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Michael Shafir [a]

[a] Senior Area Specialist for Central and South Eastern Europe, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prague

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MICHAEL SHAFIR

The Man They Love to Hate: Norman Manea's 'Snail's House' Between Holocaust and *Gulag*

Say 'Norman Manea' and a cohort of Romania's 'best and brightest' reaches for combat fatigues. The name sounds an alarm that obliterates divisions between 'right' and 'left' and pro-Western and anti-Western postures. All divisions vanish in the face of the threat posed to the Balkan nation's 'commonweal'. Exceptions? Yes, there *are* exceptions. That is not surprising: does not every besieged community have its conscious or unconscious 'traitors'? They are fortunately few and isolated. As 'traitors' – aware or unaware of their terrible deeds – always are in such cases.

Do you need an anti-climax to fully satisfy the outlandish experience? Meet the soft-spoken, Romanian-born Jewish writer, living in exile in New York since 1988. His native Bukovina, with its mellow skyline, its world-famous painted churches and, above all, its – alas, unjustifiably less famous – traditions of tolerance imbued by Austro-Habsburg imperial rule over a province where Romanians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews co-existed, is present is every gesture and tone Manea makes. It is as though Manea has carried his native Bukovina to the banks of the River Hudson, like a snail carries its home on its back wherever it goes. That is precisely the title of Manea's latest book, a collection of interviews brought out in 1999 by the Romanian Jewish community's Hasefer publishing house.[1]

A Shakespearean-like discrepancy between appearance and reality, Manea's numerous enemies would argue. Not a snail – but a *snake*, whose deadly venom is all the more dangerous in that it is administered by one hiding behind the masque of the benign bourgeois who shuns Bohemian extravagance and scandal. But surely if Manea's shy and withdrawn appearances would single him out in 'the Village' as one wearing the tame costume of a bank clerk amid a Rio-like carnival, his writings reveal him for what he is in reality. His monstrosity should become apparent – if not on page 1, then on page 10 at the latest. A 'semi-human', as C. Stănescu, a former communist cultural propagandist-turned-'democratic' defender of his nation's

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values, put it in May 1992 in Romania's largest-circulation daily, *Adevărul*. Brace yourself for an additional anti-climax and, as writers go, the only one that really counts.

For undertones not only dominate Manea's literary output: they are the only tune to be heard. One is stepping into a world where the Holocaust is not the tragedy of six million Jews exterminated by a powerful death-machine, but the drama of a few surviving individuals who are never really confronted with the physical presence of their perpetrators. And yet the perpetrators' shadowy presence dominates even the most intimate senses of Manea's characters: hunger, cold, disease. It is a world where one secretly wishes one's loved ones would pass away so as to be able to inherit a smuggled-in pullover, where one is afraid of contamination by lice carrying the deadly typhoid fever passed on by the inherited garment, and where one never forgives oneself for having both wished that death and for having survived.[2] Hunger, cold and disease once more dictate daily life under Ceaușescu's communism, dehumanizing in equal measure people and those charged with de-humanizing them.[3] If the 'pullover' symbolized the Holocaust, it is another garment, a 'trenchcoat', that symbolizes terror under a communist regime where even the privileged live in fear.[4] Manea never deals with the world's 'big questions'. He does not write about the Holocaust, but about personal holocausts; he does not draw up maps of the *Gulag*, but spots of *gulags* where inmates are 'free'. Free to obey, humiliated into competing with one another for the 'honour' of obeying. A world where happiness is, as the title of one of his volumes has it, 'obligatory'.

This article is a political scientist's layman-like attempt to scrutinize the main themes of Norman Manea's literary output and, as such, is doomed to be unsatisfactory to literary specialists. For this impertinence, excuses are due ahead. The article explores the reasons for Manea's lack of popularity in his native country, finding them in both professional envy and the reactions triggered by two of Manea's articles on the intellectual fascist past of some of Romania's most prominent interwar intellectuals. The Holocaust vs. *Gulag* dispute and its implications are then reviewed and, finally, the article touches on some reactions prompted by Romanian, Romanian-born or Western intellectuals who challenged the 'conspiracy theories' which dominate post-communist Romanian intellectual approaches to the legacies of fascism and communism.

Exile and its 'clowns'

Manea's literary output is dominated by two recurrent autobiographical themes, which in many ways intertwine: exile and the confrontation of the two 'clowns': the 'White Clown' – the dictator (but also the powers-that-be) – and Auguste the Fool – the artist.[5] The 'White Clown' is the manufacturer of exiles; Auguste the Fool is his perpetually exiled opponent.

The 'White Clown' first sent Manea into exile in October 1941, at the age of five. His family was deported by Marshal Ion Antonescu's regime to Transnistria, where his grandparents perished in a concentration camp.[6] Having returned to Romania in 1945, Manea studied engineering, a 'safer' profession than that of writer under the communist regime. His second, 'interior', exile had just begun. It is this exile, rather than the first, that was to dominate Manea's writings after his literary debut in 1966. 'I am not a Holocaust writer', Manea told a Dutch interviewer in 1998. In a 'Transatlantic Dialogue' with the Romanian literary historian Marta Petreu published in 1992, he explained how he evaded that temptation:

> What stopped me from speaking 'frankly' about my childhood in the concentration camp was not the fact that the Holocaust, after the initial post-war years of anti-fascist propaganda, had become a taboo theme. Communist ideological strategy manipulated everything . . . I was horrified by the possibility of involuntarily 'serving' the official propaganda. I also found lamentation, the traditional posture of victim occupied by the Jew in both the anti- and the philo-Semitic repertoire, repugnant. I preferred to codify the condition I was referring to. In those years of misery and terror it seemed to me that we were all suffering, that we were all 'Jews', to the extent that made focusing on the surplus reserved to 'the foreigner' border on lack of decency.[7]

Yet Manea's Jewish identity was forced on him by a regime whose national–communist postures under Ceauşescu were reaching aberrations not encountered elsewhere and which resuscitated anti-Semitism as part and parcel of its self-legitimizing efforts. In 1980 the then Ceauşescu court poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor (nowadays a senator and leader of the xenophobic Greater Romania Party) published an anti-Semitic tract under the title 'Ideals'.[8] Shortly afterwards, Manea, in a daring interview, spoke out against 'chauvinism' and Tudor's 'zealous attempts to resurrect the nostalgia of other times'.[9] In vain, as he explained years later, did he wait for non-Jewish literati to come out against Tudor's unprecedented anti-Semitism dressed up as the party line.[10] Censorship forbade even a reference to the interview after its publication, let alone reactions to it. The intention to include it in a volume of essays published in 1984 was more than naive, that volume being itself subjected to heavy censorship. But the perverse ways of the Romanian *Securitate* would not stop at censorship exercised via peers. A member of that police came to 'visit' him, making clear to the writer, if any doubt still lingered, that he was under surveillance. The Communist Party, he reassured Manea, 'distances itself' from the 'hooligans' of Tudor's mould, whose attacks on Manea had intensified following the interview. But things were 'complicated' and the writer, who was 'a European spirit', should not become entangled in such disputes. Following which, the 'trenchcoat' simply asked Manea: 'Why don't you emigrate legally'?[11]

Manea eventually did. Not 'legally', that is to say as a Jew to Israel, but by deciding not to return to Romania after receiving a scholarship in West Berlin in 1986, whence he proceeded to the United States in 1988. This was the beginning of Manea's third exile. At five, a 'White Clown' saluting with his right hand had sent him into his first exile. At 50, the 'White Clown', now saluting with a closed fist but calling himself *Conducător* (leader) just as Antonescu had, again dispatched August the Fool into exile, shortly after having instructed the Writers' Union to withdraw a literary prize from the 'foreigner'. The second exile of internal emigration was making room for the third – physical emigration. This latter exile was at first perceived as the most painful of all – the exile of the writer from the language in which he creates. For me, Manea told an American writer soon after his arrival in the United States, 'the Holocaust is just about to begin'. But he eventually found a solution: the snail's house is precisely the language in which he continues to write, his 'motherland' or 'fatherland' carried on his back – a refuge he eventually came to regard as 'a privilege' rather than a 'curse'.[12] It is a privilege because the writer came to see in it the only possibility of preserving his individuality. But it remains a curse, since the snake's 'spiral shelter' is forever doomed to have but one inhabitant. Doubts about a writers' ability to exist outside the world of words in which he reconstructs his experience nonetheless linger. Witness this conclusion, written shortly after his sole post-emigration visit to the country of his birth in 1997:

> Kafka did not often write about the country in which he was born, its history, geography or politics. His short stories, novels, letters and diary speak only of solitude, his real homeland.
>
> When he refers to the language – that is, the country – which he came to inhabit, Kafka speaks of 'impossibilities'. In a letter to Max Brod, he lists three impossibilities for a Jew writing in German, or, in fact, in any other language – which means in any fatherland. He sees these impossibilities as a matter of 'the Jewish question or of despair in relation to that question'.
>
> Kafka's three impossibilities are: the impossibility of not writing, of writing in German, and of writing differently. To these he adds a fourth, comprehensive impossibility: namely 'the impossibility of writing' *per se*. Few people have their homeland as dramatically located in writing as the Jewish Kafka writing in Prague in German – his paradoxical way of 'crossing over to the side of the world' in the struggle with himself.
>
> It is surprising that Franz Kafka did not mention a fifth impossibility that is the most kafkaesque of all. We might call it the geographical impossibility of exile, or the impossibility of operetta, to borrow [Emil] Cioran's idea that one would do better to write operettas than write in a foreign language.
>
> But perhaps it would be more suggestive to call it 'the snail's impossibility', that is the impossibility of continuing to write in exile, even if the writer takes along his language as the snail does his house. The shell does, to be sure, still provide linguistic refuge even in exile. But creative life is seriously imperilled through dislocation, and, quite often, the stranding of the snail in the torrid, bewildering, wilderness of the modern babel rapidly shrivels his prospects . . .

If, in the struggle with the world, we must ultimately take the side of the world against ourselves, then writing as a secular prayer may still accommodate either our refusal or our resignation. Dealers and consumers alike become fictions of the page itself. The suspect who prays in the act of writing does not exist either, except as a creation of earth-bound letters who turns around the anagrammed mystery of the world. A joke, almost, which is still trying to find itself in the curiosity shop of so many mother and fatherlands.[13]

It is no accident that Manea chooses Kafka, the writer with whom he has most often been compared, as his term of reference. But for Manea exile has never been an option. That 'White Clowns' would force him into repeated exiles is almost banal. But that 'White Clowns' dressed up as Auguste the Fool would do the same is the writer's real drama.

On the face of it, the writer who had kept his Jewish identity 'in check' and had extensively published on the ordeals of his fellowcountrymen under communism should have been welcomed back to his homeland after the change of regime. But that is not the way things work in Romania, and not for Norman Manea alone. Paul Goma, Romania's most courageous dissident writer, was not even invited to rejoin the Writers' Union after 1989. In his Paris exile he was 'living proof' that collaborationism and/or passivity were not the only solution for Romania's literati, if one was willing to take risks. They never forgave Goma his 'sin'. The real, almost unique hero of intellectual resistance in communist Romania was post-factum replaced by countless 'heroes' who had allegedly engaged in 'cultural resistance' – a euphemism for giving the Red Caesar what was his, in exchange for turning a blind eye to 'deviations' that had little impact outside a small circle of self-contemplating intellectuals.

In Manea's case, however, things are more complicated. He has never climbed the barricades of open dissidence, as he readily admits. He is persuaded that the regime would not even have treated him as a 'dissident'. He would just have been 'a Jew' – and that would have 'explained' his 'deviance'. Experiences such as those of Pasternak in the Soviet Union (to mention but one) were certainly not insignificant in forging this belief. And the fact that the regime 'Judaized' Goma into 'Paul Efremovici' adds some weight to the argument. Furthermore, in schizophrenic Romania many were persuaded that dissidents such as Goma or Dorin Tudoran (see below) were nothing but *Securitate* provocateurs and Manea's Jewishness – always grounds for suspicion – would have assisted the regime's efforts to reinforce those persuasions.[14] Still, not many writers had dared to produce a caricature of the Communist Party activist whose date of birth was 26 January – the *Conducător*'s carnavalesque birthday.[15]

After briefly playing with the thought of returning in the wake of Ceaușescu's overthrow, Manea quickly concluded that 'home' would be less

homely than ever. National communism may have dropped its 'communist' justification, but this was more than compensated for by a 'nationalism' freed from any previous window-dressing ideological constraints. 'Not in the least do I feel tempted to take a walk nowadays on [what was renamed] Antonescu Boulevard', he told Marco Cugno in October 1994.[16]

When he finally did return in 1997, the experience proved anything but a 'catharsis' that would liberate him from his traumas. Torn by remorse for his mother's death, Manea wished to visit her grave in Bukovinian Suceava. It was this that finally persuaded him to accompany Leon Botstein, the president of Bard College in New York State where he teaches, on a trip to Bucharest where Botstein, an internationally known musician, would hold a concert. But apart from Manea's mother, nothing was buried in the country he had left 11 years earlier. Certainly *not* buried was the animosity towards the Jewish writer, who had meanwhile been transformed into a sort of cultural public enemy number one.

There were two separate, yet at the same time complementary, explanations for Manea's 'demonization'. The first is the seemingly banal, all-too-worldly professional jaundiced eye of literati, regardless of where they happen to be in this globalized (and hence even more competitive) world of arts. Norman Manea happens to be the only living Romanian-language writer whose works have been translated into no less than ten languages (German, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, English, Hebrew, Norwegian and Greek and, most recently, Polish) and published in 12 countries, not counting his native Romania. In a culture suffering from an 'inferiority complex', where many writers are convinced that their own or their predecessors' lack of international acknowledgment is due only to their writing in a tongue that is not widely known, this can be a capital sin. Why would Manea, of all people, benefit from attention? Why would *his* works be translated and those of other writers ignored? Furthermore, why would those few Romanian-language writers whose product has been translated into Western languages fail to attract the attention of literary critics, their books remaining, in most cases, confined to the shelves of obscure libraries specializing in the 'literature of the east'?

Time for a never-absent explanation to step in: conspiracy theories. In Manea's case these were readily presented as working on two separate, though not really unjoined, levels. First, a personal one, consisting of an unexplained web of informal relations mobilized in support of an allegedly mediocre talent. Second, an ethnic one, in which the writer was both beneficiary and behind-the-scenes manipulator – an offshoot of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion Literary Lodge'. In March 1999, at a round-table debate of Romanian literati in the Transylvanian town of Cluj, the obsessive question returned: why is it that no Romanian writer has ever received the Nobel Prize for

literature? Literary critic Ion Vartic dared suggest that Norman Manea, the best-known and most-translated Romanian writer in the West, could become the first Romanian to be awarded the honour, and thus help Romanian literature as a whole escape its undeserved anonymity. But Vartic was himself sceptical of the possibility. 'Given our unfortunate tradition of envy and intrigue', he said, 'we are likely to do everything we can to stop him from receiving it'.[17]

This was no prophetic vision. It was based on a number of instances in which Romanians had 'almost' made it to being considered by the Nobel Prize jury. But it was also taking into account the hostility Manea's name was encountering among the peers he had left behind – or, worse still, among those who, like himself, had been forced into exile. Indeed, a year earlier, Dorin Tudoran, a former courageous dissident poet under Ceaușescu, was writing in the country's most prestigious literary journal, *România literară*, that Manea's success in the West was to be attributed mainly to 'a minutely orchestrated' campaign backed by 'incredible financial and public relations efforts'.[18] The poet, who had preceded Manea into American exile, had unfortunately failed to make any impression in his adopted country and had finally taken up a semi-governmental position in the Moldovan capital of Chișinău after working for the Voice of America in Washington. Tudoran, who is also a gifted journalist, made a powerful return as a post-communist 'engaged' pundit. Once Vartic had dared call a spade Manea, Tudoran reacted in two articles in *România literară* in which he questioned not only Manea's originality but also, and more importantly, whether his hypothetical 'Nobelization' would serve the interests of the Romanian literary community. To start with, it was doubtful whether Manea should count as a Romanian, or an American writer. Whatever the case, Tudoran reiterated, Manea was little more than an 'outstanding impresario of his own literature. I am, however, unaware of any notable effort he has made in backing the joint interests of Romanian literature'. Even if he were to receive the prize, this would not attest to his literary merits, but rather to the prize having become 'politicized', as witnessed by the fact that Winston Churchill had received it in 1953. One could not help wonder whether Tudoran had ever opened the pages for which Churchill had been awarded the prize, and indeed whether he was aware that the same 'politicization' argument had been made by Tudoran's erstwhile political adversaries when Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn became its laureates.[19] In a second article, Tudoran found 'proof' of Manea's 'promotion machine' in the fact that in 1992 he had received the prestigious MacArthur Fellows Award, also known as the 'American Nobel'.[20]

Between Holocaust and *Gulag*

But Tudoran also had an explanation for Manea's 'beating the record of antipathy' experienced by a Romanian writer in his country. In 1998 he had

written that in order to attract attention to himself in the West, Manea had denigrated the image of his native country in general and that of its intellectual elites in particular. His 'fitness training' had consisted of entertaining a negative image of Romania as a place haunted by anti-Semitism. He was ever ready to 'invent false adversaries, demonize the entire [Romanian] society or the entire Romanian intellectual [strata]' if that would serve his purpose, Tudoran wrote in a tract that ended 'If I am not an anti-Semite, this is my own merit, not theirs'.[21] One was thus stepping from Norman Manea's 'personal' conspiracy, initiated for egoistic self-gratification purposes, into the far larger and more generalized case of the 'Jewish conspiracy against Romania'. And in so doing, one was plunging directly into a 'debate' that had been ongoing for some time in Romania – that of the Holocaust vs. the *Gulag*.

Manea had unwittingly triggered that debate with an essay published in 1991 in the American periodical *The New Republic*.[22] The essay dealt with yet another would-be Romanian aspirant to the Nobel Prize (though not with that aspect of his past).[23] Mircea Eliade, the most outstanding figure of an interwar Romanian intellectual generation which had undergone a process that Eugène Ionesco described as 'rhinocerization', had never come to grips with his Iron Guardist past. Unlike Emil Cioran, the other 'giant' of that generation who would eventually distance himself from the fascinations of his youth, Eliade, whose fame in the West was due more to his studies in comparative religion than to his literary output, had in his diary described that part of his life as a *'felix culpa'* (happy guilt) that had paradoxically saved him from prison under the communists. Indeed, due to his attachment to his pro-Iron Guard university professor Nae Ionescu, Eliade – himself the author of several pro-Iron Guard articles – had been interned under King Carol II. This being Romania, however, to save him from further harassment he was then dispatched as a diplomat abroad. Had he stayed in Romania, the philosophy of religions professor rightly concluded, 'I would at best have died of tuberculosis in a [communist] prison'.[24] Manea's essay was triggered less by Eliade's personality – he had died in 1986 aged 79 – than by the 'cult' of Eliade and his 'rhinocerized' friends that was emerging among post-communist intellectual circles. Much of that cult was a reaction to the surrogate Marxist pseudo-positivism that had monopolized Romanian philosophy for nearly half a decade. Nae Ionescu's, Eliade's or Cioran's 'anti-rational' philosophy was, under these circumstances, naturally (if mistakenly) perceived as reflecting 'genuine' Romanian values, and the fact that figures like Eliade and Cioran had achieved fame in the West only strengthened that perception.

A plethora of 'new editions', all omitting any accompanying commentary in the form of forewords, afterwords and above all, footnotes, invaded the Romanian literary market, each of them passing over in silence the political

past of the intellectuals now turned into the subject of the cult. It was this situation that prompted Manea's publication of the essay. The tract was written in his habitual 'undertones' style, to the extent that *The Los Angeles Times* accused him of being sympathetic to Eliade and the proto-fascist and fascist Romanian intellectuals.[25] The champion of these 're-editions' was the respectable Humanitas publishing house headed by the philosopher Gabriel Liiceanu, himself a disciple of Constantin Noica, a Romanian philosopher whose pro-Iron Guard past was combined with a peculiar and paradoxical philosophy of anti-Western nationalist individualism based on communitarian values. This approach was 'functional' for the national–communist purposes of the regime, which had turned a benign blind eye to the so-called 'Păltiniș school' that Noica had set up some time after his release from prison.[26]

Both the *'felix culpa'* essay and the one published by Manea less than a year after his 1997 visit to Romania provoked a hostile reaction. Just like the first essay, the second essay dealt with the legacy of Romanian radical-right intellectuals. Manea insisted in 'The Incompatibilities' (the title of the essay) between those traditions and democratic individualism.[27] This second essay came against the background of the recent publication in Romania, by Humanitas, of the diary kept by the Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian between 1939 and 1994 and the reactions to it. The diary had stirred a mixed response among Romania's literary community. Some writers among the ethnic Romanian majority were obviously moved by Sebastian's account of his and his community's ordeals and, above all, by the pain Sebastian had to cope with when confronted by the 'rhinocerization' process of his mentor Nae Ionescu and his friends Eliade and Noica, to mention but a few.[28] For example, Gabriela Adamesteanu, editor-in-chief of the weekly *22*, who after the publication of *'felix culpa'* had professed indignation at Manea's essay,[29] now confessed to have first learned what being a Jew in Antonescu's Romania was all about. A similar sympathetic reaction came from the Timisoara-based writer Vasile Popovici (see below). Others, however, saw in the essay the same 'Romania-besmirching' attempt, a new round in a Jewish-orchestrated endeavour to deny 'the right to memory' of the *Gulag* victims; some even went as far as to claim that the diary, or parts of it, were a forgery. And there was an almost universal outcry regarding mildly critical remarks by Manea of an address by Liiceanu to the Jewish community in Bucharest in March 1997 (see below).

To understand how and why these reactions came about is not easy. The endeavour requires not only a thorough familiarity with Romanian literary life under communism and after it, but also familiarity with roles performed more backstage than onstage. Among those roles, none was more prominent than that played by Monica Lovinescu. Enjoying tremendous prestige and influence in Romania, Lovinescu, the daughter of Romania's most influential liberal-minded and Western-oriented literary critic Eugen Lovinescu, had

been encouraging intellectual resistance to the communist regime from the microphone of Radio Free Europe between 1964 and 1990, when the then Munich-based station liquidated its Paris bureau. While the regime was indulging in its aberrant promotion of 'national communism', Monica Lovinescu had been its most eloquent opponent in the West. She frequently denounced the echoes of Legionary ideology in the regime's propaganda; indeed, she came out in defence of Manea himself. But once the spectre that had united all opponents of the Ceaușescu regime had vanished, Lovinescu (whose mother had perished in communist prisons)[30] was at the head of those moved by the basic (and understandable) drive to have communist perpetrators subjected to a Nuremberg-like 'trial of communism'. Not all of the former regime's opponents – whether in Romania or the West – were of this view. They turned into her chief enemies. She was particularly opposed to efforts to deal with Romania's fascist past, considering this a deviation from what must be the focus now. And she was eventually persuaded that Jewish interests were behind the neglect of her country's more recent trauma. Her reaction to Norman Manea's 1991 tract on Eliade's silence on that past in his autobiographical works was typical; and the personal friendship that had linked Lovinescu and Eliade was not the only, or the most important, explanation for her rushing to his defence. Reading Manea, she said, 'one wonders if one is not the victim of a hallucination'. Was it the communists who had ruled the country for 'about half a century', with the Iron Guard at its helm for just a few months, or vice versa? Was it communist supporters who were imprisoned by Antonescu and left prison only in 1964, or were these Legionaries? Was one dreaming in 1989 that Europe had rid itself of the 'communist terror', while in fact it had just emerged from a fascist terror?[31] It was an argument she would reiterate when in 1996 the Jewish literary historian Zigu Ornea published his book on the same fascist intellectual past of the Romanian elite[32] and on other occasions.[33] Strangely enough, however, it was Manea and a number of other, mostly Western, scholars who would be accused of wishing to 'monopolize suffering' (see below), while the 'either–or' argument clearly originated with Lovinescu and would be embraced by her many Romanian admirers. As if dealing with both were mutually exclusive! And as if the fascist 'terror' had been so clarified by communist historiography as to make superfluous any effort to re-examine it!

Lovinescu stressed that Manea's criticism of Eliade's refusal to come to terms with his fascist past was showing either 'ill will' or 'total blindness' in face of the realities of the immediate post-Second World War period. In the then-prevailing atmosphere, she wrote, could the philosopher of religion and writer of fiction have done so without risking his brilliant university career? Perhaps not. But certainly by the time his memoirs and diaries were published, Eliade was a figure enjoying a world reputation. Besides, the argument was

odd coming from the pen of the most vociferous critic of post-war Romanian intellectuals who collaborated with the regime in exchange for a university chair or other honours – Tudor Vianu or George Călinescu, for example. Lovinescu is even thought to have coined the ironical 'East Ethics' term for such collaborationism, contrasting it with genuine 'aesthetics' (*est-etica* vs. *estetica*). As a matter of fact, she 'borrowed' the incisive contrast from Norman Manea,[34] without acknowledging Manea's intellectual paternity.

In her 'in-defence-of-Eliade' article, Lovinescu also pleaded for French-style legislation banning the activity of formations and publications displaying chauvinistic propaganda. Such legislation, she wrote, would help combat extremist parties such as the Greater Romania Party and their hidden protectors among successor parties such as Ion Iliescu's formation. The relevant proposal that would have introduced in Romania legislation of the Fabius–Gayssot type, however, was eventually not only 'forgotten', but Monica Lovinescu's most ardent emulators adopted an overt position against its provisions. Not only Tudoran but, above all, *România literară*'s director, Nicolae Manolescu, distanced themselves from the spirit of this type of legislation in connection with denouncing Manea's 'Incompatibilities' article.

Though never a dissident, the literary critic Nicolae Manolescu had been a leading figure among Romanian writers who opposed the regime's national–communist cultural policies. After December 1989, he took over the directorship of *România literară*,becoming increasingly involved in politics. In 1991 he set up the Party of Civic Alliance (PAC), which eventually joined the Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR). In circumstances which appeared opportunistic the PAC demanded that the Hungarian Democratic Federation of Romania (UDMR), also a member of the CDR, renounce its autonomy drive as a condition for Hungarians' future membership of the umbrella organization of what was formerly perceived as Romania's 'democratic opposition'. The UDMR was eventually pushed out of that organization, but so was the PAC, on whose lists it had run in the 1992 elections.[35] But the PAC's nationalist postures were more profound than met the eye.[36] The party's performance in the 1996 elections, when it ran in an electoral alliance calling itself the National Liberal Alliance, was very poor (1.92 per cent of the vote for the Senate and 1.57 per cent of the ballot for the Chamber of Deputies); what is more, the alliance's presidential candidate, Manolescu, failed to enlist the support of even one per cent of the electorate.[37] Finding itself outside parliament, in March 1998 the PAC joined the National Liberal Party, with Manolescu becoming chairman of that party's National Council. Approximately at this point in time Manolescu began to show signs that his PAC's earlier nationalist postures had not been a matter of mere electoral tactics. He began to take a leading position among Holocaust minimizers, whose echoes – indeed sometimes the same formulations –

reflected those of Monica Lovinescu, minus the advocacy of the Fabius–Gayssot legislation which had in the meantime also disappeared from Lovinescu's writings.[38]

By 1997 Manolescu was denouncing the 'witchhunt' – as the title of his editorial article put it – that was being conducted against literati who had identified with the radical right in the past. His defence extended from Cioran and Eliade to Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Knut Hamsun and was formulated in the name of the right to freedom of opinion. Readers unfamiliar with the Western scene might have concluded that Céline's and Hamsun's literary production was being censored, rather than their political attitudes being time and again criticized. No mention whatever was to be found in Manolescu's tract of attempts by Western radical rightists to disseminate those writers' political (not literary) production in order to legitimize their own views. Finally, Manolescu reached the point that had prompted his intervention: 'It is entirely dishonest' he wrote,

> to hold responsible only those intellectuals whose ideas were on the side of the extreme right and who collaborated with Nazism or fascism, or . . . with the occupation, while forgetting (or pretending to have forgotten) the others, a lot more numerous, who were communist sympathizers in Stalin's times, as well as later, and collaborated with the red power put in place by Soviet tanks.[39]

Manolescu, and other regular collaborators to *România literară*, including Lovinescu herself, would time and again contend that this was precisely what the critics of the interwar radical right were doing, and time and again would invoke the *Black Book of Communism*, published in France in 1997, in support of their views.[40] But they chose to ignore the fact that two of the book's joint authors, Nicolas Werth and Jean-Louis Margolin, had distanced themselves from Stéphane Courtois's introduction to the volume, which refuted any distinction between Nazi and communist crimes. Or, worse, they claimed that Werth and Margolin had done so because they had been blackmailed.[41]

Who would indulge in such blackmail and for what purpose was never explicitly stated, but allusions abounded indicating that 'conspiracy theories' were penetrating that former 'liberal citadel' *România literară*. In March 1998 Manolescu was extending his defence of freedom of expression to the French Holocaust minimizer (close to Holocaust denier) Roger Garaudy, whose book, *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne,* had landed its author before a court in France (he was given a 120,000 francs fine) and its Swiss distributor before a court in Switzerland. According to Manolescu, Garaudy's trial was proof that an 'absurd competition' had come into being between those who had 'for decades denounced the horrors of the Holocaust' while keeping silent on those of the *Gulag*, and those who wished the two to be placed on an equal footing. Was the competion due to the fact that 'someone is afraid of losing

the monopoly over unveiling crimes against mankind?', he asked, adding that Garaudy's trial was 'indirect proof' that his suspicion was justified: Garaudy had never written that the Holocaust had not taken place, 'only that a terrible lobby had been set up around it'.[42]

There were several misleading points in Manolescu's argument. To start with, he was ignoring the fact that the denunciations of '*Gulag* horrors' had many supporters, indeed even pioneers, among those now said to be frightened of losing their monopoly. Manea's name was singled out in this connection, the allusion again being made that the writer was 'avenging' himself for not being sufficiently appreciated in his country. That some people considered Manea's literary production 'mediocre', Manolescu wrote in his rejection of the 'Incompatibilities', did not make them anti-Semites, for this evaluation did not stem from the writer's ethnic origins. As if this had been claimed in the article Manolescu was out to castigate! Furthermore, the literary critic-turned-politician wrote in reaction to Manea's questioning of the reasons that prompted the 'Holocaust vs. *Gulag*' debate:

> I am no anti-Semite if I submit to debate the problem of the Holocaust, wishing to present it in a correct perspective in the history of the twentieth century, out of respect for the memory of its victims. At the end of the day, it is not cynical to ask what was the exact number of the victims and how millions of lives were terminated, if one does not do this merely for the sake of statistics.[43]

But what else had Garaudy done in his book than engage in 'statistics' in order to present the Holocaust as having been 'just one more' crime in a long list of historical crimes? And where had Manea, whose work had anything but 'kept silent on the horrors of the *Gulag*', engaged in an attempt to 'monopolize suffering'? When the weekly *22* published a Romanian translation of Manea's 'Incompatiblities' alongside a rebuttal by Manea of Manolescu's arguments,[44] Monica Lovinescu and her husband, the literary critic Virgil Ierunca, withdrew in protest from the publication's editorial board.

Again and again, Manolescu and those who contributed to the campaign (Dorin Tudoran was one of the most vociferous participants) claimed that Jews were united in opposition to making the crimes of communism public. In fact, in Romania as elsewhere, including France, to which most references were made, the disputes (cutting across any ethnic differences) concentrated on whether a genocide prompted by racism should be placed in the same ontological category as crimes against humanity committed on different ideological grounds. Was 'racial struggle' – to use the distinction employed by Georges Mink and Jean-Charles Szurek – identical with 'class struggle'? The difference had important operational consequences for, under communism, collaborationism, indeed even simple acquiescence – despicable as they might

have been – had in most cases assured physical survival, which was hardly the case with the Holocaust victims.

Second, Manolescu never felt it necessary to distance himself from a Romanian translation of Garaudy's book, published soon after he had come out in Garaudy's defence. The translation's sponsor was George Dănescu-Pişcoci, a Holocaust denier who had distributed the book in *samizdat* form at his so-called Anti-Totalitarian Library in Paris. On its cover, the Romanian version cited Garaudy's reaction to the protests triggered by his volume: 'It is not my fault if those who accuse me have set up a world business specializing in selling their grandparents' bones'. Nor would Manolescu bother to react to Dănescu-Pişcoci's 'Afterword' in the translated volume, where he wrote that

> Some 50 and more years after the war, the historical bluff of the gas chambers has been called. Those executed in Nuremberg were innocent. The Nuremberg Stalinist show-trial played a historic role in the manipulation of world public opinion . . . Who are the salesmen of those fictitious skeletons? The attentive researcher might soon reach surprising conclusions. For example, that in the communist genocide against the Romanian nation, a series of figures such as Hanna Rabinsohn-Pauker, Burah Tescovici *alias* Teohari Georgescu, Nikolski *alias* Grünberg . . . were remarkable for their savagery, cruelty and thirst for Romanian blood.[45]

When the author of these lines first objected publicly to Manolescu's failure to distance himself from Dănescu-Pişcoci, he responded that he could not possibly have done so in his editorial; the translation, he claimed, had not been out when the editorial was written.[46] As if anyone had stopped him from doing so later, as if distance-taking had not now, so soon after his initial defence of Garaudy, become no longer an option, but a moral duty!

Moreover, to find Manolescu suddenly defending a former prominent communist ideologist while in the same breath denouncing those whose alleged pro-communist sympathies had hindered proper attention being paid to the *Gulag* was a further remarkable performance. (Garaudy, whose dissent from communism began as left-wing Catholicism only to end in conversion to Islam, was nonetheless said on several occasions by his other defenders, among them Tudoran, to be of Jewish origin, whatever that 'proof' might have led to had it been accurate). And, as the political scientist George Voicu eventually pointed out, acceptance of Garaudy's argument that the Holocaust was just another instance in a long line of atrocities, while in the same breath calling for the *Gulag*'s recognition as being on a par with the Holocaust, was a self-defeating argument.[47]

It was not Dănescu-Pişcoci's racism that seemed to bother Manolescu, but the alleged racism of Manea, whose criticism of Liiceanu was, he claimed, indicative of the Jewish writer's 'immoral confiscation of suffering'.[48] That alleged confiscation, Manolescu wrote in August 1998, was prompted by

Manea's being 'probably afraid of losing an extremely lucrative monopoly'.[49] The argument had come full circle, though I, along with Radu Ioanid of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was to be repeatedly 'honoured' to belong to the same conspiracy to preserve the 'monopoly'.[50]

Victims and 'executioners'

Clad in sophistry, the same argument had formed the core of a lecture that Liiceanu, a Romanian philosopher close to the now ruling CDR, delivered in April 1997 to members of the Jewish community. A few months earlier Humanitas had published Sebastian's 'Diary' (see above). Purporting to be an expression of fraternization with the writer's ordeals under the Antonescu regime, the lecture was a hidden indictment of the ethnic community to which Sebastian had belonged.

Liiceanu had accounts to settle with Sebastian. The philosopher's own interwar intellectual 'heroes' such as Mircea Eliade and Emil Cioran, to whom Sebastian was close before they underwent 'rhinocerization', came out in a very poor light from the writer's 'Diary'. As mentioned above, Liiceanu had published their works (and those of other far-right intellectuals) at Humanitas without ever distancing himself from them. On the contrary: when Humanitas issued a shattering account of Romanian intellectual anti-Semitism between the wars by the Israeli Romanian-born literary historian Leon Volovici, Liiceanu added an 'editor's note' to the book, saying that the account was 'not written accidentally by a Jewish author' and that it was 'hardly conceivable that history's figures can be reconstructed by the discourse of those who are ever-ready to speak up as victims, but forget to testify as executioners'.[51]

The same argument would be repeated in the lecture, whose title, 'Sebastian, My Brother', was misleading to say the least.[52] Drawing a parallel between his own alleged suffering under communism[53] and that of Sebastian under fascism, Liiceanu's 'fraternization' was once more aimed at suggesting that Jews, having made themselves collectively guilty of Romania's communization, had obliterated any ground for claiming their suffering in the Holocaust was unique. Had Sebastian survived (he died in an accident in 1945), he '*would have*' (emphasis added) undoubtedly written the following in his 'Diary', Liiceanu claimed:

> How is it possible for one who, at a certain moment in history, had to wear the victim's uniform, to don today the garment of the executioner? Indeed, he who marched furthest on the long road to suffering, should he not have turned into a guarantee making suffering no longer possible from now on? With some of the former victims now, oddly enough, in a position to make another disaster in history possible (or at least to profit from it), had they not forfeited the chance to end suffering once and for all by precisely their extreme suffering? How was it possible that his own kin, who knew everything about pain, would participate in a scenario of provoking pain?

Liiceanu was probably familiar with Thomas Mann's 'Hitler, My Brother', all the more so in that that tract (first published in 1939 in Paris) had recently been re-published in Romanian translation.[54] While Mann had taken the guilt of Hitler (whom he had opposed) upon himself, Liiceanu somewhat perversely engaged in precisely the opposite exercise: he was indicting the entire Jewish community in a further version of the 'Judeo-communist conspiracy', was elevating himself to the rank of victim, and was using as a witness Sebastian, whose 'testimony' had been fabricated by the prosecution. When in 'The Incompatibilities' Manea commented that, by using the analogy between the Holocaust and the *Gulag* '*on that particular occasion*', the philosopher had 'left no room to evoke anti-Semitism and the Holocaust properly, or to analyze honestly the "happy guilt" of such intellectuals as Eliade, Cioran, Nae Ionescu and Noica', his statement was taken as proof of the racist 'monopoly of suffering'. Yet Manea had done little more than question a 'performance' that was tantamount to saying the Jewish prayer for the dead on the Orthodox Christian Eastern Resurrection Mass. The 'sin' of drawing attention to such a lack of sensitivity was blown out of all proportion by those out to demonstrate once more the quest for 'monopoly'. The 'indictment' would repeatedly be reproduced, despite the writer's rather timid attempts to clarify the misinterpretation of his critical remark.[55]

The author of this article suffered the same fate when he dared comment on the campaign, that went far beyond reacting to what Manea had said, as did the French political scientist Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine.[56] So did George Voicu and the France-based, Romanian-born sociologist Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, both of whom dealt with the impact of the Romanian intellectual anti-Semitic legacy on the current polemics from the perspective of cultural anthropology.[57] To Lovinescu, Gheorghiu was no more than one who had exchanged the 'wooden language' of Ceauşescu's Romania for the 'wooden language' of the French sociological school of Pierre Bourdieu, whom she placed on 'the left of the left' and saw as the hidden champion of attempts to 'undermine liberalism, capitalism and the free market' with 'archaic communist-type arguments', among which 'the interdiction to compare the *Gulag* with the Holocaust figure prominently'.[58] Voicu became the target of an unprecedented communist-like campaign that belittled not only his academic achievements, but also, and above all, his personal character, particularly after *Les Temps Modernes* published in late 1999 a translation of his article, which was summarized in a distorted manner in a January 2000 report in *Le Monde*.[59] That the author of the *Le Monde* report, Edgar Reichmann, was Jewish once again served as 'proof' of the existence of the conspiracy. No matter that Reichmann had 'interpreted' Voicu's tract rather liberally, transforming Liiceanu from the chief of a heterogeneous group of Holocaust–*Gulag* equalizers into Romania's chief anti-Semite, a claim the political science professor had never made.[60] Just as

Manea's remarks were distorted, so too were Voicu's, who was now transformed into a 'scandalmonger' seeking notoriety.

The 'besieged community' was now castigating its 'traitors'. The most polemical notes came from an unexpected source: Vasile Popovici, a literatus from Timisoara who, in Voicu's 1998 article, had rightly figured as one belonging to the 'democratic' group opposed to 'revisionism'. Now Romanian consul in Marseilles, Popovici attacked Voicu and Laignel-Lavastine using arguments which were a complete negation of those he had used only two years earlier and for which he had been subjected to attacks from his peers.[61] The author of the present article was similarly turned into a Marxist propagandist. According to a communist-style 'dossier' which *România literară* published in August 1999, I had (to mention but a few of my sins) always been a supporter of Ion Iliescu's party and, worse, of Ana Pauker, as well as a defender of Romania's Tudors and their anti-Semitic and communist patrons in the West such as Iosif Constantin Dragăn.[62] That the 'dossier' was compiled by an Israeli who had herself been part of the communist cultural apparatus was an amusing 'detail'. Even more amusing was it to witness 'conspiracy theories' at work not only in defence of Manolescu and Tudoran, but also of a minister in the Antonescu government, and of Romania's interwar democratic reputation in general, being enacted from Jerusalem, rather than Bucharest, Iasi or Cluj. The 'dossier's' unprecedented length – 12 newspaper pages – in itself demonstrated that my 1998 'diagnosis' had been accurate and that I had no reason to regret it.[63]

The intensity of the reaction to Manea's 'Incompatibilities' article and to Voicu's article once *Les Temps Modernes* reproduced that tract and *Le Monde* had reported on it, was proof that 'rhinocerization' was on the advance in post-communist Romania. Popovici's was perhaps the best example of the rapidity of that metamorphosis. That some of those who hastened to Liiceanu's defence chose to remember the few volumes taking a critical look at Romania's interwar period that Humanitas had published,[64] while ignoring the far larger output of volumes implicitly or explicitly taking an opposite position, was in itself an exercise of 'selective memory'. That some of Liiceanu's advocates were Jewish was proof of another accurate diagnosis, produced by Cioran after his own 'de-rhinocerization': everything touched by Romanians 'becomes frivolous, even our Jews . . . we have transformed them into something nearly as *superficial* as ourselves; a little more [time] and we would have assimilated them altogether'.[65]

Herein perhaps lies Norman Manea's 'capital sin': in the snail's individualist house, assimilation (in the generic, rather than genetic sense) is, for better or worse, a contradiction in terms. After all, an 'assimilated Auguste the Fool' would no longer be a 'fool'. At best, he would be an idiot. At worst, a 'White Clown'.

Post-scriptum

A shorter version of this article was presented at a conference entitled 'Anti-Semitism at the End of the Twentieth Century' in Nitra, Slovakia on 15–17 May 2000. On the second day of the gathering, the organizers of the conference arranged a visit to the town's synagogue, which was in the process of reconstruction; when the reconstruction ends, the synagogue is to serve as a museum and concert hall. Nitra's once prosperous Jewish community, the second strongest numerically after that of Bratislava and numbering over 4,300 people,[66] was decimated by the deportations to extermination camps under the Tiso fascist regime. After the synagogue we visited the cradle of Slovak independence, the eleventh-century Nitra castle with its originally Gothic, later Baroque, cathedral. There a friendly Catholic priest showed us how sounds change depending on the niche from which religious songs are recited. To illustrate the point, he recited the prayer *Sh'ma Israel* in a rather curious melodic arrangement but in faultless Hebrew. On the third day, the organizers of the conference took participants to an extraordinary, Slovak-language performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* at the local theatre. The staging could rival any performance on Broadway or London's West End. To reach the theatre we had to walk along the Hlinka Boulevard.[67] Norman Manea was unfortunately not with us. Only his 'undertones' could have done justice to these surrealistic experiences!

NOTES

1 Norman Manea, *Casa melcului* (The Snail's House) (Bucharest: Hasefer, 1999).
2 See Manea's 'Puloverul' (The Pullover) in *Octombrie, ora opt* (October, 8 o'clock) (Cluj–Napoca: Dacia, 1981), 22–30. This is the definitive, uncensored edition in the volume with the same title published in 1991 by Biblioteca Apostrof (Cluj) in 1997.
3 See Manea's novel *Plicul negru* (The Black Envelope) (Bucharest: Cartea românească, 1986). On the novel's publication in censored form and the clash with the authorities in its wake, see 'Referatul cenzorului (cu note explicative ale autorului cenzurat)' (Report of the Censor (with Explanatory Notes by the Censored Author)) in Norman Manea, *Despre clovni: Dictatorulşi artistul* (On Clowns: The Dictator and the Artist) (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1997), 68–96.
4 See 'Trenciul' (The Trenchcoat) in N. Manea, *Fericirea obligatorie* (Obligatory Happiness) (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, 1999), 141–88.
5 Still in his native Romania, Manea published in 1979 *Anii de ucenicie ai lui August Prostul* (The Apprentice Years of Auguste the Fool), the daring tones of which were subdued by both official censorship and self-censorship. The theme was eventually fully developed in the West. See *Despre clovni*, 41–67 and Manea's interviews in *Casa melcului*, 96–98, 134–5, 189–93, 209–11.
6 See Manea's interview with Marco Cugno in *Casa melcului*, 125.
7 Interview with Petreu in ibid., 104.
8 See Michael Shafir, 'The Men of the Archangel Revisited: Anti-Semitic Formations among Communist Romania's Intellectuals' in *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1983, 223–43.
9 The interview was published in the Oradea monthly *Familia* and is reproduced in *Despre clovni*, 178–88. It was easier to publish 'unorthodox' works or interviews in journals published outside Bucharest whose circulation was rather symbolic. On Manea's reaction and the ensuing

'reactions to the reaction' see also Leon Volovici, 'Norman Manea and the Rumanian Jewish Renaissance' in *The Jewish Quarterly*, No. 4, 1987, 41–7.

10 See *Casa melcului*, 28. The same unfulfilled and unrealistic 'great expectations' finally led the writer of these lines to denounce anti-Semitism among Romania's post-communist 'democrats'. See Michael Shafir,'O tragicomedie în desfăşurare?' (An Unfolding Tragicomedy?) in *Sfera politicii*, Vol. 6, No. 61, 1998, 5–16.

11 See Norman Manea, 'Istoria unui interviu' (History of an Interview) in *Despre clovni*, 145.

12 See Norman Manea, 'Exil' (Exile) in *Despre clovni*, 195.

13 Norman Manea, 'A Hooligan's Return', *Salmagundi*, No. 121–122 (Winter–Spring), 1999, 130–1.

14 See his interview with Marco Cugno in *Casa melcului*, 139.

15 See the first version of Manea's collection of short stories *Octombrie, ora opt* (Cluj: Dacia, 1981), 111–60.

16 *Casa melcului*, 152.

17 'Literatura română şi nostalgia premiului Nobel' (Romanian Literature and Nobel Prize Nostalgia) *Apostrof*, No. 5, 1999, 5.

18 Dorin Tudoran, 'Gimnastica de întreţinere sau pretextul Sebastian' (Fitness Training or the Sebastian Pretext), *România literară*, No. 22, 10–16 June 1998, 5.

19 Dorin Tudoran, 'Nobelul de vară' (I) (The Summer Nobel (I)), ibid., No. 32, 11–17 August 1999, 11.

20 Dorin Tudoran, 'Nobelul de vară (II)' (The Summer Nobel (II)), ibid., No. 34, 25–31 August 1999, 10. In an interview with Dora Pavel in the same issue of *Apostrof* that carried Vartic's suggestions and was reproduced in *Casa melcului*, 235–6, Manea had earlier pre-empted Tudoran's not unexpected 'arguments'. He spoke of the 'provincial and childish obsession' of Romanian literati with the Nobel Prize, emphasizing that the awarding of any prize was based on decisions that are unavoidably 'imperfect' and its prestige 'must not be turned into an absolute'. No prize, he said, deserves 'panting after' and over-zealous efforts to obtain it 'may undermine' the purpose. Be that as it may, Manea pointed out, it must be borne in mind that a literary prize is 'never awarded to a collectivity'. Hence 'My impression is that the . . . agitation [is] linked to the old and ever new problem of 'Romania's image' abroad. 'One is perhaps forgetting that not even Garcia Marquez succeeded in changing Columbia's image in the world', whereas countries whose writers never received the prize, such as Switzerland, suffer from no similar inferiority complex because their positive image is entrenched in 'democracy and prosperity'. 'I must add', he said, 'that I cannot easily bear the shallow conspiracy theory applied to everyone and everything that we do not understand or do not like. The mythification of the conspiracy's omnipresence amounts to believing that people are not only more evil but also more intelligent than they actually are'.

21 Tudoran, 'Gimnastica'. These words were a citation that Tudoran attributed to 'someone' whom, as he put it, he was only now beginning to understand.

22 Norman Manea, 'Felix Culpa', *The New Republic*, 5 August 1991, a poor translation of which was published in the weekly *22*, No. 6, 1992. The essay is included in *Despre clovni*, 97–132 and reactions to it are described by Manea in 'Blasfemie şi carnaval' (Blasphemy and Carnival), in ibid., 200–23.

23 Mircea Eliade himself was convinced that a 'Jewish conspiracy' launched in 1972 in the Israeli journal *Toladot* that revealed his Iron Guardist past was intended to, among other things, prevent him from receiving the Nobel Prize. A hint at this conspiracy is included in one of Eliade's novels. See the comments of Claudio Mutti, an Italian pro-Iron Guard writer of the Evola school, in Claudio Mutti, *Penele arhanghelului: Intelectualii români şi Garda de Fier* (Pens of the Archangel: Romanian Intellectuals and the Iron Guard) (Bucharest: Editura Anastasia, 1997), 124.

24 Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal II, 1970–1985* (Diary, II, 1970–1985) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), 518.

25 See Manea's interview with Philip Roth in *Casa melcului*, 100–01.

26 See Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, *Filozofie şi naţionalism: Paradoxul Noica* (Philosophy and Nationalism: The Noica Paradox) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998). See also Claude Karnoouh, *L'invention du peuple: Chroniques de Roumanie* (Paris: Editions Arcantère, 1990), 221–53 and

Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 256–301.

27 Norman Manea, 'The Incompatibilities', *The New Republic*, 20 April 1998.

28 Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal 1935–1944* (Diary, 1935–1944) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996).

29 See her foreword to Monica Lovinescu's 'Cîteva confuzii' (A Number of Confusions), *22*, No. 10, 13–19 March 1992, 10.

30 See Doina Jela, *Această dragoste care ne leagă: Reconstituirea unui asasinat* (This Love that Binds Us: Reconstruction of an Assassination) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998) and Monica Lovinescu, *La apa Vavilonului* (On the Banks of the River Babylon) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 187–95.

31 M. Lovinescu, 'Cîteva confuzii'.

32 See Z. Ornea, *Anii treizeci: Extrema dreaptă românească* (The Romanian Far Right in the 1930s) (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei Culturale Române, 1995).

33 For example, M. Lovinescu, 'Nu e momentul?' (Not the Right Moment?), *România literară*, No. 9, 11–17 March 1998.

34 See Manea's interview with Marco Cugno in *Casa melcului*, 136. But that 'intellectual appropriation' has less to do with Manea than with habits that are common on both sides of the former Iron Curtain, as the writer of these lines can testify from his own experience with Romanian-born and other 'scholars' in the West. Amusingly, Ioan Buduca, a writer whose anti-Semitic postures within the Holocaust vs. *Gulag* debate by far exceeded any others, claimed the paternity of 'east-ethics', which he claimed to have coined in Manea's presence back in 1983. Buduca 'explained' that he had lacked the courage to use the expression then due to 'self-censorship' and that Manea had subsequently used it in the West, with Lovinescu following in his footsteps. But Manea had used the term already in Romania – censorship notwithstanding – in early 1983 in an article clearly submitted for publication several months before Buduca dates his 'coinage'. See *Viaţa românească-Caiete Critice*, No. 1/2 1983, 43 and Buduca, 'Est-Etica (scrisoare deschisă domnului Dumitru Ţepeneag)' (East Ethics (An Open Letter to Dumitru Ţepeneag)), *Luceăfarul*, 16 February 2000. For Buduca's anti-Semitic postures, see his 'Care-i bubu?' (Where is the Sore Point?), *România literară*, No. 15, 22–8 April 1998 and 'Viţelul de aur' (The Golden Calf), *Contemporanul-Ideea europeană*, No. 37, 30 September 1999.

35 See Michael Shafir, "Agony and Death of an Opposition Alliance', *Transition*, Vol. 1, No. 8, 23–8.

36 See Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next*? (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1996, 116–24.

37 *Cronica română*, 8 November 1996.

38 Manolescu had been signaling the metamorphosis at least as far back as an editorial published in *România literară* on 27 December 1995–9 January 1996. At that time he refused to publish responses by the Jewish historians Radu Ioanid and Lya Benjamin to a laudatory review of a volume which whitewashed Antonescu's role in the Holocaust. The time had come, he wrote, to understand that Antonescu could not, and should not, be judged only from the perspective of the crimes his regime had committed against Jews.

39 N. Manolescu, 'Vînătoarea de Vrăjitoare' (The Witchhunt), *România literară*, 11–17 June 1997, 1.

40 For an English translation see S. Courtois *et al*, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). The book was also published in Romanian translation by Humanitas in 1998.

41 See M. Lovinescu, '"Marea paradă"' (The Great Parade), *România literară*, 5–11 April, 7.

42 The first public defender of Garaudy in Romania was *Adevărul* editor-in-chief Cristian Tudor Popescu, in an article published on 16 December 1996. The performance was repeated on 2 March 1998. The first of these two tracts carried the title 'Descartes's Condemnation', thus transforming Garaudy into an epitome of rationalism! Popescu has often displayed anti-Semitic, anti-Western, anti-Hungarian and anti-Roma attitudes.

43 N. Manolescu, 'Ce înseamnă să fii rasist?' (What Does Being a Racist Mean?), *România literară*, No. 19, 20–26 May 1998, 1.

44 See Norman Manea, 'Lectura infidelă' (Unfaithful Reading), *22*, No. 23, 9–15 June 1998, 23, translation of 'The Incompatibilities' on pp. 10–13.

45 Cited in Shafir, 'The Tragicomedy', 9–10. Dănescu-Pişcoci is referring to Ana Pauker, the prominent communist leader and foreign minister until she was purged in 1952; Teohari Georgescu, who, despite repeated claims by anti-Semites, was *not* Jewish; and Alexandru Nikolski (Boris Grünberg), who was deputy interior minister and a despicable 'founding father' of the *Securitate*.

46 Ibid. and Manolescu, 'Cum am devenit rinocer' (How I Became a Rhinoceros), *România literară*, No. 32, 12–18 August 1998, 1, 3.

47 See George Voicu, 'Reacţia de prestigiu' (A Reaction of Prestige), *Sfera politicii*, Vol. 6, No. 63, 1998, 57–62, citation from p. 59. For a French-language translation of this excellent article see 'L'honneur nationale roumaine en question', *Les Temps Modernes*, Vol. 54, No. 606, November–December 1999, 142–52.

48 Manolescu, 'Ce înseamnă să fii rasist'.

49 Manolescu, 'Cum am devenit rinocer'.

50 This was Manolescu's way of responding to the anxiety I expressed in 'The Tragicomedy' in face of the prospect of seeing such democrats as Manolescu and Tudoran undergo a 'rhinocerization process'. Most of my arguments were 'answered away' with Manolescu and Tudoran claiming that I had not produced 'a single citation' to demonstrate my point. My article, of course, had been constructed entirely around citations. As with Manolescu, for Tudoran my perspective was nothing but a demonstration of my own racist distorted interpretation of what he, Manolescu and other contributors to *România literară* had written. It was 'A Racist Reading' – as the title of his reaction had it. See Tudoran, 'Lectura de rasă' (A Racist Reading), *România literară*, No. 32, 12–18 August 1998, 12–13. Nonetheless, it was surprising to find Manolescu – a professor of literature at Bucharest University – explaining that my criticism would serve 'the genuine rhinoceros' – that is to say the Corneliu Vadim Tudors of this world. As if Manolescu had never read Eugène Ionesco's famous play, as if he did not know that 'rhinocerization' implied a metamorphosis! The Tudors are no 'rhinoceros': they were born a different species and never changed cages.

51 See G. Liiceanu, 'Nota editorului' (Editor's Note) in Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naţionalistăşi 'problema evreiască' in Romania anilor '30* (Nationalist Ideology and 'The Jewish Problem' in the 1930s in Romania) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995), 7.

52 G. Liiceanu, 'Sebastian, mon frère', *22*, 29 April–5 May 1997.

53 'Alleged' because Liiceanu has never been subject to persecution other than being shadowed by the *Securitate* and he even enjoyed privileges denied to other intellectuals (e.g. being permitted to accept a scholarship to conduct research at Heidelberg).

54 See Thomas Mann, 'Fratele Hitler', *Lettre internationale* (Romanian edition), No. 10, 1994, 55–7.

55 See, for example, Manea's response to an article by Gabriel Dimisianu in *România literară*, 1–7 March 2000, in *22*, No. 10, 7–13 March 2000, 10, as well as Dimisianu's 'response to the response' in *România literară*, No. 11, 22–28 March 2000, 5, followed by a further reaction by Manea in *22*, No. 13, 28 March–3 April 2000, 9. To those familiar with the personal history of some participants in the dispute, the polemics carried a note of surrealism. Dimisianu, a former member of the Writer's Union Communist Party branch, who had never dared write a word against that party, was now transforming Manea into a not-so-hidden agent of the Marxist-inspired annihilation of Romania's intellectual national aspirations.

56 Shafir, 'O tragicomedie' and Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, 'Fascisme et communisme en Roumanie: Enjeux et usages d'une comparaison' in Henry Rousso (ed.), *Stalinisme et nazisme: Histoire et mémoire comparées* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1999), 201–46.

57 The most revealing exchanges in these polemics between June 1997 and July 1998 are included in 'Chronology of a Misunderstanding' compiled and published by Voicu in the first supplement of *Sfera politicii*, dated September 1998. Further materials can be found on the website of the *Halbjahresschrift für südosteuropäische Geschichte, Literatur und Politik*, http://home.t-online.de/home/totok/ion.htm, where William Totok splendidly updates the 'revisionist discourse' and related debates on Antonescu's rehabilitation. For Voicu see 'Reacţia de prestigiu' as well as his responses to attacks on him in *22*, No. 11, 14–20 March 2000, 7, No. 14, 4–10 April 2000, 9 and *Observator cultural*, No. 10, 18–24 April 2000, 10. For Gheorghiu see *Observator cultural*, No. 1, 29 February–6 March 2000, 7, and No. 10, 2–8 May 2000, 8, the latter being a response to attacks on him.

58 Lovinescu, 'La stînga stîngii', *România literară*, No. 18, 10–16 May 2000.

59 See note 47 above and *Le Monde,* 15 January 2000. Within the constraints imposed by limitations of space, it is impossible to reproduce the attacks on Voicu, which were ongoing at the time this article was being prepared. See the following 'selection': *22*, 1–7, 8–14, 15–21, 22–28 February, 21–27 March 2000, *România literară*, 1–7, 8–14, 15–21 March, 29 March–4 April, 5–11 April 2000; *Orizont,* No. 2, February and No. 3, March 2000; *Observator cultural,* 7–13, 14–20, 21–27 March, 28 March–3 April, 4–10, 11–17, 18–24 April, 25 April–1 May 2000.

60 In a reply to attacks on him published in *România literară*, No. 19, 17–22 May 2000, Reichmann did not deny convincingly his 'over-interpretation' of Voicu's article, but otherwise responded excellently to his detractors.

61 See the attack on Popovici by *România literară* editor-in-chief Alex. Ştefănescu in *România libera*, 17 June 1998, for having written in reaction to the Sebastian diary that 'a huge shame is spreading over an entire period of Romanian culture and history'. Compare Popovici's review of Laignel-Lavastine's tome on Noica in *Orizont*, No. 7, 25 July 1998, 28 with his attack on the same author in ibid., No. 3, March 2000, 30–31. The 'Lovinescu-inspired' content of the latter article is reflected in its title, 'Left-wing Revisionism'.

62 See Ileana Vrancea, 'Coerenţa unui fals în desfăşurare' (The Coherence of an Unfolding Forgery), *România literară,* No. 34, 25–31 August 1999, 11–22. On Drăgan see M. Shafir, 'Marshal Antonescu's Postcommunist Rehabilitation: *Cui Bono*?' in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 372–5.

63 Not so, however, for the ensuing polemics with Tudoran, which sometimes took on a personal note. In retrospect I regret not having resisted the temptation.

64 Apart from those mentioned in this article, mention should be made of the translation of Irina Livezeanu's *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1995), published in translation in 1997, and above all, of Armin Heinen's *Die Legion 'Erzengel Michael'* in *Rumänien: Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986), a translation of which was brought out by Humanitas in 1999.

65 Emil Cioran, *Cahiers, 1957–1972* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 344 (emphasis in original).

66 See Eduard Nižňanský, *Židovská Komunita na Slovensku Medzi Československoenskou Parlamentnou Demokraciou a Slovenským Štátom v Stredoeurópskom Kontexte* (The Jewish Community in Slovakia Between Czechoslovak Parliamentary Democracy and the Slovak State in the Central European Context) (Prešov: Universum, 1999), 14.

67 In 1905 Andrej Hlinka founded the Slovak People's Party, which he led until his death in 1938. After his death, the party was renamed the Hlinka Slovak People's Party. His views intertwined Catholic nationalism with anti-liberalism and anti-Semitism. More important for the purpose of this note, under Jozef Tiso his name was given to the Hlinka Guard, the paramilitary wing of the party modeled on Hitler's SS, which carried out the Nazi order to deport Slovakia's Jewish population. See Yeshayahu Jelinek, *The Parish Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party* (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1976) and Shari Cohen, *Politics Without a Past: The Absence of History in Postcommunist Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 55, 157–8, 237 n. 166.