

Blended spaces in Mircea Cărtărescu's novel "Blinding. The Left Wing"

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Mircea Cărtărescu's prose is defining for an entire period of contemporary Romanian literature, while at the same time encompassing traits common to the European literary epoch,¹ but also a certain specificity caused by the terror of censorship generated by the political regime, during which he published his first texts.* In Romania his work stands alongside that of his contemporaries of the 1980s generation, authors who explicitly or implicitly take up postmodernism. Doubtless a chief representative of this generation, Cărtărescu made his debut as part of the so-called *Cenacul de Luni* (The Monday reading group), whose moderator was Nicolae Manolescu, a well-known Romanian literary critic, and whose activity took place from 1977 until 1983, the year it was outlawed by the Romanian secret police (Puia-Dumitrescu 2015, 23–27). This group consisted of various poets and prose writers, who adhered partially or totally to postmodernism, who besides Cărtărescu included Florin Iaru, Alexandru Mușina, Ion Stratan, Traian T. Cosovei, Bogdan Ghiu, Mariana Marin, Magda Cârneci, Ion Bogdan Lefter. The 1980s generation was marked, especially in the field of poetry, by the existence of this group, which offered the necessary framework for communication in a society characterized by the harshest of censorship, an uncertain climate of surveillance, in which any escape from reality, even if oneiric or poetic, was meant to signal the apparition of a "dangerous element", with the consequence of punishing the author.² The younger writers avoided reprisals by using hyperneological terms, which the ones sent to spy on them could not understand (Ciotloș 2021, 7–15). It was even considered that the group could change the very thinking of society, a degree of freedom which could not have been allowed under the political conditions imposed by the authorities. Mircea Cărtărescu made his prose literary debut³ in the *Desant'83* anthology with the text "Păianjeni de pământ" (Ground Spiders). In 1999 he published *Postmodernismul românesc* (Romanian postmodernism), the first extensive text after the 1989 Revolution which attempts to explain the evolution of Romanian postmodern literature and its lagging behind its Western counterpart, noting that „one can only speak about an explicitly and consciously postmodern attitude in the Romanian space after 1980" (Cărtărescu 2010, 6).

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The volume which brought Cărtărescu literary fame and contains the motifs later developed in his novels is *Visul* (The Dream) published in 1989 and republished in 1993 under the title *Nostalgia*. Later volumes included *Travesti* (1994), *Orbitor. Aripa stângă* (Blinding. The Left Wing, 1996; Eng. trans. 2013), *Orbitor. Corpul* (Blinding. The Body, 2002), *Orbitor. Aripa dreaptă* (Blinding. The Right Wing, 2007), *De ce iubim femeile* (Why We Love Women, 2004), *Frumoasele străine* (Beautiful Strangers, 2010), *Solenoid* (2015) and *Melancolia* (Melancholy, 2019). His prose has been translated into many languages. The novel *Blinding. The Left Wing* thematizes his experiences in pre-revolutionary Bucharest, in a society paralyzed by the fear brought about by the numerous restrictions of the totalitarian regime, but which only form a distant backdrop for an oneiric type of narration, where spaces proliferate, divide various types of discourses, affluents of literary fiction. The *Blinding* trilogy advances the image of the butterfly, with the writer's obsession closely related to metamorphosis and evolution, traced back to individual destiny. In the first volume, young Mircea, the main protagonist, lives intensely, through a direct observation of the present, through anamnesis or through various incursions into diverse spaces, through the reconstitution of past portraits, such as the one of the mother or of the maternal grandparents' family. Surprising instances appear here, such as the tale of Cedric, of Monsieur Monsu (the Albino) and of Brother Armando, projected against the backdrop of a New Orleans with an ill-famed French Quarter, veiled in magic and music. The symbol of the butterfly can be encountered various times throughout the novel. The imaginary constructs narrative nuclei, taking up again characters from previous sections and granting them other functions or introducing new ones altogether: Maria and Costel, Ion Stănilă, Melania, Cecilia. The search, the explosion of senses, the concentric visions, the overlapping of time and space, a profound return to matter, before the division of the cell are identifiable hypostases throughout the reading process, with the text abounding in bookish references and inserts of scientific theories presented in a fantasy-like manner.

CONSTRUCTING "BLENDED SPACES"

The present study sets out to analyze two essential directions for understanding the construction of interdiscursivity in Cărtărescu's prose. The first one is related to what Norman Fairclough calls "constitutive intertextuality" and explains that "we have considered a relational view of texts and text analysis, in which the 'internal' [...] relations of texts are connected with their 'external' relations (to other elements of social events, and to social practices and social structures) through the mediation of an 'interdiscursive' analysis of the genres, discourses and styles which they draw upon and articulate together" (2003, 38); and the construction of what Gilles Fouconnier and Mark Turner have termed "blended spaces" (2003, 61). The second, deriving from the first, sets out to observe the fruitful dialogue between literature and sciences, from the point of view of spatiality, an essential trait of the texts advanced for discussion here.

The novel *Blinding. The Left Wing* serves as a basis of the analysis, which can be extended also to the other two texts, belonging to the complete corpus. It debuts with a revelatory image for this type of "blended spaces":

I used to watch Bucharest through the night from the triple window in my room above Ștefan cel Mare. The window usually reflected my room's cheap furniture [...]. The reflected yellow turned even yellower as it deepened into the enormous window, [...]. I saw myself in the yellow glass, under the triple blossom of the chandelier's phantom (2013, 11).

The elements of the reflective process, which also imply a transfiguration and deformation of the perceived image, are associated to the stages described by Fauconnier and Turner:

The projection allows emergent structure to develop on the basis of composition (blending can compose elements from the input spaces to provide relations that do not exist in the separate inputs), pattern completion (based on background models that are brought into the blend unconsciously), and elaboration (treating the blend as a simulation and "running" it imaginatively) (2003, 62).

A mixing-up of space occurs through "composition, pattern completion and elaboration", thereby generating a multiple network: the image of the city "a nocturnal triptych", which overlaps with the reflected image of the furniture ("a bedroom set of yellowed wood, a dresser and a mirror") and over this the narrator's own image, itself fractured by space: the left half "a dead eye and a tragic mouth" and the right half an "adventurous young man, almost handsome" (2013, 11). The last stage of mixing-up spaces is done through "elaboration", with an abyssal transposition in the case of the aforementioned fragment, the mirror mirroring itself, in an oneiric vision, and the character fragmenting his own structure through spatial separation dually divided.

The same process is observable in constructing urban spaces which are also featured in the novel, completing the image of an exotic character. Cedric is originally from the French Quarter in New Orleans, and his recollections are almost psychedelic descriptions of another world, for the locals listening to him. He talks of palm trees and agave "of glowing saxophones that blew in thousands of taverns", of the famous Bourbon Street and of Mardi Gras parades, of "the sinister voodoo rituals performed by mobs of black people in the city" (147). The historic details regarding the American city intertwine with fictional ones: Cedric plays jazz in the Monsu club, just like the famous King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton, the Mardi Gras celebration is even nowadays a major cultural event, and the voodoo rituals practiced in the past, as well as the famous "red light district" associated with the French Quarter are also insertions of the historical reality. The same mixing-up of space, by means of composing it out of various elements, the establishment of a pattern and the subsequent realization of a personal form can also be witnessed in the description of this city through which the Mississippi River flows and where the characters speak Cajun French. The process is the same, through reflection: "enjoying the reflection of New Orleans in the mirror of the sky" (148), with dream-like accents.

The vision that obsessively appears to the narrator is the one of looking into a magnifying lens, a return to the world of the small infinite, away from the big one. "The hypnagogic rebellions" are episodes which complete reality: "In the end I would sink into sleep, wrapped in a cocoon of fraying dreams" (56). The nightmarish, heterogeneous mixture of spaces and colors, along with the cultural references, create fragmented, disparate spaces similar to oneiric images:

Acrid delirium, a stew of colored threads, garbage swept into heaps – and unexpected, sweeping Altdorfer scenes, oceans and ships, blue mountains and amber beasts, battles where every button and lily on the banners and every freckle on the soldiers' faces was visible, like under a blinding magnifying glass (39).

The panoramas created are subtly connected to art, the insertion of Albrecht Altdorfer, the father of landscape paintings being by no means an accident, because Cărtărescu's text is constructed under the form of immense spirals, ample scenic constructions juxtaposing oceans, mountains, battles and peoples, almost intertextually describing Altdorfer's famous painting, *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* (1529). "Blended spaces" also define the aforementioned painting, where epochs are also overlapping: Alexander the Great's campaign and 16th-century battles against the Ottoman Empire are two events which, without pushing things too far, can be compared to the example of boat races (one from 1853, the other from 1993, both spanning the distance from San Francisco to Boston) based on which Fauconnier and Turner prove the existence of "the fourth mental space" or "the blended space". To this space, others are added in Mircea Cărtărescu's narration, such as "ivory castles", "with twisted columns and round windows like in Monsu Desiderio" (39) with reference to ample spaces, with a complex architectural study, describing ruins or apocalypse. Beyond the mystery which shrouds the existence of this early 17th-century artist, to whom various identities have been attributed such as François de Nomé or Didier Barra, oneiric visions made André Breton (Breton – Legrand 1957, 56) consider him a forerunner of surrealism (Oster 2003, 95–123), and in the novel Cărtărescu tells his romanticized story, in a dialogue with the character Herman, the pretext being a painting which describes the ruins of ancient Rome.

In a similar direction, we can recall references to "cells like Piranesi" (Cărtărescu 2013, 39), an allusion to the spatial paintings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (18th century), such as *Carceri d'Invenzione* (Imaginary prisons), the famous sketches, studies of cells and buildings, models of fantastic topographies. The Romanian writer seems to resort to an abundance of cultural references, which do nothing else but complete the literary space constructed as the text progresses.

The narrator who reconstructs his biography within his imagination has grand oneiric visions, travels through vast and elaborate spaces, almost compressing the artistic experience of humanity. From the 1st-century mosaic picturing Alexander the Great which inspired Altdorfer, to the Roman dwellings studied by Piranesi, Cărtărescu travels in a millisecond through labyrinths, opaque or transparent surfaces, jungles or swamps, cathedrals and creeks:

I pass, tiny as a flea, under immense porticos, into halls with beautiful mosaic floors, under cupolas high as the stars. I wanted through sinuous labyrinths, leaving through crystal doors, to sink again into aphasia, misunderstanding, delirium, and dejection. Jungle with limpid springs, swamps with visions of eternal citadel: such was the cartography of my dreams (40).

The mapping of narrative events takes place by means of simultaneity: spaces belonging to different epochs are brought into a continuous present, constructed by means of various temporal values, placed under the ample umbrella of an oneiric

mapping. An undoubtable element of originality, this map of dreams becomes a map of human dreaming, with the being itself becoming a synthesis of all beings, of all generations which preceded it. Such references to the mixing process also appear by joining Marc Chagall's painting "with spikes and ragged lace" (136) or to El Greco's, in the description of the parishioners (281).

BINAR STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD: NARRATIVE POLARITIES

The narrator's autobiography continues, moving to the genealogical origins of his family, a mixture of mysticism and religion. The magical, archaic space, rich in symbolic significances is Tântava, the place all his childhood memories are tied to, possessing an intuitive knowledge, devoid of any scientific or informational dimension: "[T]he family house, old and rotten, in Tântava, with all the rituals of Romanized Bulgarians, wrapped in the mystical incense of Orthodox and an ancient, un-Christian fear, talking about Christ and the Virgin and archangels without knowing the first things about the Bible" (44). This fantastic realm creates visions of the beginnings of the Earth, and the mnemonic fragments sketch out a space of origins, starting point, and *origo mundi*: "[T]he room that was now the center of the center of the world" (48). The moment continues with a sort of mixing up of dreams, within a dream, a descending movement into a world of motionlessness, of self-loss, of special dissolution "through the thin walls of our dreams we heard the snow falling" (48). The regressive movement is almost intrauterine: "Curled up like a foetus in a belly of old wool and crackling straw, eaten by dozen and hundreds of fleas" (47) and advances a vision which borders on the nightmarish, where the body is subjected to terror, and the spirit is liberated by dreams: "I rested my head beside Tatie's and dreamed his dreams [...]. I then descended in a delirious Scythia" (48). The descent to Scythia is a descent into the inferno, with delirious images succeeding each other, fantastic, demonic creatures being described as the permanent residents of this space: "Three hundred dead"; "knocked their livid, moldy skulls" (56); "They were demons. They sprang from the enchanted circle like the fable coming of evil, filling the sky with wings and howls, filling the earth with squirts of venom and sperm, and filling the divine being with horror" (57). These apocalyptic images created by the demons' apparition in the skies, on earth, within people represent a moment of anarchy, of chaos before the creation of the world. The proliferation of evil comes about rapidly, in an exaggerated dynamic, where "space is Paradise and Time is Inferno" (79). This distinction is based on an attachment to place, a sort of "topophilia" (Tuan 1990, 16), a rebellion against the passing of time which inevitably transforms the human being. Sacred spaces, such as churches, are "time travel machines" through "temples and basilicas, with human insects crawling on tombstones", and "the marvel is the perspective of never-ending walls tightly intertwined" (Cărtărescu 2013, 89).

Mircea Cărtărescu's worlds are dual and built on an obvious tension between two opposing poles, observing surprising pairs, belonging to different discourses: animal/vegetal, space/time, spirit/soul, movement/passivity, which also correspond to the human being: "bilateral symmetry of our organism" (78) and are contaminated

by all of the world's structures: "Everything has a dual structure, like magnets, with poles oriented in opposition. Animal and vegetable polarities are paired everywhere, in every object. The first belongs to space, the spirit, searching, and movement. The other belongs to time, the soul and the immobile passivity" (78). A transposition, which recalls the philosophical poems of Empedocles of Acragas: "our diaphragms, like two walls between two kingdoms – above – air and fire, below – water and earth" (89), introduces the reader to the advent of philosophical thinking. Let us recall that the pre-Socratic Empedocles based his theory on the principle according to which the superior is represented by "life and life-giving fire", and the inferior by "earth" immobility, passivity. The taking over of theories from ancient Greece thus leads to a recontextualization and implicitly to a certain type of intertextuality. The obsession which haunts Cărtărescu in all of his prose writings can be found also with Empedocles, with regard to the twins who, in his vision, had the possibility of choice, so a more relaxed structure of the soul. In this sense, twins are imagined to originate from different types of material, choosing masculinity or femininity according to the dominant that they themselves define throughout the evolutionary process, just like the child-narrator searches for his sexuality in the Romanian writer's novel. Mircea, the narrator protagonist, had a twin brother named Victor, who died, and the process of embryo division haunts the adolescent throughout the defining process of his personality.

THE HUMAN BODY AND THE STORY OF UNIVERSE: INTERTEXTUAL CHAINS

This intersection of discursive spaces can be found even in the definition of the human being, seen as "abjections organized by geometry, phlegm and perfume" (97) and simultaneously as an astral being: "[W]e know from our cerebro-spinal trunk that we are larvae of an astral being" (128). The geometric structuring of the human constructs a fractured vision of order, to which are added reminiscences of humoral theory which remind us of Hippocrates' medicine, by means of the connection established in *Airs, Waters, and Places* to the correspondence between essential elements such as air, water, fire and earth (Hippocrates 1923, 171), i.e. the surrounding environment and human temper, as well as the various diseases they might get, along with their movement from their native lands to places far away. Even if many of these arguments have been previously discussed, denied, and reanalyzed, the theories identified in Cărtărescu's narrative constitute a sort of history of humanity, through fragmentation and inclusion in a vast area of interaction of ideas.

The novel's text is a hybrid one, containing by means of the relationships it establishes with the others a constellation of elements belonging to various areas of science. Between spaces defined in terms of mathematics, physics, and biology yet connected to literature, something is born which Fairclough termed "intertextual chains", defined as "one way of gaining insight into this dimension of social structuring [...] they often become lines of tension and change: the lines, or channels, through which text types are colonized and invested and along which relationships among

text types are contested” (2003, 289–290). In *Blinding. The Left Wing*, Cărtărescu tells the story of humanity through the filter of a mythological biography. With elements of Darwinist evolution theory or elements of genetics and biology, he transposes into literature the network structure of intertextuality:

systems and devices composed of tissues composed of cells composed of organelles: ribosomes, lysozymes, mitochondria, Golgi apparatuses, nuclei with chromosomes composed of chains of DNA and RNA composed of nucleic acids composed of molecules of hallucinatory stereo symmetry composed of atoms composed of nuclear particles composed of quark barely leaves any room for a splash of sparkling liquid, a clear thought, where the structured dust of worlds could develop. And this is only for a few of the billions of sentient worms that crowd together inside the stomach of a larger worm. They live as long as they're given, and then they're reabsorbed into the spiraling conglomeration of the earth. Everything is a grain of sand on a beach as wide as the universe (2013, 89).

The phylogenetic theory is perceived, on the level of the microcosm, in the development of the human embryo, through association with the evolution of living organisms. The reference to the synthesis of Ernst Haeckel is obvious: “Ontology recaps phylogeny”, according to which, simply put, the embryos of different species bear resemblances to one another. A pretext for the discussion of the stellar body, beyond the being of flesh and blood, the discourse is heavily indebted to genetic vocabulary. The human being is perceived as interconnected with the phylogenetic chain, while still possessing the power of being granted “eternal life”:

The human embryo recapitulates an abbreviated phylogeny of the living world. Swimming in the muscular pool of the uterus, feeling the warmth of the urinary and rectal canals, translucent and curled up, we envelop ourselves with the complications of embryonic layers, becoming, one by one, coelenterates and worms, fish with fluttering gills, amphibians, insectivorous mammals and primates, until we break the blood-filled vulva and, dirty with meconium, we emerge headfirst into the new place where we live until our next birth. The same magical link exists between the stages of this life and the corporeal scheme of our flesh, as if we could see through time the way we see the panorama of space – as if our lives themselves were human beings made out of time, with structures identical to ours down to the smallest details, and analogous in surprising (83).

Christian Moraru notices that Cărtărescu

shows how the phylogeny of these metamorphoses (another Cărtărescu trademark) rehearses cosmic ontogeny by recapitulating a whole cosmology – an entire cosmology. Indeed, what he ultimately puts up is a spectacle of the planetary All and of those without whom this provisional, non-totalistic whole's wholeness would fall short, a performance of self and – and as necessarily with – others (álloi in Ancient Greek) (2015, 114).

This is the case for the character Sycamore Bădescu, the officer who has a passion for physiognomy. By studying the physiologist Franz Joseph Gall and the criminologist Cesare Lombroso, he explores the existence of a so-called “crime chromosome”, integrating their ideas into this vision. We can thus see that, just as Fairclough proved, “intertextuality is a matter of recontextualization” (2003, 51). Cărtărescu's text is based on conceptual chains, in a transdisciplinary context, through recontextualization of one discourse into another.⁴

One of the novel's most memorable fragments is the one describing a return into the past, as the sole value of humanity:

The past is everything, the future nothing and time has no other meaning. We live on a piece of plaque in the multiple sclerosis of the universe. An animal, small and compact, a single particle a billion times smaller than a quark, and a billion billion times hotter than the center of the sun, encompassed the entire design that our mind perceives in the moment it is given to perceive, uniting it in the breath of a single force, with balls of space and strings and the foggy droppings of the galaxies and the political map of the planet and the unpleasant smell of someone's mouth you're talking to on the bus and Ezekiel's vision on the banks of the Chebar and every molecule of melanin in a freckle under the left eyebrow of the woman you undressed and possessed a night ago and the wax in the ear of one of the ten thousand immortals of Artaxerxes and the group of catecholaminergic neurons in the medulla oblongata of a badger asleep in the woods of the Caucasus (2013, 75).

The return to a faraway history, from the myth of the Ten Thousand Immortals fighting against Artaxerxes, in a Persia before Christ, to Ezekiel's vision on the banks of the Chebar, equivalent to the establishment of a new world (Jewish settlement in Babylonia and Jewish settlement of Tel Aviv) always at a crossroads, just like the discussion about the medulla oblongata, situated at the crossroads between medulla and pons and the starting point for the cervical spinal nerves, to diverse acts such as the breathing of a common fellow on a bus or the freckle of a woman, all present a vision which fragments the world infinitely and concentrate in the tiniest of cells an entire universe. This multiplication, hustle and bustle of the cell and its reproduction are progressively captured, with the discourse alternating from scientific, Cartesian insertions, to more common, trivial ones such as "wax in the ear" or a "badger asleep".

BUTTERFLY EFFECT AND THE DISCURSIVE MIXTURE

The discursive chain created by Cărtărescu is sustained by the transdisciplinary perspective it applies, through a journey into paradoxical worlds, the only one capable of perceiving it being human thinking "our mind, the thought that thinks itself" (75). It is, actually, we believe, a fictionalization of the theory of Edward Norton Lorenz, regarding chaos, opposed to the one of Pierre-Simon de Laplace. The initial moment, the supreme question that the author poses, is the one regarding the production of a major event which generated the rupture of symmetry. The concrete nature of this discussion as the novel progresses is done in two important sequences: the first is tied to the explanation provided by the study of chaos theory and the butterfly effect:

Someone with the perspective of an angel (or Laplacian demon) – someone whose eyes could perceive not only the refraction of corpuscles or photonic waves across the surfaces of objects, but also the objects themselves, as they really are, suddenly given in all their details, at every level that our minds artificially separate: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology" (253),

with the character becoming a hybrid creature, "like a pseudopodium full efflorescent corpuscles, flowing gently, undulating pouring toward the brass plaque through

the flickering delta of her five fingers" (254). The theory of Laplace, also referred to as the demon of Laplace, contains an orderly vision of the world, to which the butterfly effect demonstrated by Edward Norton Lorenz is opposed, and which refers to the fact that error makes prediction impossible, the most concrete and best-known example provided by the American researcher being connected to the fluttering of a butterfly's wing which may influence the meteorological development of a hurricane.

Moreover, the second narrative sequence in *Blinding. The Left Wing* is the one generated by the image of the enormous butterfly underneath the ice, discovered by the ones who established the first community in Bereslăvești: "They never would have imagined that there was such beauty frozen in the thick crust of ice. But the garden of the Lord is greater than the mind of man, and its wonders are many" (68). The description thereof is made within the complete spectrum of colors, and the gesture of feasting on its flesh equates an impiety. Cărtărescu's discourse is situated at the crossroads between spaces which contain, just like bubbles, diverse theories, theorems, personalities, epochs and countries; Kafka, Pushkin, Lombroso, Stalin, Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and their times are mixed in a literary effort meant to hold together the memory of humanity, deeply entrenched into the successive strata of events which oftentimes have changed the course of history. Guglielmo Marconi, for example, is seen "in front of his ridiculous device", and the first message that the inventor of a radio telegraph system receives is "from quiqui quinet to a miche-miche chellet and from a jambebatist to a brulo brulo" (87), an essential text extracted from *Finnegans Wake*, interpreted as a synthesis of the theory of history belonging to James Joyce, with essential references to Edgar Quinet, Jules Michelet, Giambattista Vico or Giordano Bruno (e.g. Patell 1984). So, these "blended spaces" are doubled this time around: first there is a discursive mixture in the primary Joycean text, and secondly there is a restructuring through the integration of this mixture into the one of Cărtărescu's fiction.

CONCLUSION

The analysis undertaken through resorting to this discursive dialogue and to the fictional construction of these spaces brings about some important conclusions. Interdiscursivity is manifested in the Romanian prose writer's text through the simultaneity of writing, which contains in the fictional present an ample history of humanity, but also symptoms of the future. The gathering unto the same plane of events and personalities belonging to different epochs and domains, only to filter them through the autobiographical lens with fictional accents produces a dense, compact narrative framework, with multiple interpretative senses. Cărtărescu's text is in a permanent dialogue with itself and with other texts belonging to humanity, with the Romanian space containing infinitely multiplied spaces. The national and the global are exemplarily intertwined in the novel, as the Romanian society before and after the 1989 Revolution forms an original backdrop to the narration, from the discussion of the precarious situation of the population, to the introduction of characters reminiscent of Ceaușescu's secret police, the denouncing of the epoch

or the political convictions. At the same time, the freedom of writing combines social reality with the history of humanity: from biological, chemical, physical discoveries up to universal literature, with intertexts belonging to authors such as James Joyce, André Breton, Franz Kafka, André Pieyre de Mandiargues, Samuel Beckett, Tristan Tzara, Ilarie Voronca and others. The journey undertaken by Cărtărescu throughout these spaces is, as is confessed, one of “crossing countries and seas, eras and spheres, finally they reached the middle of the middle, the enigma of the enigma, the navel” (178). And this desire to reach a central point is a proof of the need for unity, of uniting these dissonant spaces. It is an exercise in refining narrative methods which he makes use of also in the prose texts published after this novel and which constitute the specific touch of his narrations.

NOTES

- ¹ Christian Moraru writes about the integration of the narrative formula and spatiality in *Reading for the Planet. Toward a Geomethodology*: “Amplifying exponentially across the post-Cold War novel, the thematization of the dialectic of micro and macro world pictures becomes more transparently political in Cărtărescu’s later work (*Orbitor* [Blinding]), but also in DeLillo (*Underworld*, *Cosmopolis*, *Falling Man*, and *Point Omega*), Chang-Rae Lee (*Native Speaker*, *A Gesture Life*, *Aloft*, and *The Surrendered*), [...] Ondaatje (*The English Patient*), Houellebecq (*Les particules élémentaires* [The Elementary Particles], *Plateforme* [Platform], *La possibilité d’une île* [The Possibility of an Island], and *La carte et le territoire* [The Map and the Territory]), [...], to list only a few of the Romanian writer’s kindred spirits” (125–126).
- ² The documents preserved in the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives commented upon in recent years revealed the fact that group members were constantly followed by the secret police, some of the security agents participating in the literary readings.
- ³ See also the published poetry volumes: *Faruri, vitrine, fotografii* (Headlights, Shop Windows, Photographs, 1980), *Poeme de amor* (Love Poems, 1982), *Totul* (Everything, 1984), *Levantul* (The Levant, 1990), *Dragostea* (Love, 1994), *Dublu CD* (Double CD, 1998), *Plurivers* (Pluriverse, 2003), *Cincizeci de sonete* (Fifty Sonnets, 2003), *O seară la operă* (One night at the opera, 2009), *Nimic* (Nothing, 2010), *Poezia* (Poetry, 2015), *Nu striga niciodată ajutor* (Never cry for help, 2020).
- ⁴ Norman Fairclough observes that “it can be operationalized in discourse analysis in a transdisciplinary way through categories such as genre chain, which allows us to show in more detail how the discourse of one social practice is recontextualized in another” (2003, 222).

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Blended spaces in Mircea Cărtărescu's novel "Blinding. The Left Wing"

Interdiscursivity. Blended spaces. Romanian fiction. Cultural heritage.

Romanian criticism has discussed from various perspectives Mircea Cărtărescu's belonging to postmodernism from various perspectives. We advance a new idea in the overall exegesis of his work, which is that his prose revisits cultural references from the 17th century (the image of the citadels of Desiderio Monsu), the 18th century (Piranesi's prisons), the tormented history of the 19th century, the cities of New Orleans, the Mississippi region, or the grotesque visions of El Greco or Biblical images, even the criminology of Gall or Lambroso, by means of *spatiality*. Thus, the fundamental thesis which we prove by analyzing Cărtărescu's novel *Blinding. The Left Wing*, is that interdiscursivity is realized by means of spatial dialogue, which becomes an essential element in sketching out the architectural or artistic discourse according to the literary one. Starting out from the theoretical framework represented by "constitutive intertextuality" and reaching "blended spaces", the space generated by Mircea Cărtărescu's prose is configured by interdiscursivity.

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