

A VISION ON POSTMODERNITY

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Mariana Baloşescu, after several books where she builds her own vision of literature and her own strategy of interpretation, brings in her latest book, *Conştiinţa precară* [*Precarious Conscience*], a provocative critical perspective on postmodernity. Mariana Baloşescu has already demonstrated that she is a lucid comparatist, strongly anchored in the consanguinity between philosophy and literature, passionate about exploiting fictional or (auto)biographical worlds to reveal the dynamics of mentalities, but especially the life of personal consciousness, under the pressure of history, society, and one's own moral choices.

Remarkable are the analyses applied both to ancient literature and philosophy, as well as to modernity, starting with the Renaissance humanism of Dante or Cervantes and reaching up to the proximate contemporaneity in *Poveşti despre omul interior* [*The Inner Man*] (2019/2020). Meditative readings, set in a personal logic, which in no way repeats the huge library dedicated to interiority, but invents its own path, those analyses connect, often spectacularly, Socrates with Augustine, with patristic thought, with Dante, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

Mariana Baloşescu has established herself in the small community of comparatists in Romanian universities since her first book, *Modernism between literature and philosophy*. Camil Petrescu and José Régio (2002), where she makes the first important comparative approach between Romanian and Portuguese literature, against the backdrop of a new vision of European interwar modernism. She has also published (under the name Mariana Boca) *European Mentalities* (2006/2019), *Memory of Texts and Canonical Narration* (2019), *Romanian Literature in the 20th Century. The Machine of Modernism and the Histories of Identity* (2007), *The Novel of the 20th Century* (2021). What connects all these books is Mariana Baloşescu's attachment to consciousness, in all its forms of manifestation, at the level of the text. The comparatist thus puts in dialogue, throughout her interpretations, the

consciousness of the author, with the consciousness of the fictional voices created by him and with the “silent consciousness” of the reader.

Mariana Baloșescu’s 2025 book problematizes postmodern thinking, in a series of critical essays where she debates the philosophy and literature of the last 50 years. Without being at all indebted to the massive research on postmodernism, Mariana Baloșescu comes with a new perspective, centered on the concept of precarious consciousness, defined precisely by the ideal of self-overcoming precariousness. The courage to come up with a new concept, fundamentally provocative, in an already crowded space of ideas is remarkable. In order to give specific content to the concept of precariousness, the author focuses on the structural difference between the civilization of ancient man (Jewish, Greek, Roman, Christian) and that of modern man, through the position towards Divinity.

In this way, Mariana Baloșescu consciously distances herself, right in the pages of the book, from an entire dominant paradigm of (post)modernity, which starts from Marx and Nietzsche, passes through Cioran, then through Derrida, Deleuze and ends up in the very hybrid discourse of the philosophy of Vattimo, Baudrillard or Tvetan Todorov. The author anchors herself very differently, in Christian patristic thought, in Socrates and Plato, in Augustine and in the Epistles of Saint Paul:

“In the human space of the ancient and medieval worlds, the Jewish man, the Greek man, the Roman man, the Christian man and then the Byzantine man had a precarious prayerful and knowing, but also fragmentary, isolated in ignorance consciousness – simultaneously full of power and assumedly very weak, depending on its proximity or distance from Divinity. Prayer, through inner transfiguration, could charge the human person with divine strength and content. The founders of the tradition and of Christian thought, the Fathers of the Christian Church, speak from the first centuries of the improvement and deification of the inner man through prayer. In this logic of the transformation of the person, precariousness is overcome, even by assuming, at the level of the precarious personal consciousness, its weak nature, but capable of the state of prayer (*precārius*). In other words, while the person recognizes himself as precarious, in the plane of his consciousness, through prayer he shares in divine knowledge and acquires a power that does not belong to him, but which he can use in his own evolution and in understanding things. Thus, the person’s energy is inscribed in a triangular circuit that nourishes him *ad infinitum*: Divinity-identity-otherness. The precarious consciousness of this man – Jew, Greek, Christian – has a clear ideal of self-overcoming his own precariousness through union and communion with the Divinity.” (Baloșescu, 2025: 15)

In fact, Mariana Baloșescu develops the knowledge of the inner man. She shows what, in her own vision, the precarious consciousness of the postmodern means, which she then details in analyses of texts considered representative of postmodern culture. The dominant ideas with which the author works unite in a “circle of the person”, because they value memory, interiority, ethical imagination, moral conscience:

“In the modern and postmodern world, especially, the consciousness of the person breaks away from Divinity. The precarious consciousness of the (post)modern gives up prayer, turns its back on Divinity and repositions itself, directing all its inner energy towards itself, sometimes towards the other. The ascending triangular circuit is annulled and replaced with a mutually devouring duality: identity versus otherness. The precariousness of being is no longer overcome. The precarious consciousness of the person enters a race of self-subversion, transposed in detail in modern philosophy,

literature and arts. The ideal of self-overcoming precariousness is completely discharged from its ascending movement. It goes into the terrestrial relativity of the struggle of the self with itself and with otherness. The precarious consciousness of the person loses its connection with the protohistorical root. It becomes lonely in a history that it already calls – posthuman.” (Baloşescu, 2025: 15)

BALOŞESCU, Mariana, (2025), *Conştiinţa precară*, Editura Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca, 212 p.

