

Cognitive cartographies in Liviu Rebreanu's "Forest of the Hanged"

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The present study sets out to analyze the relationship between two concepts – literature and knowledge – advancing a “Romanian model” in keeping with Ernst von Glasersfeld’s remark that “[t]here can be no final answers in this area but only models that, for the time being, satisfy our demands” (1996, 279–286). The theoretical backbone of our essay is made up of two levels: the first one will be employed in order to prove that the Romanian novel features “cognitive cartographies”, using Roger M. Down and David Stea’s definition of the phenomenon they refer to as “a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of the phenomena in his everyday spatial environment” (2017, 12). Liviu Rebreanu’s novel *Pădurea Spânzuraților* (1922; *Forest of the Hanged*, 1930) is centered on a protagonist who perceives external space by means of subjective states of mind, drawing a map out of the cognitive processes recorded in the narration, as part of a psychological analysis.¹ The complexity of such a mapping process is evident from the stages generating the overall image: the accumulation of narrative information, by means of the initial scene, the stocking up of experiences that define the Transylvania region as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the decoding of cognitive processes by clarifying the act of belonging to a space.

Another direction outlined in our study is to prove that “literature is a type of knowledge rather than simply a collection of cultural artifacts” (Bjornson 1981, 59). Therefore, mental activities generate both literary works and their interpretations in the form of maps represented individually by each reader. The second hypothesis is taken from von Glasersfeld, for whom “the role of knowledge is not to reflect an objective reality but to empower us to act effectively in the world of our experience, which is to say, to act so that we achieve a goal we have chosen” (1996, 238). The power conferred by literature by means of the experience it narrates is the main element by means of which we can update the practical aspect of the literary imaginary, but also the updating and integration of fiction into the global circuit of knowl-

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edge. Major events such as wars have brought about crucial geopolitical changes such as realignments of borders, with the old frontiers becoming “phantom borders”, and the perception of such changes generated diverse cognitive cartographies.² Such a map, to resort to the definition of the syntagm (see Lynch 1960), is constructed through a multitude of information which we can find along the unfolding of the narrative, in the case of Rebreanu’s novel, registered and reinterpreted by the protagonists, according to the manner of reacting to space. Moreover, the region of Transylvania which makes up the spatial framework of the novel is an obvious example for the analysis of “phantom borders”, but also of other fundamental milestones such as inter-imperialism.

THE WAR IN INTER-IMPERIAL TRANSYLVANIA

To observe the manner of functioning of the relationship between literature and knowledge, we shall use the Romanian writer Liviu Rebreanu’s *Forest of the Hanged*, which has been translated into several languages, and has received widespread recognition not only nationally, but also on a European level.³ The novel’s primary source is an experience that was thematized and narrated in the writer’s biography, which establishes a connection with a powerful image represented by a photograph showing “a forest full of hanged Czechs behind the Austrian frontline close to Italy”, a firm proof by means of which the one who had shown him the photograph attempted to show “how the Czech people had been treated by the leaders of the Austrian monarchy” (Rebreanu 1943, 12).⁴ Indeed, the thematic concerns surrounding World War I had been previously taken up by the writer in novellas such as *Hora morții* (Death’s dance, 1921), *Ițic Ștrul, dezertor* (Itzig Strull, deserter, 1920) and *Catastrofa* (The catastrophe, 1919). The topic as developed in the novel keeps the general scheme of the feeling of duty and nationalism, but also a certain multiculturalism existing in the Transylvanian space, which can be described as inter-imperial. Described as located at the intersection of several imperial powers, the region is “an example of a multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional region of the world” (Parvulescu and Boatcă 2022, 2).

Rebreanu remembers in his confessional writings (1943) the fact that he had been told about similar horrors, involving hanged people by recording information in the printed press of the day, an analogy to the situation of the “priests and peasants” from Bucovina who had been executed in Bistrița, a city in the northern part of Transylvania. The closeness Rebreanu feels towards the place of execution in Bistrița, confirmed by historical data (other accounts regarding the forests where soldiers and commoners were hanged, such as Cezar Petrescu’s novel *Cartea Unirii 1918–1928* [The book of unification], set not far from Rebreanu’s birthplace), prompts his imagination to add this detail to the novel he was starting to work on. Another source of inspiration is connected to personal experience, as Rebreanu’s brother Emil had been executed on grounds of his being an officer in the Austrian army and having thus to fight against the Romanians, he deserted and had consequently been sentenced to death.⁵ The third documentary source is connected to the letters that Emil had sent to him in Bucharest. In these letters certain realities are thematized and

described, such as a presentation of the front in Russia, the war map of the battle of Doberdò,⁶ real events that will be transformed into fiction such as the destruction of an enemy reflector or the protagonist's decoration with a medal.

The flux between literature and knowledge is connected to Liviu Rebreanu's journey to Ghimeș-Palanca, where he had been told his brother had been buried. The first one was undertaken by means of documentation efforts and the identification of information concerning the period the executed person had spent in that place. Furthermore, based on the recollections of the writer's wife Fanny Liviu Rebreanu, we can encounter personal statements which testify to the strong impact the event had on him, such as the finding of the grave of his executed brother. During this journey on May 20, 1920, he found the site of the hanging, where the inhabitants of Ghimeș had placed a "huge stone" (Rebreanu 1963, 144). Underneath it, he discovered his brother's grave, which he manages to recognize thanks to an interesting biographical detail: "[O]nce, during one of their childish games, he had accidentally severed a part of one of his fingers on the left hand. [...] He looked at the left hand and recognized his brother Emil, by the missing part of one of the fingers" (148). The following year, on October 2, 1921, he returned to Ghimeș in order to exhume and give a Christian burial to his brother Emil in the soil of the "former kingdom".

Several references to the front appear in Rebreanu's novel, but its central theme is the psychology of the protagonist Apostol Bologa, and the internalization of his wartime experiences. This is shown by the dialogue between him and other combatants, carriers of different values, meant to contrast their ideas to the ones which Bologa stands for. The novel's protagonist advances a simple, almost Rousseau-like, vision of existence. Speaking with the Czech captain Klapka, who is surprised at his involvement with a Hungarian peasant, Bologa meditates on the issue of equality between people, but also on the idea that war is generated by civilization:

"The soul is the same in the peasant girl as in the countess," answered Bologa with warmth, "at all events in its essentials. Only the shape has been changed by civilization. [...] I think that civilization has corrupted man and demoralized him. Primitive man is kind and just and believes – that's why he is happier than civilized man. All that civilization has bestowed on mankind up till to-day is war, which puts millions and millions of people face to face, and which kills thousands and thousands of souls in one second!" (Rebreanu 1930, 302)

Egalitarianism is clearly voiced here, as are the social differences that create the gap between two major social classes: "[A] few favoured ones who suffer from boredom and spleen. For one thousand five hundred million people civilization is a calamity, if it isn't in truth a refined system of slavery" (302–303). Bologa's perception of the social system and the rules established by communities as a form of slavery is meant to give rise to debate, in order to highlight a complex of multicultural experiences. His evolution offers him the opportunity to bring up the rebellion against a state sending him to an almost certain death.

Gross, "a Jew and an engineer, employed at works in Budapest" (1930, 57), identifies a sole culprit for the war: "The State! The State which kills! Behind us our State, in front of us the enemy State, and we in the middle, condemned to die in order

to secure a peaceful, comfortable life for those brigands who are responsible for the massacre of millions of unconscious slaves” (57) and preaches the liberation of all nations: “all the downtrodden ones will turn on those who have exploited them for thousands of years, and into their blood, thick with sloth, they will dip their banners of peace and of the regenerated world” (59). To his fellow lieutenant Varga’s attempt to justify the war through the idea of “protect[ing] our homeland, friend, the land of our forefathers” (57), Gross replies by referring to the existence of a universal type of human, who is a citizen of the world. “The International” that Varga constructs looks as follows:

“Behold! You are a Jew, the captain is Czech, the doctor over there is German, Cervenco is a Ruthenian, Bologna is Romanian, I am a Hungarian... [...] And I am sure that in the big room over there or in the lobby we would find Poles, Serbs, and Italians, in fine all nationalities [...] fight for a common ideal against a common foe.” (59)

Literature teaches us what Glasersfeld referred to as tools for the management of experience (2001, 32). The experience of war offered by Rebreanu’s novel contains such a set producing an analysis of reality, starting out from a fictional framework. The goal is not, as Glasersfeld noted, the one of offering a “true” picture of an observer-independent “reality” (2001, 32), but on the contrary to produce a matrix, a pattern of reaction to a traumatic event such as World War I. This relation confirms the usefulness of literature in the context of present-day knowledge, and at the same time, the power invested in the readers by the very act of reading, the one of offering them a model of reaction to a reality not directly known, through one’s own methods of analysis.

With Rebreanu this mechanism functions very well, because the elements of the structure he creates are the result of an ample process of documentation, involving historical and geographical data, or data regarding the history of human trends of thought. We can thus notice that in the case of literature the flux functions differently, because from the direction of the narrative text a new type of knowledge emerges that offers the reader the chance to include into their mental pattern data which, even though springing from fiction, advance a coherent hypostasis of the world.

MENTAL PATTERNS AND COGNITIVE GEOGRAPHY

Forest of the Hanged provides an ample incursion into the multicultural universe of Transylvania. The novel commences abruptly, with the protagonist, a Romanian from Transylvania named Apostol Bologna, witnessing the execution of the Czech Svoboda, convicted for deserting to the enemy lines and being caught. Being part of the group that had decided on the conviction, Bologna is haunted throughout the entire novel by the condemned man’s gaze. Foreshadowing what will happen to the protagonist, the event constructs a mental pattern regarding the experience of death. The hanging of the Czech warrant officer represents the narrative scheme used by Rebreanu in order to explore the manner in which one’s sense of duty functions in a multicultural region. The major dilemma of Apostol Bologna is the fact that

while he is enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian army, his home territory belonging to the empire, he reaches the Romanian frontline and finds himself in the position of having to fight against his compatriots from beyond the mountains.⁸

The conglomerate constituted by an empire containing several nations poses such major issues of consciousness. The characters imagined by Rebreanu stand for their respective nations. For instance, Klapka is Czech, which is a very dangerous predicament, considering that “all Czechs were suspects” (Rebreanu 1930, 69). Hailing from Znojmo (Znaim in German), a city in Southern Moravia, Klapka represents a variation of the narrative scheme initiated by the hanging of Svoboda. The Czech senses the danger and the fact that he is a suspect, by virtue of his belonging to a different nation. He remembers that “on the Italian front a Romanian was hanged for the same crime” (73), but also the plan he had made to escape together with other three officers. Out of cowardice, however, he does not leave with the other three, who are subsequently caught, and he denies knowing them, in an almost Biblical manner. Their cry “Long live Bohemia” (74), by means of which they confirm their belonging to a nation, is registered as an act of courage, in stark contrast with Klapka’s cowardice. In fact, Bologa’s Czech interlocutor is the one who describes the eponymous forest of the hanged:

There were no gibbets, but on each tree men were hanging, strung up on the branches. All were bareheaded, and from the neck of each man dangled a label bearing the words “A traitor to his country” inscribed in three languages. [...] Then I closed my eyes, thinking with stupid amazement: “This is the Forest of the Hanged”. [...] A Hungarian major [...] whispered into my ear [...]: “They are all Czechs, both officers and men, only Czechs!” (74–75)

The characters are identified as belonging to certain nations, in a power struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, without any trace of individualization. This is one of the strategies employed by Rebreanu by means of which he renounces the creation of individuality, in favor of a certain typicality, meant to represent the image of an entire generation. The turmoil experienced by the nations which were within the Austro-Hungarian Empire contains the idea of nationalism that was heavily debated in the late 19th and early 20th century. Transylvania represents a good example of multiculturalism and inter-imperial relations⁹, as it is located at the crossroads of powerful circles of influence, being a territory heavily disputed by various communities and ethnicities, and playing an important part in the tensions between world powers, both before World War I, as thematized in Rebreanu’s novel, and in its aftermath:

Transylvania has thus long constituted a spatial node of inter-imperial relations, with the empires of the region in tension with other world empires on a global scale: the Hungarian Kingdom at odds with Bohemia-Moravia and Venice; the Ottoman Empire in global conflict with the Persian Empire and the Spanish Empire; the Ottoman Empire at odds with the Habsburg Empire; the Habsburg Empire facing the Russian Empire; Austria and Hungary intension with in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Austria-Hungary and Romania in conflict with in the global conflagration of World War I; Hungarian and Romanian nationalisms struggling over the region. (Parvulescu and Boatcă 2022, 22)

Therefore, the space chosen by Rebreanu is interesting from this point of view, because it brings up on the one hand the relations between the nations incorporated in 1867 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which included the Romanian nation as part of this construct, but also the relations between the great imperial powers of the day. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy coincides with the affirmation of Transylvania's independence in 1918 and its inclusion in the Romanian state, as a result of the General Assembly of Alba-Iulia on December 1, 1918. This unification was only formally recognized by the Trianon Treaty in 1920, by means of the recognition of the rights of nations in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The relationships between empires are amplified in *Forest of the Hanged*, with the characters relating to major historical events: "Revolution has broken out in Russia – which means our hopes have vanished, like this, into thin air" (1930, 173). The duality of the two worlds is manifested also on the level of the two armies confronting each other. The Austro-Hungarian army was fighting against the Russian one, but at the same time it was opposing the different nationalities that constituted it.

The nationalist idea is also amplified by Rebreanu by means of the inclusion of historical data inserted into the protagonists' biographies. Thus, in order to explain his attachment towards the Romanians, Rebreanu confers interesting origins to the character of Apostol Bologna, whose ancestor Grigore had taken part in the 1784 Transylvanian peasant revolt known as the Uprising of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan and had been put to death on the wheel. Apostol's father Iosif Bologna had been one of the signers of the Memorandum of 1892 presented to Emperor Franz Josef by the Romanians in Transylvania, demanding equal rights with the Hungarian population. The document was never read by officials, however, and its authors were arrested and tried, receiving punishments ranging from several months to several years in prison. Iosif Bologna was imprisoned for two years, explaining his son's relationship with the situation of Transylvania. The ancestry Rebreanu creates for Bologna, including references to the Uprising and the Memorandum, is focused on the same status of "tolerated population" of the Romanians in Transylvania. Thus, the writer expresses the national idea through historical events and documents that are meant to complete the protagonist's psychological profile.¹⁰

THE THREE COGNITIVE SCHEMES: THREE WAYS TO SEE THE WAR

In one of his notebooks, Rebreanu writes: "Apostol's circle: Meyer, the Hungarian, the Jew, the Ruthenian, etc." (Ms. 2541), which is a possible explanation for the conglomerate of nations brought together by an empire.¹¹ Therefore, beginning with the notes he took while creating the novel, Rebreanu imagined Apostol Bologna as one of those individuals who experience tragedies that bear ethnical and identarian connotations. Similarly, General Karg, another of the novel's characters, is based on a historical document found in the archive of notes and documents which formed the base of the novel's elaboration: "Officer's Order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Hungarian Guard", signed in Budapest on July 23, 1917 by Count Karg by means of which Emil Rebreanu had been sentenced to "death by hanging. This

sentence, accompanied by the signature of the commander of the Grand Unit, was executed in Ghimeș, on the 14th of May 1917, at 10 p.m.” (Ms. 2188), can be found in the official document, kept in the archive, and offers real information, which was then taken over into fiction.

The essential discussion that advances the working instruments is centered on the issue of national consciousness, perceived as a cognitive scheme that may be applied not only to the Romanian space, but also to other nations which were part of the Empire. In one fragment of a manuscript kept at the Library of the Romanian Academy, Rebreanu describes national consciousness:

Once upon a time, even 50 years ago, such discussions would not even have been possible in any army in the world; national consciousness is a new concept. Internationalism gave rise to nationalism, that is to say material internationalism produced material nationalism. Religious internationalism, with its foundation of love, resulted in a spiritual type of nationalism. (Ms. 2541)

In the same context, we can notice by consulting the manuscripts that on the map Rebreanu had set up before starting to write the novel, containing the positions of rooms, the mess hall, the lodgings and the division headquarters, three identifications appear: the International of hate – Gross, the International of crime – Varga, and the International of love – Cervenکو. The three characters are hypostases of vision, embodying different relationships to the idea of nation–liberty, a triangular structure of the cognitive scheme possible when faced with oppressive powers.

Rebreanu constructs the image of a character who believes that he can obtain freedom through anarchy. As Gross tells Bologna in the third part of the novel, the world had to be destroyed to its core through hate, because “[n]othing but hatred can destroy the falseness that poisons the world!” (1930, 261) Pleading for honesty and its accompanying brutality, the character embodies a viable attitude for a society facing World War I, but also antisemitic sentiments. He accuses Bologna of chauvinism and implicitly of hypocrisy, confronting him with truths such as the fact that “you would murder joyfully a thousand Russians or Italians to save yourself from shooting at your own people” (263). Dehumanization, as well as crimes committed in the name of war, are vehemently condemned.

Varga, representing the Hungarian nation, is the kind of soldier who perceives any order as a duty without questioning its morality. The only time when he questions this extreme feeling of duty is when Apostol Bologna asks him what he would do if he had to fight his own nation. The lieutenant of the Hussars is visibly shaken, because the question disturbs his inner peace and contradicts the basic logic of a soldier’s existence, in which war means committing crimes without being held accountable for them. Varga is also the one who captures Bologna at the moment he decides to desert and finds the map of positions on him, which undeniably incriminates him and results in his condemnation to death by hanging.

Cervenکو represents the third hypostasis by means of which the pacifist attitude towards war is described. We find out that “[the] officers all considered him a sort of maniac because during these two years of soldering he had never once touched

a weapon of war. He always went to the fight armed merely with a reed wand and singing hymns” (54). He did not want to kill anybody, and had a boundless love for all humankind.

The three cognitive schemes embodied by the three characters define the tool used for managing the experiences of war, a borderline experience which periodically marks humanity: Gross, Varga and Cervenko. The hypostases presented by the Romanian novelist are attitudes towards war, models of relating to conflict and of contextual placement. It is a form of literature preparing one to react to major events, a sort of emotional preparation, a drill. One fragment describing Bologa's thought process is edifying, advancing exactly this type of map – a cognitive scheme springing out of literature which may or may not be modelled on real life:

Some person sits himself down at a table, full of faith in his own knowledge and experience of life, and decrees that men should be so and so. [...] And that somebody would do his best to force living soul into his scheme [...]. Life flowed on indifferently, destroying not only learned men's systems but even men's minds, inventing new situations [...], new ideas which the Lilliputian imagination of human beings would never be able to understand and much less to foresee. (134–135)

The writer is perceived as a fallen deity, with the only real creator being, according to Rebreanu, life itself. Thus, experience is the only element that may destroy systems and undermine the human mind, because it faces the human being with unforeseeable situations. Therefore, according to his vision, knowledge is real only in as far as it is lived and experienced, not gained through intermediaries. In spite of this, the novel itself becomes such an experience, which, even though it is not lived, still produces knowledge. In this sense, we hold that “literary knowledge does not exist in books, which merely offer the opportunity to acquire it, but in the cognitive schema which all individuals must construct for themselves” (Bjornson 1981, 59), which leads to explaining existence by means of the individual's belonging to a cognitive scheme.

PHANTOM BORDERS, FAILED EXPERIENCES

A cognitive map can be identified by means of *Forest of the Hanged* relating to the identification of so-called “phantom borders” with Transylvania, the region where the action unfolds being representative for the mobile map of Europe. The definition of what is meant by “phantom borders” or “phantom spaces” is the following:

they designate the performativity of previously-existing historical territories. Former historical territories have the capacity to shape both the experience and the imagination of a social group and, consequently, to establish regional patterns in a specific domain. This capacity is not permanent but limited to specific historical moments. Phantom borders and phantom spaces appear and disappear depending on the historical and geopolitical circumstances. (Hirschhausen et.al. 2019, 386)

We can notice that the essential connection between the narrative events in *Forest of the Hanged* is Apostol Bologa's consciousness of belonging to the Romanian nation, even if his native Transylvania belongs to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The border separating Transylvania from the Romanian space was a real one during the period depicted by Rebreanu. The novel, on the other hand, was published in 1922 when

the border separating the province had become a “phantom border”, as after World War I the configuration of several European spaces changed through the creation of nation-states. The historical heritage and social relationships established were part of a complex process, which Rebreanu himself had experienced and which he transposed to the novel’s narration. Rebreanu’s protagonist does not reconstruct space with the help of “phantom borders” but by registering “mental borders”, because the only reality he subscribes to is the inner one, the one of belonging to one single nation. In his case, the border he cannot cross is that of renouncing his primary cultural identity, the one of being a Romanian, which in his vision would mean an abandonment of the self. Even the linguistic criterion is brought up when Apostol Bologa breaks off his engagement to his hometown fiancée Marta, supposedly because of her speaking Hungarian with another man, although the girl he has fallen in love with, the undertaker Vidor’s daughter Ilona, is actually Hungarian, which is a further proof of these mental borders which become the driving forces of the characters’ actions.

For Apostol Bologa, the mental map had another component, as well as other landmarks than the legal, official ones. Power is what defines belonging to one space or another, just as war is a direct consequence of exaggerated displays of power. It seems that “mental maps [are] originating from higher levels of power. Hegemonic knowledge defines, among other things, the ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’, as well as ‘modern’ and ‘archaic’ regions” (Hirschhausen et.al. 2019, 369). Such dominant knowledge also places spatial structures in order, because images of real frontiers appear alongside mental maps, created according to other factors than the one of contemporary reality.

The Transylvania region is characterized by such realities, as it involves the hypostasis of a cartography created on linguistic grounds, as well as a cultural history. Apostol Bologa is the representative of this Romanian ancestry, as well as the carrier of a legal component of rebellion, of the fight for the fundamental rights of the Romanians, the successor of the participants in the Uprising of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan and of the Memorandists. This reference suggests the gap between the real situation and the inner experience of the protagonist. His psychological evolution consists in the unveiling of a mental map, discovered alongside external events. War becomes a catalyst prompting the human being to discover within itself “ unsuspected mysteries” and to take “unexpected decisions” (Rebreanu 1930, 135).

Another hypostasis of phantom borders is the one generated by places situated on the frontline in Belarus, Poland, Hungary, and Italy which can be observed by using information provided in the novel, and which also correspond to “phantom borders”. Thus, spaces defining the frontlines are introduced (Bako 2021, 233), field hospitals, representative cities, and villages pertaining to the network of nations encompassed by the Austro-Hungarian territory.¹² With Rebreanu one can notice a permanent preoccupation with real, objective details, such as the introduction of the maps. By using this element of cartography, Bologa traces the Russian enemy, in order to highlight the army’s position and to destroy the reflector: “He stared at the map and saw only the captain’s fingers which held the compass and moved hither and thither, casting a strange shadow shaped like a gibbet” (Rebreanu 1930,

77). In this situation, he remains anchored in a military mapping system. Then, signs on the map become blurred, because the map itself no longer serves orientation, but transforms in Apostol Bologna's case into a burden, into a failed experience, a simulacrum of existence, where life has to be lived without decoys: "He rested his head on his hand and stared at the lines, dots and angles marked on the map. They seemed to him cabalistic signs and he wondered how he had managed to understand them up till to-day. [...] 'How was it that I did not realize that a stupid formula could never cope with life'" (77-78). Passing through real spaces and penetrating phantomatic ones is done by changing the map's destination, that no longer offers precise landmarks, but instead blurs frontiers, transforming them into mental borders, which change according to the protagonist's will. His evolution is studied by means of the relationship between the inner self and the cartographic instrument. Apostol Bologna deserts and is captured carrying a map showing the positions of the Austro-Hungarian army. This time, it is no longer an "approximate and out-of-date" sketch, but "an accurate map" (254), the same map he accidentally takes with him, overcome by emotions, when he bids farewell to Ilona. The map is the one that seals his fate when Varga captures him, alongside a document which confirms, in the prosecutor's opinion, his intention of treason.

In the same manner that real geography is inserted into the fictional one, knowledge springs from the usage of historical documents, such as the ones showing the frontlines during World War I, but also the occurrence of certain events in these spaces. In the opening pages the village of Zirin on the Russian front is given as the location of the execution of Svoboda, the Czech soldier in whose sentencing Apostol Bologna played a part. Such a geographic landmark is connected also to the biography of Cervenko, who had been teaching at a high school in Stanislav. The fact that Rebreanu chooses this particular city is connected to the writer's preference for documentary realism. Maps of World War I reveal that the city of Stanyslaviv (now called Ivano-Frankivsk) was located on the front line, being a battleground of the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian armies, and only escaped the Habsburg Empire's influence upon its dissolution in November 1918. The characters are thus engaged in a complex mechanism of constituting a cognitive cartography, the terms of which are multiculturalism, experience, nationalism, and war. There is some sort of interdependence between these narrative focal points, which produce knowledge, sprung out of literature. Simultaneously, as we have previously shown, the flux also runs in the other direction, from fields such as geography, history, or military science.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions which we can derive from this novel lead in two fundamental directions: the novel *Forest of the Hanged* advances a hypostasis of reality experienced not only by Romanians, but by many other nations during World War I, with the contemporary reader extracting a type of fictionalized knowledge, which none the less is important for defining modern human sensitivity. References to concrete historical data and the geographic spaces the characters wander through, or biographical details which have to be confirmed or in order to highlight the idea of nations

and war as a destructive event, generate a cognitive manner of looking at the world through the viewpoint of the early 20th century, but above all from the perspective of the multicultural conglomerate of which Transylvania was a part. Rebreanu's vision confirms the manner in which national consciousness had evolved since the 19th century, but also of the creation of a point of view anchored in documentary sources, as we have previously shown. Another important conclusion, which represents a novel perspective offered by our research, is the literary study of "phantom borders"; an idea that can be sustained by means of the reference to the role of Transylvania. Perceiving phantom borders, separating territories and people, with the eyes of the mind, is also made possible by narrative events discussed in the present novel. Real borders, official ones and phantom-mental ones can also be observed by means of fiction, which is capable of offering partial insight into the mental archaeology of the protagonists. What seems important to us is the role of the novel not in offering a mirror image of reality, but rather providing a tool that helps people to efficiently handle certain types of situations. In fact, this is one of the possible answers that can be provided in connection with the future of the humanities and the importance of literature, in the present age and in the context of globalization.

NOTES

- ¹ Regarding *Forest of the Hanged*, Romanian criticism has focused especially on the psychological component or on the internalization of vision. These viewpoints range from seeing it as a work that "revolutionizes our analytical novel" (Cioculescu 1936, 2), to regarding it as a "psychological novel" (Călinescu 1981, 650), to describing it as a "novel of consciousness; [...] not necessarily a psychological novel", in which "[the] internalization of vision is an essential element, but not the only defining one" (Manolescu 1980, 123).
- ² For more details about the conceptualizations of perception in literature see Mikuláš 2015.
- ³ The novel is representative for the interwar period in Romanian literature all the more so as it was republished 11 times between 1922 and 1944 as well as in translation in Prague (1928), London and New York (1930), Perugia-Venice (1930), Paris (1932), Cernăuți (1932), Rotterdam (1932), Istanbul (1942), Madrid (1942), Stockholm (1944), Lisbon (1945), and Helsinki (1946) as well as other post-humously published translations mentioned by Nicolae Gheran in Rebreanu's collected works (1972, 667–668). Among these was the Slovak translation by Peter Doval under the title *Les obesencov*, Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1965.
- ⁴ Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Romanian are by the present author.
- ⁵ In the preserved document created by the Supreme Commander of the Hungarian Royal Guard it is shown that second lieutenant Emil Rebreanu was found guilty of "the crime of deserting [...] having had the intention of passing through the trenches of our army on the Romanian front in order to join the enemy" (Ms. 2188).
- ⁶ This battle is not accidentally chosen, because in the history of World War I it is known as "the battle of nations" especially because of the ethnic diversity of the Habsburg army, made up of Hungarians, Slovaks, Slovenians and Romanians from Transylvania, but also the victory of the Italian forces who captured Gorizia.
- ⁷ 1918 is the year of the formal proclamation of the unification of Transylvania with Romania, but the battles of the Romanian army in Transylvania continued on the Tisa plains by means of a powerful offensive during the year 1919.
- ⁸ A statistic from 1922 features data connected to the representation of the ethnic group of Romanians taking part in the war. Historical facts show that during World War I, Transylvania sent around half

a million Romanian soldiers to the battlefield, representing almost 15% of its total population enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian army. In the inter-imperial space they had also been enlisted Hungarians, Germans and others (Jews, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Romani). Many Romanians fought on the frontlines of Galicia, Serbia, Italy, and France, as well as on the Romanian front. For complex data see Păcățian 1923.

⁹ For a detailed explanation of the inter-imperial concept, see Doyle 2012.

¹⁰ One idea that appears in the manuscript explains the uprising as a result of war, but with resorting to a spiritual reference: “In times of war, because thousands of people die at once, vagabond psychological energies run astray and penetrate the atmosphere, that is why war always results in revolutions, discontent, public uprising” (Ms. 2541). The aftermath of war is also expressed, which can be studied from the perspective of the one who sees beyond appearances and the concrete realm and believes in a spiritualized world, where energies run freely, determining revolt in the states of the world.

¹¹ It should be mentioned that the term “Ruthenian”, which Rebreanu uses, referred to the entire Eastern Slavic population within the Habsburg monarchy at the beginning of the 20th century, not only the Rusyn minority in today’s eastern Slovakia and western Ukraine.

¹² The protagonist acts as a cartographer, with whose help the reader discovers an entire region. From Lunca to Făget or Ghimeș, he identifies within the territory the spaces he passes through. For a demonstration in this respect see Bako 2020.

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Cognitive cartographies in Liviu Rebreanu's "Forest of the Hanged"

Cartographies. Romanian literature. National identity. Knowledge. World War I. Liviu Rebreanu. Transylvania.

The study proves the fact that between literature and knowledge there is a double exchange of influence, the former offering a manner of acting when confronted with extreme situations, and the latter offering valuable documentary data essential for the anchoring of the reader in the narrative action. The formation of cognitive cartographies is studied in the Romanian novel *Forest of the Hanged* (1922) by Liviu Rebreanu, which brings up various key elements for our study: World War I in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the inter-imperial issue which influenced the geopolitical and cultural situation, but also the analysis of cognitive cartographies generated by "phantom borders".

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