the impossibility to represent describes the condition of possibility for literary creation."[106] Papadat-Bengescu's narration also goes into the depth of impossibility of representation ("you cannot"). Yet, in spite of being unable to represent the feeling, the unnamed feminine character shouts out her discoveries, she is estranged from the world and yet she returns to it. The unusual acuity of her sensations transforms these into instruments by which she apprehends the world: forms, colours, sounds are mediated via eye, ear, flesh and touch. The sensorial becomes a door towards the intellectual. The multiple reactions, at times contradictory and inhomogeneous, mix and build the real from emotions that invite the reader to see beyond the horizon of ordinary perceptions. To quote Olk once again, and extend her findings on Woolf's aesthetics to Papadat-Bengescu's, we may conclude that indeed "[t]he privacy of aesthetic vision serves as a paradigm of this poetic creation, in which the beholder partakes in the construction of the aesthetic object."[107]

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[105] Claudia Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 162-3.

[106] Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*, 183.

[107] Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*, 183.

Unlike her predecessor, Papadat-Bengescu sometimes lacked the sharp technical exigency; there is a lack of technical expertise that sometimes is visible in her short stories, yet this is offset by aesthetic sensibility that conveys the inherent dynamics of the images that the reader has in front of his eyes. Papadat-Bengescu's apparent disarticulation of style, the deceiving incoherence are actually methodical because the writer wants to descend in the unconscious. There the narrator plunges and renders states of emotions which are pre-linguistic, since these states are transcribed by the narrator directly from the characters' brains, before they become words. Thus, the ellipsis and exclamation marks are used abusively. In Papadat-Bengescu's fiction punctuation sometimes lacks and this is a sign of an artistic intelligence that reduces the narration to the disorganization that it wants to suggest: what Olk called "a fluid interaction between the subject and the object of the gaze".[108]

Conclusion: Woman Writes Woman

This essay started on the reflection upon Woolf's declaration: "As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world".[109] The demonstration of adaptation vs intertextuality that Papadat-Bengescu used, directly from Woolf or via Woolf's own adaptations of other techniques (borrowed from Proust and Bergson), with examples of her use of stream of consciousness, interior monologue, free indirect style, poetic language, symmetrically ends with another feminist credo, that of Hélène Cixous: "Woman must put herself into the text – us into world and into history by her own moment. […] I write woman: woman must write woman."[110] A little

[108] Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*, 183.

[109] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 313. Woolf's essay was actually referring to the idea of female patriotism and brought arguments against the extension of the social contract between a country and that country's female citizens.

[110] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1.4 (Summer, 1976): 875 and 877.

before and during the inter-war period both Virginia Woolf and Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu anticipated this gesture: women wrote women.

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維吉尼亞・吳爾芙與何闐西亞・芭帕達-班傑斯古：改編，互文或時代精神？

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摘　要

本論文探討維吉尼亞・吳爾芙之創作，與著名羅馬尼亞現代主義作家何闐西亞・芭帕達-班傑斯古之間交錯關連。有鑑於吳爾芙以及芭帕達-班傑斯古兩者之關連正座落於改編與互文兩者的重疊之處，同時兩者之交流亦可從時代精神的較大脈絡探討，故論文之導論部分首先釐清上述觀念之間差異，其中強調文章標題所使用之問號正點出・芭帕達-班傑斯古針對吳爾芙具女性主義導向的文學創作之改編並非全然是有意的。論文第二部份剖析兩次大戰間羅馬尼亞吳爾夫接受問題，其中並帶入有其價值之補充材料，補足 Mary Ann Caws 與 Nicola Luckhurst 兩學者所編纂之《吳爾夫於歐洲之接受》（*The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe*）文集，因雖忠實探究法國、德國、波蘭、瑞典、丹麥、希臘、義大利、西班牙、葡萄牙、但遺珠在東歐範圍內之任何發展。除簡短介紹羅馬尼亞作家作品外，第三部份試圖建立與兩位女性作家——吳爾夫與芭帕達-班傑斯古——有著共同精神遺產並且兩位作家均仰慕的普魯斯特（Marcel Proust）與柏格森（Henri Bergson）之可能關連；此部份對於吳爾夫與芭帕達-班傑斯古皆挪用自《回憶似水年華》（*À la recherche du temps perdu*）作者處的文學技法有較多著墨。第四部份討論可說是芭帕達-班傑斯古對現代主義敘事技法之改編，同時檢視若干不同的意識流定義，

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其間並呈現羅馬尼亞作家如何選擇探索角色之內在經驗的流動。下一部份處理兩位作家的詩性小說（poetic fiction）以及研究芭帕達-班傑斯古藉由針對如吳爾夫一般西方現代作家之改編所學習到的，作為其女性主義之企劃。此部份包含針對芭帕達-班傑斯古的短篇小說〈海洋〉（“Marea” [The Sea]）的詳細探索，因論者曾將此作品與吳爾夫的《海浪》（*The Waves*）相比擬。論文結尾對稱地回到對於吳爾夫有關其創作普遍性的反思，此特質亦可見於我們發掘出來芭帕達-班傑斯古與吳爾夫關連的各個面向中。

關鍵詞：維吉尼亞・吳爾芙，何闐西亞・芭帕達-班傑斯古，改編，互文，女性主義，現代主義