Richard Rorty – An Ironic Poet of Thought. A Stylistic and Hermeneutic Reading of Henrieta Șerban's Work

Philosophy – that "silent blossoming of the spirit," as we were once urged to see it – manifests itself in Henrieta Anișoara Șerban's work not only as a discipline of concepts, but also as a poetry of human becoming. This perspective highlights philosophy as an inner growth, a subtle and continuous transformation of the spirit, which transcends the limits of mere reasoning in order to open new horizons of meaning and existence.

Her book, *Richard Rorty: A Philosophy for Multiple Blossoms. Freedom, Knowledge, Solidarity, and Hope*, is both an act of philosophical exegesis and a discreet manifesto for reviving a form of thought that rejects absolutes but does not abandon humanism. The very title is a programmatic metaphor that reflects an understanding of philosophy not as a rigid system, but as a generative force of meanings, openings, and experiences.

The Rortyan "blossoms" to which the author refers reveal a profound understanding of philosophy as a dynamic force, capable of generating multiple ways of being and thinking – a plurality of becoming's that constitutes the very essence of humanity. In the author's own words, "the ironist is responsible for sending lights into existence" (p. 22), thereby evoking the creative, poetic, and ethical gesture of the philosopher, who is no longer an absolute master, but a mediator between possible worlds. This irony is not merely a sceptical attitude, but a form of responsibility that involves ethical commitment and openness to transformation.

Thus, philosophy becomes a poetry of human becoming, a space of freedom and solidarity, a resource for hope – even in the absence of absolute certainties. It is an invitation to a living thought, always in process, capable of sustaining and inspiring multiple "blossoms" of the human spirit.

From Anti-Fundamentalism to Poetic Trust

From the very first pages, Henrieta Anișoara Șerban constructs a subtle intellectual portrait of Richard Rorty, highlighting a thinker who, although he "did not wish to be king," nevertheless exerted a significant influence on contemporary philosophy (p. 18). This expression captures both his modesty in relation to traditional dogmas and his intellectual authority within the philosophical landscape of the late twentieth century.

Rorty is positioned between Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and European hermeneutics, emerging as a "transgressor" of disciplinary boundaries (p. 14). This fluidity reflects a philosophical style that does not adhere to a fixed system but instead navigates creatively across traditions, offering original reinterpretations. The book's preface emphasizes the "transgressive" nature of this theoretical construction, which even explores "the leftist roots of a neoliberal pragmatist" (p. 14), thereby revealing the ambiguity and complexity of his political and philosophical stance.

Rorty's self-description as a "democratic ironist, democratic nihilist, democratic neopragmatist" (p. 18) reflects a deep awareness of the contingency of existence and the limits of thought. His philosophy thus becomes a radical anti-fundamentalism which,

while rejecting metaphysical absolutes, does not succumb to nihilism but rather promotes a "poetic trust" – a belief in the continuous construction of meanings and values within a contingent world.

Building on this position, Henrieta Şerban highlights how Rorty rethinks fundamental values such as freedom, solidarity, and hope within a pluralist and open framework. Freedom is no longer a natural and immutable right, but a contingent "blossoming" that develops through dialogue and community. Solidarity becomes an essential ethical principle, replacing the pursuit of absolute truth with a shared commitment based on understanding and cooperation, a "poetic and ethical" act that "sends lights into existence" (p. 22). Hope, in this context, is not simplistic optimism but a responsible attitude, facing uncertainty with openness to reinvention and transformation.

Thus, Rorty's philosophy, as interpreted by Henrieta Anişoara Şerban, becomes a living space of meaning and values, rejecting dogmatism while maintaining a humanist commitment. This vision of "multiple blossoms" constitutes a manifesto for an open, poetic, and ethical mode of thought, capable of casting light into our contingent existence.

In today's context, marked by pluralism and crises of meaning, this philosophy proposes an alternative that combines creative freedom with ethical responsibility. Rorty is no longer the master of truth but a democratic ironist who acknowledges that truth is a contingent construction, subject to dialogue and ongoing revision. In this sense, philosophy becomes both a poetic and an ethical act, an open space in which human communities can together find new ways of existing and of understanding one another.

Philosophy as Poetry – A Methodological Revolution

Henrieta Şerban powerfully recovers the poetic dimension of Richard Rorty's philosophy, a dimension which, far from being a mere stylistic ornament, represents a radical shift in how we understand the very nature of philosophy. In *Philosophy as Poetry*, Rorty states that "human beings do not have a nature that must be understood, but a history that must be reinterpreted" (p. 28), thereby shifting attention from a fixed essence to the continuous dynamism of language and meanings. This moves transform's philosophy from a discipline concerned with discovering universal and immutable truths into a fluid activity centred on the changing vocabularies that define and shape our experience.

Thus, philosophy becomes a "therapeutic activity" (p. 32), in Wittgenstein's sense, that is, a means by which conceptual problems are addressed through transforming the way we speak and think about the world, rather than by appealing to absolute foundations. Within this framework, philosophy takes on the role of liberator of discourse – a space of creative freedom that transcends the rigid boundaries imposed by earlier philosophical traditions. Henrieta Şerban emphasizes that Rorty is not interested in uncovering an "essential" truth, but in sustaining "discursive freedom" as a fundamental value, a freedom that makes possible the plurality of vocabularies and perspectives (p. 32).

This reinterpretation marks a genuine methodological revolution: philosophy is no longer a pursuit of immutable principles, but an art of continuous reinterpretation, a space where meanings are constantly born, die, and are reshaped. In this sense, Rorty proposes an *ars poetica* of philosophical postmodernity, in which philosophical discourse becomes akin to poetry – a play of words and images that provides new ways of understanding and creating reality. This means that philosophy is, at its core, a poetry of human becoming, a creative and therapeutic act that allows the spirit to "blossom" in multiple and unforeseen forms.

Moreover, this philosophical stance abolishes the expectation of a unified and definitive system, replacing it with a plurality of vocabularies engaged in permanent dialogue. In this sense, philosophy becomes an open space of interpretation, a fertile ground for conceptual and ethical innovation. The methodological revolution Rorty proposes, as interpreted by Henrieta Șerban, is therefore also a revolution of philosophical responsibility: by abandoning the idea of absolute truth, the philosopher becomes a mediator of possible worlds, a "democratic ironist" who recognizes the contingency of his own convictions and at the same time assumes a commitment to human freedom and solidarity.

This vision also profoundly transforms the status of knowledge. There is no longer a final point or fixed centre of truth, but a dynamic network of meanings and values built within community and time. Philosophy thus becomes a dialogical and creative process, in which trust is no longer placed in dogmatic fundamentalism but in a "poetic trust" – a belief in our capacity to create and recreate meanings and to shape, together, a more open and pluralistic world.

The interpretation offered by Henrieta Șerban shows how Rorty's philosophy transcends the classical status of a normative discipline and becomes a poetic and therapeutic force – a methodological revolution that restores vitality and freedom to thought, enabling it to reinvent itself continuously. *Philosophy as poetry* thus becomes a manifestation of human becoming, an invitation to ongoing dialogue that rejects absolutes but does not abandon the ideals of freedom, solidarity, and hope.

Language – Organ and Instrument

One of the most profound and fertile chapters in Henrieta Șerban's work is dedicated to language, especially in relation to epistemology, where the essential role of language is emphasized not merely as a means of communication, but as a creative and constitutive force of our reality. The author highlights a central idea in Rorty's philosophy: "our lives are changed for the better by exchange of words rather than exchange of blows" (p. 17). This phrase evokes a pragmatic optimism regarding the power of dialogue and linguistic interaction to shape human existence, suggesting that social change and progress can be achieved through the transformation of discourse and the ways in which we understand one another.

From this perspective, language is not just a passive instrument reflecting a preexisting reality, but an active "organ," a force that "creates, shapes, and enables" the world we live in. Rorty argues, as Henrieta Șerban points out, that "skilful use of language has led to rationality, not the other way around" (p. 17), overturning classical epistemological hierarchies. Instead of viewing rationality as a precondition for language, it becomes the result and expression of a well-conducted linguistic practice. This opens the way to an epistemology that foregrounds social and discursive interaction rather than fixed and universal criteria.

This vision leads to a reinterpretation of philosophy as an "art of redescription," a space in which absolute truth is replaced by criteria such as internal coherence and the capacity of discourse to generate meaningful interpretations in shifting contexts. Henrieta Șerban underscores this dimension when she notes that "conversation is preferable to foundation" (p. 37), which means that dialogue and discursive interaction take precedence over the search for fixed, immutable epistemic bases. Philosophy is thus not a solid, immovable edifice, but an ongoing process of negotiating meanings – a living, open-ended practice.

Rorty does not advocate a superficial or nihilistic relativism but instead proposes what Henrieta Șerban calls a "conversationalism" with poetic and ethical dimensions. This involves a philosophical attitude that acknowledges the absence of absolute foundations but does not abandon a moral compass: "to be an ironist, in this sense, is to live in a world without absolute points of support, but with an ethical compass oriented toward the suffering of the other" (p. 37). In this way, Rortian irony becomes a form of ethical responsibility, requiring heightened sensitivity to the suffering and needs of others – an attitude that balances metaphysical scepticism with a humanist commitment.

Therefore, language in Rorty's philosophy, as presented and interpreted by Henrieta Șerban, becomes a fundamental organ of change and human becoming. It not only shapes reality, but also serves as the terrain on which the struggle for freedom, solidarity, and hope unfolds. The transformation of the world begins with the transformation of discourse, and philosophy, in this context, is an act of poetic and ethical creation that invites openness and dialogue, rather than the imposition of fixed, absolute truths.

From Kant to Blaga: The Poetic Re-Foundation of Knowledge

One of the strengths of Henrieta Șerban's work is the careful and nuanced dialogue she establishes between Richard Rorty's philosophy and the thought of Lucian Blaga. This comparison is not merely thematic but extends to stylistic and methodological levels, highlighting profound parallels between Blaga's "poetics of knowledge" and Rorty's "ironist poetics." The author foregrounds Blaga's key concepts – "horizon, axiological atmosphere, form" – which "refer to the philosophy of culture as a poetics of being" (p. 232). In this endeavour, Blaga is not reduced to a mere source of ideas or a conceptual tool; rather, he is brought forth as a genuine partner in dialogue, an interlocutor who shares an ontological and epistemological perspective with Rorty.

This shared perspective is based on an understanding of philosophy not as a technical discipline or abstract metaphysical speculation, but as a creative act of shaping historical being. In Blaga's vision – and, by extension, in Rorty's as well – "form" is not something given once and for all but the result of a dynamic process, a continuous creation mediated by language and culture. Thus, philosophy becomes a "poetics of being" – a reflexive exploration of the ways in which reality and knowledge are symbolically and culturally produced.

Henrieta Șerban emphasizes with precision that this "ontology disconnected from metaphysics" (p. 14) offers an innovative path for thinking the human condition without resorting to rigid transcendences that are often inflexible or dogmatic. At the same time, this approach avoids the trap of epistemological cynicism – that is, the absolute refusal of meaning or values, which certain postmodern positions may entail. Therefore, the philosophy proposed here, inspired by both Rorty and Blaga, is situated at the fertile intersection between poetic openness and ontological commitment, between pluralism and responsibility.

This poetic re-foundation of knowledge, as captured by Henrieta Șerban, resonates with a contemporary need to think of the human condition in terms that privilege creativity, dialogue, and the continuity of meanings, rather than dogmatism and closed systems. It is a philosophy that, like poetry, creates forms and opens horizons, inviting a reconsideration of how we relate to the world and to ourselves.

Solidarity Instead of Truth

The political dimension of Richard Rorty's philosophy, as presented by Henrieta Şerban, is revealed more through an ethical register than through a militant or ideological discourse. Rather than offering a rigid political project, Rorty proposes a project of social hope, one whose strength is grounded not in dogmas or certainties but in openness to the other and in the cultivation of tolerance. The author accurately observes that "the Rortian argument brings us to the idea that tolerance for those who are not good at mathematics should not differ from tolerance for atheists, or for those of another religion..." (p. 17). Thus, truth loses its central position and becomes secondary to the fundamental values of human coexistence: tolerance and empathy.

In the "post-truth" society in which we live, this Rortian ethic acquires a particular relevance, preserving its character as applied humanism, deeply rooted in everyday experiences, and not as an abstract or dogmatic ideal. Solidarity therefore becomes not merely a moral virtue, but an organizing principle of social relations, one that replaces the search for immutable truth with an ethical commitment to the other.

This ethical dimension is accompanied by an essential historical lucidity, which Henrieta Şerban underscores through the statement that "historicism follows from contingency" (p. 212). Rorty's philosophy does not appeal to absolute or universal metaphysics but embraces the contingent and contextual nature of human existence, which gives it a non-metaphysical yet deeply meaningful character. To be a historicist, in this sense, means recognizing responsibility toward others and toward the real conditions in which we live, and not toward an abstract, inaccessible "world in itself" (p. 126).

Therefore, Rorty's philosophy, as interpreted by Henrieta Şerban, offers us a model of thought that abandons absolute certainties in favour of active, ethical, and responsible solidarity. This is a philosophy of action and of relation, one that makes tolerance and empathy the foundation of sustainable and meaningful coexistence.

Instead of a Conclusion: Philosophizing Together

Henrieta Şerban's volume emerges as a vibrant plea for a fluid, open, and deeply humanist way of thinking. It is not merely a book, but a lesson in philosophical style and intellectual honesty, avoiding dogmas and absolute certainties in favour of a sincere invitation to reflection and dialogue. It does not offer a definitive synthesis, but proposes a path – a journey of thought in the making – where Rorty's philosophy appears as a "philosophy in motion," capable of harmoniously articulating individual freedom and social solidarity, irony and hope, epistemological relativism and moral exigency.

In an era dominated by polarization, rigidity, and closed discourses, this book brings a fresh breath, a return to what the Greek philosophers called *phronesis* – practical wisdom, modest yet with essential depth for the human condition. This very quality makes Henrieta Şerban's work not only relevant but indispensable for today's cultural and social context.

The author succeeds in composing a true interpretive symphony in which major voices such as Rorty, Blaga, Wittgenstein, Kuhn, Derrida, and Dewey resonate and complement each other. In this work, philosophy is no longer an abstract and severe construction but a "natural flower of life," a space of intellectual freedom and creativity.

Moreover, the volume is a warm and profound invitation to philosophize together – to construct shared meanings through dialogue, to cultivate solidarity and hope through the power of words and ideas. It is a call to flourish together in a world that so deeply needs open reflection, empathy, and understanding.

GHEORGHE DĂNIȘOR

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, *Richard Rorty, a philosophy for multiple blossoms. Freedom, knowledge, solidarity and hope* (*Richard Rorty, o filosofie pentru multiple înfloriri. Libertate, cunoaștere, solidaritate și speranță*), Bucharest, Pro Universitaria, 2025, 287 pp.

The Power of Language to Create Hope

From the very title, Anișoara Șerban's book made me think of the role of metaphor and creative description in philosophy. Without wanting to, I associated the title of this book with the title of a poem by Marian Drăghici that I read in literary journal *Ramuri*, when I was a philosophy student. A title so powerful that it has remained in my mind for more than thirty years: "My years, the mental rose". This metaphorical title of the poem I am referring to, I suppose, alludes to the symbolic meaning of the cup of life, of the symbol of the soul, the heart, love, the mandala, the mystical center, and most of all, the symbol of perfection.

In fact, I think I spontaneously associated this meaning with Anișoara Șerban's book, because a serious book (even when it opens a portal to the playful in an artistic-aesthetic sense) is the result of a long experience of the author, reading experience and reflective experience, experience of notation, of commentary, of writing, of the actual editing of the book. (This book also contains frequent references to the author's writings from past years).

As a sum of intellectual experiences, we have here a philosophical work of synthesis, which reevaluates the current relevance of Rorty's epistemology and political philosophy, neopragmatism and postliberalism, in which all aspects of Richard Rorty's thought are treated with seriousness and originality, but my interest as a disinterested reader focused on the original species of liberalism that this author cultivates, a liberalism that starts from the individual (hypostasized in the liberal ironist), but whose goals are solidarity, community, knowledge, freedom and hope.

Besides, beyond the self-creation that defines him, solidarity is one of the main characteristics of the "liberal ironist" invented by Richard Rorty, a human type permanently willing to critically distance himself from his own existential vocabulary and at the same time determined to take a stand against cruelty of any kind.

The liberal ironist is, I believe, the main character of Rorty's book *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, where the author shows that self-creation that is accomplished mainly in the space of individual existence and solidarity that manifests itself in the community are not necessarily related to each other, but they are not incompatible either: self-creation by virtue of a formulated personal creed is also inspired by sources outside self-knowledge, being transposed into deeds by means that go beyond the framework of private life. And the feeling of solidarity generally follows a complicated path from the healthy human instinct of coexistence with our peers and of understanding the disadvantaged or the "different" (of the other), to complicated elaborations, from the plane of the "spirit", to that of direct action. From text to action, as Paul Ricoeur would say.

Rorty's statements in *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, which continue those of the dispute with traditional philosophy as a painting depicting the mind as a great mirror containing various reflections (representations) in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, lead to the idea that truth cannot be outside us – for it cannot exist independently of the human mind that formulates propositions. The world is outside us, but the descriptions of the world are not. And only the descriptions of the world can be true or false. In other words, the central problem of any philosophy (including political philosophy) is that of

language or vocabulary – and this discovery marks a "turning point" in understanding the purpose of philosophy for which different philosophers, such as Heidegger, Derrida, Davidson or Wittgenstein, are responsible.

And this is also the ground on which I believe that Henrieta Anișoara Șerban builds in the last part of the book the comparison between Rorty's philosophy and Lucian Blaga's philosophy, in the chapter *Richard Rorty and Blaga: the poetics of knowledge and historicist being*: "In Lucian Blaga, man interrogates and visits the horizon of mystery, *a horizon permanently accessed by man*. The specific human existence environment includes the concrete horizon and a horizon of the unknown, both forming domains of the human universe interrogated through language. Here we again arrive at a common point, of the special importance of language for the quality of life and human aspirations, as in Richard Rorty." (pp. 212-214) On the other hand, "If from a metaphysical perspective Rorty and Blaga's conceptions are different, from a creative, daring and thirsty individuality freed from fundamentalism, the two philosophical conceptions come together in a fascinating confluence." (p. 218) Therefore, the author shows that she interpreted "exposure to different vocabularies as a version of exposure to mystery, of the 'other', of the world." (p. 222)

In addition, "In a study dedicated to metaphor, Richard Rorty refers to philosophers of science and language in order to investigate metaphor with a role in cognition (an 'unfamiliar noise'), the type of metaphor that actually interests Lucian Blaga as well, who distinguishes and values a type of cognitive metaphor, the revelatory metaphor." (p. 224)

To summarize, in her dense work, Anișora Șerban pays full attention to the Rortyan attempt to articulate a moral and political vision consonant with his philosophy, in the vision of a diverse community, built through opposition to cruelty and not through abstract ideas such as "justice", "common humanity", etc. In other words, starting from the idea of the contingency of language and from the epistemological conception according to which truth is acquired on the basis of a belief that has no religious connotations, the problem of community and self-creation (self-construction) is a problem of vocabulary. A vocabulary that gravitates around the notions of metaphor and self-creation, in other words, creative self-description. This is more suitable, according to Rorty, for the preservation and progress of democratic societies than that centered on the notions of truth, rationality and moral obligation. Without founding democracy, or establishing its foundations, the new philosophical vocabulary allows for its re-description. This also expresses the difference between the culture of Rorty's liberalism and older forms of cultural life.

The "ontological" difference lies in the conception of truth. From what I have read both in Rorty's books and in the work of Anișoara Șerban, truth would be what we believe it to be, more precisely what we want to believe or even what is advantageous and agreeable for us to believe. I do not think that this can be a matter of a conscious self-deceptive policy for reasons of psychological comfort, nor even of a laudable preference for civilized hypocrisy, instead of "primitive" sincerity. My opinion is that beyond an exposition of what we may believe about the word "truth" in certain alienating contexts, here is an attempt at moral reorientation of man, an ethical turning point, a leap over the order of truth and correspondence and a refoundation of the value and social order.

My distancing from Rorty's vision of man, which I find more honest than tedious (Habermas), more extravagantly optimistic than irresponsible, more aesthetic than pragmatic (because everything seems to be a choice of taste), start from the observation that even within some revolutions of creative self-description, the classical truth-correspondence cannot be ignored. Thus, for example, in medicine, progress in the order

of verbal expression (theories based on laboratory experiments) has no value in terms of health if it is not validated by medical practice. After having established a diagnosis as adequate as possible in the medical terms of his time, the doctor must offer the treatment appropriate to the detected condition and propose a creative re-description of the disease in terms of what he personally believes about healing, only after having cured a sufficient number of patients to establish a rule.

And because in Richard Rorty's vision the ideal community is one that promotes peaceful general agreement among its members, along with tolerating disagreement, I personally find that the strongest expression of solidarity is found in the evangelical formula "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep!".

Richard Rorty, a philosophy for multiple blossoms. Freedom, knowledge, solidarity and hope, is a book that highlights the power of language to create hope, and the chapter "The project as hope and hope as project: Bloch and Rorty" has as its motto Jean Paul Sartre's confession «Je crois que l'espoir fait partie de l'homme», as further proof that this state of well-being flourishes in the ambience of our vocabulary that allows for self-creation, solidarity and the refusal of cruelty: "In our interpretation, the connection between self-creation, the refusal of cruelty, and hope, seen both separately and in relation to solidarity, are central to the investigation of hope. (…) Consequently, in Rortian theory of hope, which is largely also of solidarity, we have an 'enlightened' understanding of relativism. Rortian relativism is not taken to the extreme, to pursue the impossibility of knowledge or truth; it is simply a more flexible approach to knowledge, to the knowledge of others, and to life, so as to allow for a more participatory notion of truth and knowledge." (pp. 188; 190)

Henrieta Șerban believes that the Rortian postliberal utopia that holistically includes an epistemology, an ontology, a philosophy of mind, language, culture, religion, a political philosophy and human society philosophy, a philosophy of education is as current and relevant as possible, thanks to its significance as a human project full of hope. This message contains a necessary infusion of optimism (not only epistemological) for the times we live in.

LORENA STUPARU

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Henrieta Șerban is a Researcher with a rich activity in the fields of philosophy and political science, an activity valued year after year in scientific works and in participation in numerous national and international conferences. The passion for research and the experience accumulated over the years is reflected in the results of her sustained, disciplined work in the most creative and inventive sense, so that the volume dedicated by Henrieta Șerban to the American philosopher Richard Rorty – the man, the philosopher, the work, and everything together – published in 2025 by Editura Pro Universitaria in Bucharest, naturally fits into the ascending and solid academic path built by the author.

This initiative to bring into the Romanian academic space, as well as to the broader Romanian public interested in knowledge in the most generous and open sense of the word, a name among the greatest of contemporary world philosophy – Richard Rorty – represents a trailblazing challenge. We note that in the Romanian academic space Richard

Rorty has been studied by researchers such as Gorun Manolescu, Victor Popescu, Eugen Huzum, Bogdan Popescu, Lorena Stuparu, Viorella Manolache, authors of books and studies about this philosopher.

In the book proposed to us, Henrieta Șerban closely, in detail, and with subtlety studies the work of philosopher Rorty, but she clarifies from the outset that her research is not intended to be a proper monograph. It is rather a guide for reading and understanding Rorty, but it is a special guide, in no way schematic. Henrieta Șerban's book presents itself instead as a true intellectual expedition into the world of Rorty's ideas, an expedition where fine connoisseurs of the field can discover numerous interpretations and connections argued by the author to richly illustrate the 'placement' of the studied philosopher – a philosopher dear to Henrieta Șerban – in the grand tableau that philosophy has constructed along the coordinates of time and space, but also to offer those who are just discovering the Rortian universe a welcoming gateway, a gentle and wise invitation, towards a unique vision that could serve as the basis for a better world, a better society, a better human coexistence.

Henrieta Șerban's book is, thus, in the spirit of the Rortian vision, not only a study addressing the closed circle of philosophy as an academic concern and an incessant dialogue/duel of ideas, but also an argument for understanding that philosophy is intimately linked to the quality of living and daily coexistence, that its importance and role are particularly evident when philosophy is liberated from its ivory tower, showing that it is part of the lives of ordinary people, contributing essentially to the architecture of their existence. The broader reading public thus has the opportunity to enrich itself at the end of a reading exercise – that nonetheless requires the willingness to accept the "struggle" inherent in any authentic and erudite intellectual expedition –, and to understand the universe of Rortian ideas as a pathway to a society built inclusively, harmoniously, in a spirit of tolerance and love for others, rejecting the barriers created by the claim to possess absolute and final truth; because the claim to hold the final truth often generates cruelties, sometimes of a disturbing magnitude and gravity, but also in the most subtle forms, more deeply insinuated into everyday life practices, seemingly microscopic, yet so involved in the construction of individual being and society.

We insist on Henrieta Șerban's book opening itself to a broader reading public, which thus has the opportunity for an authentic exercise, at the end of which it emerges that, alongside the overwhelming 'inventory' of great ideas and philosophical systems, the ideas, visions, choices, and preferences of 'ordinary' people also matter, for they are not just that silent and passive majority and, in turn, can learn the harmony of coexistence. This exercise unfolds into reflections that each of us formulates concerning some of the most pressing issues, such as the functioning and quality of the democracy we live in or wish to build, or like the importance of knowledge, education, and the willingness to make individual efforts, in a socially and institutionally conducive framework, to educate ourselves thoroughly and continuously. Rorty, the author argues, advocates for "the courage and necessity to build your own opinion about the world, your own vision and attitude, a desire and a necessity valid for any free individual." (p. 57)

Speaking about the book that Henrieta Șerban dedicates to Rorty translates to being carried away by the ideas and arguments that the author develops about Rorty, and starting from Rorty, resulting in a discourse that, to borrow the expression from the suggestive title of the present book, "blooms" spontaneously in multiple directions, in rich connections. Affirming this "fertile" effect on the reader, we will focus nonetheless, even if without going into (valuable) details, on the actual architecture of the book, with the intention of revealing both the content and the academic method through which the author guides the reading and understanding of Rorty's work.

Suggestively for the content and message of the book, the first page of Henrieta Șerban's volume greets us with a motto – taken from Wystan Hugh Auden – that invites us to reflect on the perpetual, never-ending struggle to do "good," with the awareness that there is always something more to achieve, but also with the hope of an "improvement" that becomes possible. This perpetual process, marked by lucidity and hope, is one of the keys to reading this book. The note on the edition, signed by Claudia Moscovici, as well as the Preface, signed by Oana Șerban, also provide keys to understanding, as well as sketches and portraits of the author, naturally framed within the tone and substance of the book.

In Part One, Henrieta Șerban writes about Richard Rorty: his life, work, and legacy. The twelve subsections investigate that 'deep mark in contemporary philosophy' left by Rorty, 'considered the most influential philosopher of the late 20th century', 'the major American philosopher since John Dewey', but also 'the embodiment of the European intellectual...' (p. 23). Rorty's family background is presented as an explanation, but not the only or the strongest one, for the work of philosopher Rorty. Similarly, aspects regarding his education in the academic-university environment are explained by the author as foreshadowing Rorty's non-rigid, liberating conception, built from contact with 'absolutizations', presented as beyond doubt, provided in the context of university studies: "The rejection of Dewey's pragmatism by the college professors made Rorty realize that most people react negatively to the "lack of absolutes," although it seemed clear to him that this represented an advantage, a release, noting that the incursion in the search for truth can be an extremely diverse foray, but also guided by the dictate of authority, legitimacy, as well as by the search for this authority (in fact for power, in a certain sense)" (p. 24).

We take this quote to say that the author explains, in the subchapters of this first part, key concepts and notions for understanding and interpreting Rorty's philosophy, such as: relation to metaphysics, philosophical 'fundamentalism,' historicism, pragmatism, philosophy of mind, epistemology, human nature, knowledge, man as a knowing subject, representation, redescribing, metaphor, vocabulary/vocabularies, culture/science/technology, religion, common sense, contingency, conversationalism, irony, ironism, ironist, democracy, solidarity, freedom, truth, progress, postliberalism. The author carefully and deeply investigates the Rortyan conception built in the book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, as well as in other significant works of the philosopher; Rorty's reference to the main resources: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey, affirming: "...Rorty is, in our opinion, a Lockean philosopher, convinced about the *tabula rasa* and about a rather good man, even though he does not accept the idea of human nature. (...) Personal and historical experience teaches the Rortyan man about everything that has good consequences and is worth cultivating." (p. 34); the relative distancing (the author explains) from Kant; the critique of the Rortyan vision: Hilary Putnam's critique and Dennett's critique.

We present, with the help of some quotes taken from Henrieta Șerban's book, provocative and controversial themes in Rorty's thought: "The philosopher rejected the use of the concept of truth in politics, ethics, and philosophical debates, as he believed that objective truth does not exist, but only 'what your contemporaries can accept as truth,' and develops the pragmatist and hermeneutic philosophical argument that 'there is no global epistemological way, of comprehensively or directionally, to critique or endorse a certain course of investigation,' but only 'conversational modalities' of epistemological action, determined by contingent human historicity. This pragmatist and hermeneutic positioning toward the problem of truth has been and is difficult for many specialists to accept. One

expression of this reception is also the documentary made by the BBC in 2003, titled *Rorty: The Man Who Killed Truth*." (p. 49) Or: "Rorty has stirred up memorable controversies through his academic writings, continuing to this day, which can be indicated by contrasts such as realism versus antirealism, philosophy versus science, democracy versus philosophy (he reiterated and argued that it would be better to let democracy set the goals of philosophy rather than letting philosophy set the goals of democracy) or even controversies regarding the relationship to religion, atheism versus orthodoxy (in the sense of rigid religious thought, whatever the religion in question may be)." (pp. 48-49)

The first part of the book concludes with a poignant description of the moment of awareness of the end of life, a moment marked by the philosopher's invocation of some disturbing poetic fragments, rendered in translation by Henrieta Şerban (p. 128). This moment of the end of life constitutes for Rorty's philosophical vision a flat symbol full of meanings, from which we can derive numerous reflections. The second part, suggestively titled *Rorty 'blooms'*, offers, over the course of five subsections, reports and interpretations of Rorty's conception in 'dialogue' with Immanuel Kant, Thomas Kuhn, Isaac Levi, Bloch, Foucault, and Lucian Blaga. These erudite and complex philosophical parallels enhance the substance of knowledge and the originality of Henrieta Şerban's book.

The concluding remarks, as well as the Appendix: *Weltanschauung and re-description in the perspective of Rorty's philosophy*, bring towards the most current present Rorty's conception, including in relation to current or very recent crises, such as the one triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. We also mention the summary in English at the end of the book, which is of great importance for conveying the content of this research in a broader linguistic context. Entering, invited by Henrieta Şerban, into Rorty's philosophical conception, each of us can formulate questions, uncertainties, or necessary returns to Rortian themes. How could a large democracy function concretely, made up of individuals encouraged to shape their own conceptions of the world, society, organization, order, all of these visions considered equally valuable and worthy of participating in dialogue? How could decisions be made, some in a rapid manner? Or how can we include in the 'conversational modalities' those people who, realistically speaking, are less inclined to educate/training themselves, for whom, for different reasons, the willingness to know is reduced, given that the Rortian individual, in order to be an open, tolerant, good citizen seeking the common good, must be educated?

Henrieta Şerban delicately guides us through the thinking of a philosopher who, although he sparked controversy and questioned the 'absolutes', built his arguments on a scientific and scholarly foundation that grants him maximum authority and academic credibility. This academic legitimacy of a provocative author is elucidated by Henrieta Şerban.

Starting from Rorty's work, Henrieta Şerban's book is about a better world, about how such a world could become possible, without it being a better world constructed 'by force', through the closing of individuals' minds into a unique, absolute path that dominates them totally and in a totalitarian way. It is a world of freedom, of openness to accepting multiple visions that can coexist, can dialogue, and can enrich each other, without hatred and without arrogance. The author states several times in her book that in the relationship between truth and freedom, freedom is 'privileged', as freedom ultimately allows, even if sometimes difficult and through convoluted paths, for truth (but not in the sense of final truth, rather in the pragmatic sense that the author details, in the context of an in-depth explanation of Rorty's vision, but not only) to come to light.

RUXANDRA IORDACHE

Alexandru Ioniță, Stefan Tobler (eds.), *Orthodox Liturgy and Anti-Judaism*, EDIS, Edition Israelogie, Band 12, Peter Lang Verlag, 2024, 313 pp.

This book is the expression of a serious extended investigation of a long and unsettled history, followed with expert and documented attention for the specificity of Orthodoxy and Orthodox Liturgy in respect of Jewish faith, too. The researchers contributing to the volume consider, as well as the editors do, the liturgy and liturgic texts as a crucial level in documenting the perspective of Orthodox Church on Judaism and, as a consequence, these analysts place the accent on this invaluable resource to discern the Orthodox attitude on Judaism as undistorted as possible.

This way the liturgical heritage becomes a starting point for the initiation of an honest discussion between Jews and Orthodox Christians. The volume dares to approach a delicate matter: the authors are conscious in respect to the intricate perils of approaching the matter of anti-Jewish liturgical inheritance, yet, we agree with the authors of the volume that research of all topics, including the delicate ones... The chapters of the volume are signed by Jewish and Christian researchers (Christians belonging to several denominations) and the volume addresses post-Byzantine documents, the modern period and current issues related to the theme of anti-Judaism, contributing to the current, informed and open inter-confessional dialogue.

The volume, structures in three parts, opens with the study of Ruth Langer and Demetrios E. Tonias, titled "The Self through the Other in Byzantine and Jewish Liturgies: A Comparative Exercise" approaching the interplay of otherness in the historical representations of Greek Orthodox and Jewish liturgies via multi-step, multi-directional comparison. Alexandru Mihăilă, in "Quoting Scripture against the Jews during the Holy Week in the Eastern Orthodox Church" analyses the notable anti-Judaic references ("periscopes") encountered either explicitly or as illusions in the Byzantine liturgy during the Holy Week.

"The Liturgical Prayer in the Sight of the Gospel: How Are Jews Presented?" signed by Sandrine Caneri approaches certain Byzantine liturgical hymns discerning the anti-Jewish elements within a more complex analysis. While some of these texts could be interpreted as incitation to violence against Jews, it stands out as a strange disruption from the general message of the Gospel.The research conducted by Sandrine Caneri shows that anti-Jewish hymns tend to rather undermine the universal and timeless significance of our liturgical texts.

Vadim Wittkowsky studies the Die antijüdischen Stellen des Neuen Testaments als besondere Texte des frühesten Christentums ["The anti-Jewish passages of the New Testament as special texts of the earliest Christianity"] arguing that the connections between these New Testament texts which could be categorized as "anti-Jewish" seem rather out of context and the mentions of Jews in Christian liturgies are surprisingly strange. The chapter is structured on the basis of research questions such as: Is "the Jews" in 1 Thessalonians 2:14 really about the entire people of Israel? What kind of Jews were "children of the devil" according to John 8:44? What can be said about the origin of the "self-cursing" of the "whole people" in Matthew 27:25?

A notable and complex argument is brought to the fore by Bogdan G. Bucur in the chapter titled "Missing the (Theophanic) Point: A Blind Spot in Patristic Scholarship and Its Consequences for Understanding Anti-Jewish Texts in Byzantine Festal Hymns". The striking anti-Jewish content and tone of a significant part of the Byzantine hymns are the result of exegeses that equate the *kyrios* ("Lord") of Old Testament theophanies with the *kyrios* of Christian worship: Jesus Christ. The shockingly "indefensible and pastorally

irresponsible statements are analysed from this perspective". The patristic authors and the scholarly interpreters in the field of Patristics should be in consonance.

Basilius J. Groen observes in "The Strained Relationship between Venerating Old Testament Saints and Singing Anti-Jewish Hymns during Holy Week in the Byzantine Rite" the feature of the Byzantine rite in granting to a sum of Old Testament saints, emphasizing that Christian identity and the joy about Jesus' redeeming acts do not imply and they cannot imply the idea of God cancelling His covenant with the Jews (p. 108). In the second part of the volume, Charalampos Minaoglou's study titled "The Post-Byzantine Anti-Jewish Literature" treats post-byzantine anti-Jewish texts are rather theological treatises, not exactly Biblical texts, following the goals of their writings as very personal and not theological per se.

The chapter Anti-Jewish Trends in Late Byzantium: "The Example of the Painting Manuals" signed by Konstantinos M. Vapheiades shows that the early Fathers of the Christian Church compelling the faithful to acknowledge at the deepest level the superiority of the Church presented the historical reality of the first few Christian centuries, amidst the tides of the anti-Jewish rhetoric underlining the responsibility of both the Roman authorities and the Jewish leaders for Christ's crucifixion which went contrary to Christ's earthly ministry. Agnieszka Gronek focuses on two nineteenth-century Slovakian icons of the Passion of Christ in "Representations of the Sanhedrin in Post-Byzantine Art Following the Example of a 19th Century Icon in Uličské Krivé". Presenting scenes of *The Unjust Trial of Christ*, a theme which is customary in the West and not in Byzantine art such iconography presents the opportunity to discuss the symbolistic of the various details in relation to the exegeses accompanying the theme. Nadieszda Kizenko studies in "The Long Shadow of Byzantine Anti-Jewish Liturgical Texts: The Church Slavonic Service to Martyr Gavriil of Białystok" the narrative around Gavriil, a young Orthodox Christian boy who was killed in 1690, with the consequence that the event and, in subsidiary, the boy became the object of veneration in Russia at the end of the 19th century.

The third part of the volume begins with the study "Reforming by Translating or Omitting: The Case of Orthodox Holy Week Hymns in the Greek-American Context", where Stefanos Alexopoulos investigates a selection of the hymns from the Byzantine Holy Week referencing Jewish people. The mentions of Jewish people are followed in the translations of the Greek writings (hymns) into English considering also the Greek-American context. Marian Pătru approaches the topic of "The Romanian Orthodox Church and the Homiletical Construction of Jewishness in the Interwar Period (1918–1940)", evaluating the ways in which Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) contributed to anti-Semitic and nationalist discourse between the two World Wars, the study presents ROC's discourse as homiletic, nationalist and antisemitic. Ionuț Biliuță, in "Antisemitic Tropes in the Liturgy of the Saints of the Communist Prisons in Post-Communist Romania", studies the permanence of antisemitism in the liturgical offices, accompanied by the praising the self-sacrifice of the "saints" of the Communist prisons in post-1989 Romania. "Reception of the Liturgical Hymns by Christian Orthodox Service Attenders", by Alina Pătru, examines Christian Orthodox liturgical hymns as messages, part in the process of liturgical communication, which is also investigated through the lenses of Umberto Eco's theory of the three intentions of a literary text. The study applies a fourfold scheme of intentions discerned in the evaluation of liturgic performance. We are the people of our time so not only that the problematic content is noticed and should be purged, but there is a dare necessity for a more problematizing theological education.

Peter Ebenbauer signs the investigation titled "'Mein Volk, was habe ich dir getan?' Die Karfreitags-Improperien in den gegenwärtigen Ordnungen des byzantinischen und

des römisch-katholischen Ritus" ["'My people, what have I done to you?' The Good Friday *Improperia* in the Current Orders of the Byzantine and Roman Catholic Rites". The study emphasizes that in both the Byzantine and Roman Catholic rites, so-called *Improperia*, a sum of antiphons and replies to these antiphons are present in the liturgical texts of Holy and High Friday, in a ritualic recalling of Christ's suffering and death on Good Friday. These warnings from God or Christ are characterized by a whole series of biblical motifs that are linked to the scene of the crucifixion in an accusatory and dramatic way.

Simona Ștefana Zetea proposes an interesting image in "The Jews, Our 'lawless' … 'elder brothers'. Perspectives on the Reception of the Second Vatican Council among an Oriental Catholic Church" discerning between the theological level (at which the Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek-Catholic Church (the Roman Catholic Church, RCU) has recognized and accepted post-Vatican II doctrines on Hebraism) and the practical level at which the transposition of post-Vatican II doctrines on Hebraism in the practice of liturgy still lacks a full actualization. Various anti-Semitic elements still linger. In conclusion, "Greek Catholic Church's liturgy cannot remain unchanged after the Shoah" (p. 290). Precisely this latter point emphasized captures a specific of such analyses, important by their role in nuancing and increasing mutual, interconfessional and knowledgeable understanding.

HENRIETA ȘERBAN

Francis Fukuyama, Mathilde Fasting (eds.), *După sfârșitul istoriei. Un dialog despre ultimii 30 de ani [After the End of History, Conversations with Francis Fukuyama]*, translated from English by Alina Popescu, foreword by Mihai R. Ungureanu, Bucharest, Corint Istorie, 2023, 268 pp.

The Norwegian researcher Mathilde Fasting proposes a book of interviews conducted between 2018-2020, in Oslo and Stanford, with the famous American sociologist and political scientist Francis Fukuyama, known as the author of the famous statement made in 1989 that liberal democracy will mark "the end of history". The volume is an analysis of the social and political changes that have occurred in the 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and since the appearance of the famous essay in the summer of 1989 "The End of History?", in the American conservative magazine *The National Interest*, in which the author foresaw the end of the Cold War and announced the triumph of liberal democracy, which would mark the "end of history". The idea of the article was strengthened and developed in his equally famous book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, published in 1992, which addressed the events of 1989-1991 that culminated in the disintegration of the USSR and made possible the rise of the Western liberal model and the proliferation of democratic states.

In 1989, Fukuyama's claim that the victory of liberal democracy marked the "end of history" was not exactly a prophecy, but explained in the Hegelian sense that the ideological entanglement between political systems had ended, that the claims of other political ideologies to represented different and higher forms of human society. At the long-awaited end of the road through history, after the end of the Cold War was a political and economic model superior to other competing ideologies. This was the model of liberal

democracy, an ideology that would know consecration and to which no antithesis could be constructed, representing the end of the Hegelian cycle "thesis-antithesis-synthesis". Fukuyama's paradigm did not fully come true, as not all societies became successful liberal societies, and the transition to democratic regimes took too long in some states.

In the 1990s, Fukuyama's liberal paradigm, the "end of history", manifested itself in competition with the realist paradigm, the "clash of civilizations", of the equally well-known political scientist Samuel P. Huntington – who brought to the fore the geopolitics of ethnicity, religious ideologies and nationalism, and said that we must "respect the matrix, the score of the civilization to which we belong" (p. 8). All these were also considered by Fukuyama, but secondarily, because he considered them unviable for democracy and liberalism, considered universal values/principles. Although they proposed different perspectives, both theories shared the idea that the international system would fundamentally change after 1989 and became themes of international relations theory in the 1990s.

The present volume is structured in 18 chapters, in which both Fukuyama's older ideas, liberalism and democracy as final destinations of contemporary states, but adapted to the current context, as well as topics of international life in the first decades of the 21st century, are addressed – the financial crisis of 2008, the victory of Donald Trump in 2016, the emergence of a growing number of illiberal political leaders in Europe and the world, the threatening rise of China – as well as other themes, including migration, human nature, neoconservatism or contemporary economics, which reflect the author's concerns for various fields of the social sciences.

In chapter I, entitled *What happened after the end of history?* the author mentions that after '89 and until 2000, at least in Europe, the number of democratic states increased, after which there was "the rise of populist movements within traditional democracies that affect the quality democracy even in the most stable democratic countries, including the USA and Great Britain" (p. 22). The populist trend is evident in countries such as Poland, Hungary and Russia, which highlight their national identity and exclude those who do not share their historical and cultural background or ethnic origins. Fukuyama believes that this trend is a threat to liberal democracy because it uses democratic legitimacy to undermine liberal institutions.

In the next chapter, *How has world politics changed?* the author argues that the fundamental change in world politics is the configuration of "identity politics". To examine the important changes in world politics in the last 30 years, the interlocutor brings up the book *Identity*, published by Fukuyama in 2019 as a reaction to the rise of populism both in the US, with the Trump Administration (2016), in Europe after Brexit in 2016, as well as in other parts of the world and in which he claims that "identity is the main driving force of current political developments" (p. 30). In the author's opinion, identity politics acquired a more pronounced character at the beginning of the 21st century, compared to the existence of that polarity between the Left and the Right in the 20th century, and parties that emphasize identity attract more votes than those that formed the older axis of politics economic. Populism finds its most succinct expression in President Trump's anti-immigrant moves from Mexico and the deployment of troops to the southern border; regarding European populism, the author gives the example of Hungary and Poland, where populist leaders win the elections and therefore have legitimacy, after which they begin to undermine the rule of law.

The theme of populism is also taken up in chapter III, *The Threat to Democracy by Authoritarianism*, in which Fukuyama develops the idea of "illiberal democracy" (p. 44), a term launched in the 1990s by Fareed Zakaria, which refers to countries that are a democracy but does not accept liberalism. Fukuyama describes the mechanisms that

drive populism, distinguishes left-wing populism (which focuses on economic aspects and leadership style) from right-wing populism, manifested today (which is more concerned with charismatic leaders and an ethnic definition of peoples' identity). This last form is found in Hungary, where Viktor Orbàn is an exponent of "illiberal democracy", "that is, a majoritarian democracy freed from the constitutional constraints we associate with the liberal order" and "seeks to redefine Hungarian national identity in ethnic terms" (p. 42).

Asked to answer the question – *Will the US cease to be a beacon of the liberal order?* Fukuyama discusses the consequences of the election of Donald Trump in 2016, the disintegration of the US's role as international hegemon, and the Sino-US trade war. Asked by M. Fasting whether Trump's election invalidates the "end of history" theory, the author states that in his more recent books on political order, he had already modified the ideas about the end of history to include the phenomenon of political decay, that is, the possibility of political systems regressing. He also states that he did not expect "Trump to be this bad" (p. 57) because, in addition to the identity issue, Trump exploited the racial issue and led the US to withdraw from international agreements.

Continuing the conversation, M. Fasting dedicates Chapter VI to the biography of Fukuyama (born in 1952 in the USA, second-generation Japanese-American and of the Christian religion), his studies and career as a prestigious academic in some universities in the USA and Europe. The interlocutor places Fukuyama in the typology of the classic European liberal in intellectual thought and approach rather than American, and, moreover, considers him a "supporter of interdisciplinarity and intellectual curiosity" (p. 86). We then find out *What led Fukuyama to international politics*? – a chapter reserved for the details of his bureaucratic career, practiced within the US State apparatus (former employee of the RAND Corporation, where he focused on the Middle East issue, but also followed the foreign policy of the USSR, then of the State Department in the first Reagan Administration and in the George H. W. Bush Administration since 1988) and about political affinities (former neoconservative, supporter of the Republicans from which he broke away after the invasion of Iraq by the Americans, currently in the Democratic camp).

In order to follow the evolution of Fukuyama's thinking, the interlocutor considers it necessary to understand what the meaning of the "end of history" thesis is today, a topic to which Chapter VIII is dedicated. After 30 years, the author claims that the meaning of the expression "the end of history" (as a normative statement, not a historical condition) is not its cessation (of history), but the point to which modernization should lead us, "and from a multitude of theoretical rationales, liberal democracy and the free market represent the best regime or the best of all alternative ways of organizing human societies. It fully, if not completely, satisfies basic human desires, which means that the historical problem can never be considered closed." (p. 105) In addition, the theory of the "end of history" will no longer hold only when democracies fail, the author argues. So, even after 30 years, Fukuyama's theory remains valid, because no authoritarian regime has been able to achieve the recognition that democracies are capable of, that of providing well-functioning societies.

Other topics discussed in the book include: the spectacular changes in the field of artificial intelligence and information technology, the political model of Denmark (considered a state with a functioning democracy and a successful society); "how liberal democracies are built", "how we understand the workings of society", "how society and capitalism interact", "the influence of human nature on society".

Chapter XV also caught our attention, rhetorically titled *China – a serious competitor of liberal democracy?* in which the interlocutor proposes a debate on the existence of a real alternative, that of the Chinese model, to liberal democracy. The debate about China revolves around ideas that China's ambitions are economic, not liberal; that China's

international power is due to its economic miracle; about the weaknesses of the Chinese political system, despite the fact that it is a very powerful state; about the possibility of attacking Taiwan or about China as a possible global hegemonic power in the long term.

Another question asked by the interlocutor is if *We are experiencing a conflict of civilizations?* As such, Chapter XVI is devoted to the theoretical controversy between Fukuyama and Huntington regarding how culture and religion affect the political evolution of a state. According to Huntington, religious, cultural, identity differences are the main sources of current and future conflicts between civilizations. In opposition to Fukuyama, Huntington also claims that the institutions and values of liberal democracy are not universal, but only the product of the cultural customs of the West, which is why different value systems will collide and create unrest and conflict – this theory being the most serious challenge of the "end of history" hypothesis. Fukuyama recognizes that Huntington's claims are relevant to current populist movements.

How can we make liberal democracies win? is a chapter dedicated to addressing the dangers to liberal democracy in states around the globe, the future of the European Union and climate change.

The dialogue ends with some considerations on the *Future of History*, which talks about: the liberal, American and European traditions, the building of the modern state, the Euro-Atlantic hopes of Ukraine (before the invasion of the Russian Federation) and the "spirit of 1989" – which Fukuyama considers still "alive" and which "will not die" because "people are still protesting against authoritarian leaders and military dictatorships" and the main problem is "corruption endemic that countries face during the transition from authoritarian to democratic governance" (p. 243). Asked how he reconsidered the "end of history" after 30 years, the political scientist replied that he was forced to change his political position because of the two failures that were the product of conservative ideas of the Americans (the war in Iraq and the financial crisis), that it would give more importance to the modern state and that it still supports social protection policies and the issue of identity.

We recommend this interesting dialogue, carried out by M. Fasting with the man and scholar Fukuyama, equally to those interested in politics, economics, sociology, history, the social sciences in general, but also to the general public, concerned with finding answers, opinions and predictions to subjects found on the contemporary agenda of international life. The novelty of the book also lies in the fact that the interlocutor manages to summarize the main works of the author during the discussions, from the famous book that consecrated him, to the others, equally interesting, among which: *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, *The Origins of Political Order or Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*.

Perhaps the ideas and perspectives shared by Fukuyama in this volume seem out of date, given that after the writing of this book the "spirit of 1989" was besieged by: increasingly authoritarian, populist politics and restrictions on freedom of movement in the pandemic years; the wars in Europe and the Middle East breaking out in 2022; the populist forces that reached the European Parliament and the extremist/illiberal European leaders elected from 2024 in several European countries or the new victory of Trump in the White House from November 2024. Even in these conditions, let us remain in the spirit of Fukuyama and wish that democracies do not fail, so that the future will be one of peace and prosperity.

SANDA CINCĂ

Valentin Naumescu, Raluca Moldovan (coordinators), *Războiul. Consecințele invaziei ruseşti în Ucraina la nivel global, european și românesc [The War. The Consequences of the Russian Invasion in Ukraine at the Global, European and Romanian Level]*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2023, 390 pp.

The war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is still ongoing and it is not known when and how it will end. The invasion of Ukraine has already generated multiple changes in the European and global security architecture, and the consequences of the war have spread throughout the world economic system. One year after the start of the war, 16 members (professors and experts in various fields) of the Initiative Association for European Democratic Culture (AEDC), whose founder and president is university professor Valentin Naumescu, joined his initiative to expose the perspectives on the consequences of the war in Ukraine at the global, European and Romanian level within the present collective volume.

The introductory note – The war and after the war: diagnoses and forecasts signed by the coordinators of this volume, specifies the objectives of this editorial approach which is a complex picture of the multiple consequences caused by the war, but also an anticipation of the post-war ones.

The first part of the volume, structured in several chapters, captures the "political impact" of the war and opens with the study of international relations professor V. Naumescu, *Putin's War and the post-Putin world*. *The Great Changes Ahead*, which provides a substantial analysis of the consequences and "changes of this great conflict, including how the postwar world will look and work" (p. 15). The author proposes six variants of possible scenarios for the completion of this war, which he claims actually started 15 years ago, with the invasion of Georgia in 2008, continued with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine in 2022: "the conflict frozen", "compromise", "defeat of Russia", "Putin's overthrow", "regional expansion' of war" and the "globalization of war to change the world order". V. Naumescu identifies ten dimensions (strategic, geopolitical, security and military, economic, energy, technological, ideological, communicational and informational, educational, international justice) that will be affected by "Putin's war against the West", whatever the end scenario the war, which they treat at the global, European and Romanian level. The volume also includes an interview of prof. V. Naumescu with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Dorin Recean, about security and defense considering the neutral status of the country, about the situation of Transnistria and the prospects of integration into the EU in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Professor Silviu Nate's contribution, *The Indefinite Compromise in the Black Sea and the Dilemma of Perpetual Conflict*, focuses on the security situation in the Black Sea region which remains "a global point of tension that hosts a large concentration of actors with extremely diverse visions and interests" (p. 52). Russia's interest in exercising increased control in the Black Sea space is obvious, because it has both a regional stake, to control the Ukrainian coastline up to the mouths of the Danube, as well as a global stake, to regain its status as a great power in the system international relations. Another scenario would be the situation in which two great powers, the US and China, "enter the competition to achieve the primacy of peace and war brokerage in the Black Sea" (p. 55). The author argues that China's presence in the Black Sea is limited at the moment, but if it (hypothetically) increased its influence, it would undermine the US's ability to guarantee

European security. Therefore, S. Nate summarizes that it is essential for the US to remain connected to Europe and engaged in the Black Sea in order not to allow Russia to strengthen its control in the region and, in addition, offers a series of recommendations to Romania in order to manage the new regional situation.

Geopolitical analyst Dorin Popescu offers us a very interesting study, entitled *Russia drifting towards the New World Order – "hic sunt leones". Romania beyond the "governments"*, in which he discusses the "new foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation" adopted at the beginning of 2023, which "develops around the objective of building a multipolar, equitable and sustainable world order", in which Moscow either "one of the world's great geopolitical players" taking on the task of removing the dominance of the US and "other unfriendly states", i.e. the West, identified as "the main threat to Russia" (p. 75). This project is nothing more than a new "neo-Soviet project USSR 2.0"/"hegemonic imperialist project USSR 2.0" to start "a new Cold War" against the West (p. 76). The author identifies in this "Putinist project", along with the "consecrated geopolitical triangle" formed by the West (USA, EU, NATO), China and Russia, a fourth actor in the arena of the current confrontation for power, the "emerging non-aligned powers" (i.e. the South Global) whose alliance Russia believes it can rely on. He also discusses Romania's ability to transform the current crises caused by the war into opportunities for "the development of the geopolitical architecture of the West towards the East" (p. 87), through an active role in the extended Black Sea region and for the removal of Ukraine and Moldovans from the "grey zone" of Europe through their integration into the EU.

The next contributor to this volume, journalist Robert Lupițu, signs the essay *Transatlantic relations in the era «Democracies vs. Autocracies»: Indispensable America and Emancipated Europe* exploring the dynamics of transatlantic relations in the race for supremacy between democratic regimes (the West) and authoritarian, revisionist regimes (China, Russia) in the looming new multipolar global order. The author believes that the fusion between "indispensable America" and "emancipated Europe" has become necessary in the strategic competition for supremacy in the 21st century, when Western civilization and values are under siege by "illiberal revisionist Eastern powers" (p. 115). "Russia's war against Ukraine represents the first battle of the strategic competition" (p. 119), R. Lupițu also specifies, and suggests the need to prepare "a strategy of the transatlantic West" to eliminate the desynchronization between Europe and America (that is, achieving a convergence of the views of France and Germany on the transatlantic relationship in relation to American foreign policy), so as to achieve joint action in support of a global order based on rules, not revisionism. The bottom line is that only a functional relationship between an "indispensable America" and an "emancipated Europe" can long-term combat competition with authoritarian regimes. The author also addresses Romania's position within the transatlantic community, specifically Bucharest's foreign policy objectives regarding the integration of Black Sea security between US and NATO priorities and the establishment of the Republic of Moldova within the families of European democracies in order to be protected from the threat of Russia.

European Parliament expert, Tana Foarfa, presents *The EU's post-2022 expansion prospects in the eastern neighborhood*. The author points out that for many years the enlargement policy was no longer a priority for the EU, but the war on the EU border brought a new breath regarding the accession of some states from the Western Balkans (Albania and North Macedonia) and the prospect of the integration of Ukraine and the Republic Moldova in the EU.

Next, prof. Iulian Fota, offers us an analysis of the current context in which Romania must strengthen its foreign policy and security actions to compensate for the security deficit created by the multiple Russian aggressions and to counter the new challenges on its border. As such, the text *Romania and the end of illusions*. *The first year of the war* is a signal that the hopes that "the international order, based on rules, will become global, that states will no longer use military force (...) as the main instrument for resolving disputes" have been dashed (p. 155) and Romania must approach the new security challenges with responsibility and competence.

Prof. Raluca Moldovan, who is also the coordinator of this volume, directs her attention to the positioning of Turkey on the "Great Chessboard", "a deeply divided state, at the lower limit of fragile democracy, but a state whose global and regional position and influence they cannot be matched" (p. 199). Study of *The Republic of Turkey between East and West. Geopolitical balance and energy security in the context of the Ukraine War* provides us with a historical analysis to understand the positioning of Turkey in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the possible future scenarios in the context of Erdogan winning a new mandate as president.

The second part of the volume, dedicated to economic and societal aspects, offers us a first article full of substance, *War in the era of globalization*, signed by the economist Anca Dragu, in which he discusses the state of the current globalization process, with an emphasis on global economic risks associated with the invasion of Ukraine. The author believes that the globalization process is rather "fragmented" as a result of "four major shocks": "Brexit, the Trump Administration's policy, the pandemic and the war in Ukraine" (p. 210). As such, scholars today describe the process of globalization in terms such as "deglobalization," "slowing down globalization," "regional globalization," or "global regionalization".

Prof. Corneliu Bjola proposes the essay *Intellectuals before the war: between observation and participation*, in which he captures the dual role of intellectuals, as observers and active participants, in the context of war. Starting from the rortian (Richard Rorty) distinction between the "metaphysical intellectual" and the "ironic intellectual", the author investigates the concept of "intellectual reflection" in relation to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The conclusion is that "intellectual observers and participants bring different perspectives, thus contributing to a broader and more nuanced understanding of the war situation" (p. 240).

The contribution of Ana Otilia Nuțu, an expert in energy policies, focuses on the issue of energy security, an important stake in the invasion of Ukraine. The main point of the study *Energy: Decoupling from Russia makes the EU stronger* is that the EU has succeeded in removing Russia's energy blackmail and has overcome the 2022 energy crisis, but it still has a long way to go in the medium and long term to become fully energy independent, the author referring, among other things, to the maintenance of European solidarity and support for Ukraine and the resuscitation of the Eastern Partnership to support the other countries in the EU neighborhood.

Lawyer Luminița Tuleașcă proposes a subject of international commercial law, entitled *Foreign direct investments in times of war and international sanctions*, which captures the consequences of the sanctions applied to Russia on foreign investors forced to withdraw their businesses from the Russian Federation and the ways of defence of the states that have applied such sanctions for compensation claims that could be made by affected investors, and economist Claudiu Vrînceanu identifies economic opportunities for Romania in the current geopolitical context, in the article, *The situation of foreign direct investments in Romania in times of war. What are the biggest opportunities of the local economy and what international best practices can inspire the Romanian public*

authorities. In the analysis of *Corona, methane gas and cereals-inflation*, economist-financier Adrian Codîrlașu brings to our attention another economic topic, "inflation growth", one of the direct economic consequences that appeared during the pandemic and continued in the context of the war in Ukraine that affects economic growth and other areas of society, and makes an assessment of the inflation rate in the following period.

How "intelligent-artificial" the war in Ukraine is, we learn from the study signed by the expert George Gima. The author proposes a very topical theme, a mix between conflict and technology, namely the accelerated development of artificial intelligence in times of war, signal the consequences, limits and regulations that should define this field. The author appreciates that this conflict is "the most technological in history" (p. 353) due to the use of state-of-the-art military technologies by both sides (cyber-attacks, the spread of propaganda through social networks, satellite images, the use of drones, of missile and artillery systems, virtual reality and 3D holograms) and appreciates that Ukraine's (a smaller state with fewer resources than Russia) access to this technology provided by other countries helped her regain the lead and hold out in this war.

The energy game of Russia in the context of the war is put under the microscope by the expert Dumitru Chisăliță in the article *Energy resilience – needs, options and sustainability objectives*. The author believes that the measures taken so far by the EU are not sustainable in the long term, but can only contribute to a reduction of dependence on Russian gas, and proposes the use of the Green Deal Policy and an Energy Resilience Policy to achieve the resilience and energy independence of the EU. In addition, it offers 10 energy security objectives and a series of long – and short-term measures to reduce Romania's energy dependence.

The war in Ukraine will continue to be a hot topic for both Europe and the whole world, about which much more will be written from now on. The plus-value brought by the appearance of this volume in Romania is the approach to the consequences of this war from several perspectives and on several dimensions: global, regional-European and especially Romanian.

We therefore propose to both specialists, researchers and the general public an assessment of the first year of the war captured in the analyses, evaluations, interpretations and consistent points of view offered by the authors of this volume. An invitation to reflection for understanding this changing world, because, as Dorin Popescu notes in the pages of this volume, "Russia's war in Ukraine reconfigures maps, rebuilds borders, forces resistances and fears, tests limit, creates heroes, resets relationships and redraws the contemporary world" (p. 86).

SANDA CINCĂ

Viorella Manolache, *Alternativa lui Michel Foucault la modelul diferențiat al fenomenelor biopolitice* [Michel Foucault's Alternative to the Differentiated Model of Biopolitical Phenomena], Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale "Ion I. C. Brătianu", 2025, 203 pp.

Viorella Manolache continues her substantial work on biopolitics and Michel Foucault exegeses with the present volume, titled *Michel Foucault's Alternative to the Differentiated Model of Biopolitical Phenomena*.

Methodologically, the investigation follows a double mechanism capitalizing upon a synthesis of previous works (articles, studies, book chapters, conference papers) addressing

the intertwining and recontextualization of the investigative directions already followed and placing the research against the background of various well-selected novel exegeses, interpretations, comments to capture newer nuances and analytic matrixes.

One may recall Viorella Manolache's works "Michel Foucault and the Matryoshka – The Russian Doll Effect", published in "*Research and Science Today*", University "Constantin Brâncuşi", Târgu-Jiu, no. 1(9)/2015, March 2015; "Political Philosophy and economy. Three perspectives: Foucault – Žižek – Lyotard, in Romanian, in the volume *Filosofie și Economie: Teme și realități contemporane* [*Philosophy and Economy: Contemporary Themes and Realities*], Loredana Cornelia Boşca, Lucia Ovidia Vreja eds., ASE Press, Bucharest, 2015, with Henrieta Anișoara Șerban; Maurice Florence on Michel Foucault. "Us... Michel Foucault", in Romanian in *Caiete critice*, no. 3 (341), 2016; the chapter dedicated to Michel Foucault, in English, in the volume titled *Political Philosophy in Motion.*mkv*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017, ISBN 978-1-5275-0392-2; "Edward W. Soja – reader of Michel Foucault's Heterotopias", in Romanian, in *Saeculum*, new series, year XVII (XIX), nr. 1 (45), 2018; "This is not a leather jacket: Michel Foucault and the 'fashion thinking' scheme. Consideration on a dialogue with designer Ștefan Muscă", in Romanian, in *Transilvania*, new series, year XLVII (CLI), no. 8, 2019; "Come back, Michel Foucault – we need you!"...but wear a mask, in *EON*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2020; "About and on Michel Foucault – On human nature", în *EON*, vol. 4, nr. 1/2023 and many other investigations opening novel perspectives.

The volume revisits the perspective advanced by Michel Foucault according to which, in/on the threshold of the modern age, natural life becomes a system engulfed into the mechanisms and calculations of state power. By this, politics is transformed and (bio)politics emerges. Political reality and state affairs both register the "recalibration of zoon on an axial level of bioactive politics". Human nature becomes a version of zoon politikon, shaped and cultivated by the state.

Thus, "life" gets politically woven into the "political texture" and by this observation the author opens the topic of "the social-historical bioaccumulation of governance". Another synonymous expression for the "bioaccumulation of governance" biopolitics results from a politics massified, quasi-artificially transformed art of the political natural and natural politicized unfolding in alternative of social-cultural spaces, with and without tensioned manifestations.

The "bioaccumulation of governance" is emphasized by Viorella Manolache via recessive parameters, showing that "bio" is not stronger than "politics", or, that politics seems to serve life and it does but according to a full fledge political agenda of governance. The reality and concept of naturality – naturalness is reshaped within the *artificial* environment of political and politics. Zoon political maintained "naturalness" by virtue of sociality of man, but only to a limited extent, while it becomes artificialized as "strong foundation", actually, as legitimacy of biopolitics and biopower. The author illustrates this conceptual perspective discussing pandemics seen from the theoretical framework provided by Michael Foucault's philosophy and biopolitics. Thus, the author shows that analyzing the triad city-penury-epidemics (pandemia) the sets of physical natural and biophysical processes are managed and rendered more governable. In dialogue with Roberto Esposito (on the 21st of March 2020) the author interrogated "the historically differentiate character of the biopolitical phenomena" and following closely the "medicalization of politics" as well as the "politization of medicine" so notable during the times of Coronavirus. This phenomenon of deformation of politics in comparison to the classical profile of politics, with modified strategies and objectives. With a perspective opened by Jean Baudrillard, namely, the fatal strategies, are applicable to explaining Foucault's therapies

and the versatile philosophical condition of power especially during pandemics, notable in the pandemic strategy.

The innovative structure of the book is subsumed to the volume's argument and leads to a conceptual extension (or, "elasticization" in the author's terminology) of the "bio", of "zoon" and "naturalness". After the introductory argument, follows the discussion of "the primacy of bio" that opens with Foucault's perspective on human nature as a critical articulation between the natural and the political with a governing edge. In Foucault's dialogue with Noam Chomsky (1971), with Fons Elders as moderator, human nature emerges as intricate contemporary concept in the clash of languages, personalities and arguments to be discussed in terms of power, justice-injustice, ideals and political-cultural practices. Michel Foucault emerges as a daring parrhesiast, who instrumentalizes and "loves problematization as creative act", whose freedom of thought sharpens in the absence of blindness, deafness or ideological "denseness" that turns pollical discussion into philosophical discourse with multiple implications (some economic and social in nature). Approaching "veritable politics" Foucault investigates and unravels the problematics of democracy, the exercise of power by the classless mass, as well as class dictatorship, institutional and constitutional violence, the option and manner of individual interest in politics. Thus, the emphasis of all power relations emphasizes critically the supposed neutrality of political institutions and actions along a critique of the mechanisms of control as oppression of the social body.

Logically, Michel Foucault's method takes the shape of profound unsatisfaction with life and the political climate of the times. Foucault's interpretation evolved toward a significant political and biopolitical interpretation of *Phaidon* and Socrates' last words, given that the identification and diagnosis of the disease as a symptom of false opinion and reasoning, for the ill-formed opinion is also a disease that touches the soul, corrupts it, eventually the logos is corrupted and the good reasoning hopefully shall achieve the healing. Socrates is the ultimate symbol for affirming the truth, as Socrates' death still resounds in Western history; it is a form of veridiction which is "neither that of prophecy, nor that of wisdom, nor that of tekhné; a form of verification specific to the philosophical discourse". Foucault's model is kindred. In Paul Rabinow, this is the direct result of a "deep dissatisfaction with life, with the broader political climate of the time, and of the unexpected rethinking of what it meant to think". Foucault's state of mind was one of captivity, including the "enframing" and resentment in front of the type of structure adopted by the Collège du France (changing the presentation time of the course, the transmission system and the agglomeration, favouring the thinning and absence of contact and dialogue with the audience, etc.) especially frustrating within the political situation in France at the end of the 1970s. Foucault's model evolves toward direct protest: open critical discourse, becoming an activist, present in the street manifestations, signing petitions in support to liberating causes, such as condemning the French government's refusal to support the Polish Solidarity movement. Intriguingly, Foucault interprets naturalism and liberalism as different forms of societal "correction" and coercion. The author analyzes Rorty's and Foucault's liberalism with exemplary attention. Rorty sees Foucault as a stoic but inert observer of the social, which is a flagrant error. However, Rorty realizes that liberalism remains a dynamic axis of biopolitics integrated to the investigation of the politics of life.

The Deleuze-Foucault theoretical dialogue is especially interesting, presented in a configuration that includes an examination of the dependence on the relations that the "thoughtful individual" establishes in the social, political or economic system and according to formal universal structures recognizable (according to Deleuze) in the thoughtful

problematization of knowledge (savoir), power (pouvoir) and self (le soi). In Deleuze subjectivity is a "fold of the exterior line" and marks the demarcation between the field of force strategies, layers of knowledge and the field of nomadic singularities and of the disorganized forces, not included in specific reports. The discussion of Insanity, Foucault's cat occasions another interesting incursion into Foucault's philosophy of biopolitics as problematization of politics and political relations. From the very beginning, even starting from the cover of the book where we encounter Viorella Manolache's cat, named Foucault, facing a jig sawed colourful image of the philosopher Foucault, but also throughout the work, an entire historical arsenal composed of an accumulation of ideas and attitudinal reactions of humans towards animals, display the way the philosophical category of human was construed and constructed by and in relation to them as a fascinating contrast of the human constitution from governance's perspective and purposes. Animal, barbarian, wild, as opposed to human, cultural, political: Foucault is, to a certain extent, recovering the status of the barbarian (vector of domination) and the wild (vector of exchanges) functional within a biopolitical contractarian discourse, as a breakdown between the theoretical-legal profile of the savage (the subject who concludes the contract and exchanges rights) and homo œconomicus (one who exchanges goods). The landscape of interests and priorities of governance nowadays, along with the individual contexts of individual affirmation, activism and dissent are the inheritors of the French Revolution replacing war with civil struggle, oriented in the direction of the economy. The author comments related to this evaluation the perspective of J. Habermas, criticizing Foucault's view of modernity "a form of self-contradictory and anthropocentric knowledge of an overloaded structural subject, of a finite subject that transcends to infinity". However, supporting or not Foucault's perspective the subject who is decoding of the truth remain central to any definition of freedom or power critique.

Governance applies to governing a population which is no longer expected or "seen" as "demos", a population to be "managed" smoothly in quasi-economic terms of production, increase, accumulation and improvement of human capital, as the "subjects" are the object of an exercise of sovereignty and a governable population. The book emphasizes that, in fact, in Foucault's view, it is the philosophical condition of power that needs amelioration and a special type of vigilant, parrhesiastic and active individual governance.

Other analyses relate biopolitics to posthumanism. Rosi Braidotti is the first theoretical reference in this respect, Viorella Manolache recalling the "classic posthumanist example of Michel Foucault's image (1970) of the face of 'Man', drawn on the sand on the shore of the sea, which is gradually erased by the waves of history" in a paradoxical moment of open possibility either toward extinction or toward renewal: "at the moment of dissolution, Man becomes thinkable as Man and appears as a present concern" no longer being an implicit notion. It is very possible that Rosi Braidotti criticizes the humanist ideal via Foucault, but there is there an implicit attachment to the humanist ideal, too, with the possibilities to reform and redescribe it in the posthuman turn, as a materialist and neo-foundationalist approach, with hopes raised by a non-identical future route, taking advantage of the divisions of power. However, Romanian sources are capitalized in the book as well as the most relevant international ones. To illustrate we mention that the author discusses the interpretation of Cristiana Arghire for whom Foucault privileges the historical discourse of Boulanvilliers, especially rejecting the juridical model for the analysis of sovereignty based on the Hobbesian contractual discourse. The interpretation is met with the perspective that Foucault appeals to the perspective of Boulanvilliers only as an opening for the discussion of political historicism and of the manufactured knowledge, presenting the antagonistic positions of forces, nobility vs. bourgeoisie. A therapeutically vision of

the Constitution meets an ahistorical absolutization of the Constitution. The glorification of war was to be replaced by the social contract as political socially ordering force.

The philosophical investigation of the medicalization of politics and the politicization of medicine is the logical case study for a framework of analysis suitable for the problem of biopolitics in Michel Foucault. The volume ends with a well selected, varied and up to date bibliography.

HENRIETA ŞERBAN

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The paper expands upon Viorella Monolache's study entitled Michel Foucault's Alternative to the Differentiated Model of Biopolitical Phenomena with a view to turning to account Michel Foucault's perspective according to which, "on the threshold of the modern era, natural life becomes a system included in the mechanisms and calculations of state power, politics transforming into biopolitics." Her approach is based on new exegeses, interpretations, commentaries, nuances and reading grids. Thus, Patricia MacCormack's concern for humanist-structuralist meanings brings into focus the abolition of the human-animal distinction and the question of identity as ego. Rosi Braidotti's is analysed in terms of her cognitive-ethical perspective applied to the posthuman condition. Claude Morali's focus on the image of Foucault "neither sociologist, nor historian, nor structuralist, nor thinker, nor metaphysician" together with Erik Bordeleau, who relates anonymity to the process of multi-facetin highlighting the fact that Foucault's problem of anonymity does not consist in the depth of the gap of resistance to identity politics, but in the problematization of the processes of subjectivation that arise from the self-relating to the dispositif(s are are some of the most significant personalities analysed by the author, proving her ability to operate "a re- evaluation of form and substance through a necessary re-actualization" of the most appealing attempts to approach the issue of biopolitics.

Viorella Manolache, author of the study entitled *Michel Foucault's Alternative to the Differentiated Model of Biopolitical Phenomena,* is an eminent scientific researcher at the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations, with deep concerns in the fields of political science, history and international philosophy. Already in Argument-warning, the author specifies the double mechanism on which this interpretative approach is based, namely "the turning to account of the prefix *re–*, through recontextualization of the perspectives issued by reviewing, deepening and/or interrelating" the articles, studies, chapters, conference texts dedicated to the issues discussed in this volume, "in fact, applying the perspectives issued" she operates "a *re–* evaluation of form and substance through a necessary re-actualization" (our translation, 7). The second approach calls for "absolutely new exegeses, interpretations, commentaries, nuances and reading grids", accepting the refutation of Michel Foucault's perspective according to which, "on the threshold of the modern era, natural life becomes a system included in the mechanisms and calculations of state power, politics transforming into biopolitics" (our translation, 7-8). The author shows that "in the parameters of the recessive, 'bio' is not stronger than 'politics'" (8). Viorella Manolache resorts, through "elasticizing of bio," to the co-involvement of the "touches of Foucault's biography, a completely new approach in the Romanian scientific

space", also dealing with the "effects of *bio* tabloidization that is applied to the philosopher" (our translation, 9).

Subchapter 1.1. entitled *This is not a cover – Foucault's cat face to face with Michel Foucault*, starting from Cary Wolfe's interpretation of animal studies and human-animal studies, proposes this approach that aims at two levels: the first "considers the turning to account of animals as material (non-human) entities through a discourse of species difference; the second firmly establishes the fact that the field of animal studies is concerned with clarifying a guiding imperative – would you like or dislike animals – by emphasizing the change felt in the ethics of reading and interpretation that accompanied the consideration of sexual difference, in the 1990s (in the form of queer) or of race and gender, in the 1970s-1980s" (our translation, 10). The author specifies that the interpretation of categorical structures targeting animal and human-animal studies requires the extrapolation of the thematic and object of knowledge towards "locating a point/node of intersection with posthumanism; that the expansion is required to be balanced not in the sense of a fantasy of transcending human embodiment (…), but rather, in the sense of a return to the density and finitude of human embodiment and to human evolution as a specific form of animality, unique and different from other forms" (our translation, 10). The same Cary Wolfe, quoted by the author, states that "animal studies require to be located within the corpus of a humanistic (as internal practice) and posthumanist (as external/outer disciplinarity) discipline and practice" (our translation, 10).

Patricia MacCormack, quoted by the author, appeals to humanist-structuralist meanings, dealing with "theorists concerned with the abolition of the human-animal distinction and the question of identity as ego", focusing on "interrogating the human-animal division at the species level, showing that it is vague, imaginary and deeply redundant, stemming from man's compulsive need to dissociate nature from culture" (our translation, 11). These premises "premeditatedly resort to the name, both direct and insinuated – 'Insanity, Michel Foucault's cat' indicating in and through Insanity the operational hypostasis of a figural-imaginary entity, neither natural nor merely a sign" (our translation, 11).

On the other hand, Viorella Manolache channels her attention to Rosi Braidotti who, by placing the posthuman "in the corpus of a syntagma with comparative value, potentiates the posthuman as becoming-animal". It is shown that what Rosi Braidotti questions "is the very subject of humanism, perceived both as an abstract universe and as *anthropos,* a title considered illogical, in the sense that it is founded on the very reasoning of political economy, that of Man as a rational animal" (our translation, 11). Regarding the meanings related to the issue of the posthuman, Rosi Braidotti recalls points of intersection with Foucault, with whom she studied, together with Irigaray and Deleuze, in Paris in the 1980s. All of them are considered by Braidotti to be "innovative thinkers" regarding the "complexity of language as a material and semiotic structure" (14). Regarding the cognitive-ethical perspective "applied to the posthuman condition", she adds feminist theory, rejects dualism, questions the premises of "transcendental universalism", and analyzes the way in which "French philosophy applies it, through Kant, to Levinas or Derrida or from Spinoza and Nietzsche, to Foucault and Deleuze" (our translation, 15).

Viorella Manolache continues her approach to the connection between Braidotti and Foucault with the example regarding Michael Foucault's image of the face of Man drawn on the sand on the seashore "which is gradually erased by the waves of history, meditating within itself whether the meaning is that of extinction or renewal, specifying the conceptual paradox with which Foucault struggles", namely that "at the moment of its dissolution,

Man becomes thinkable as such and appears as a present concern", because previously "he functioned as an implicit notion" (15). The subchapter concludes by situating Foucault "in the category of philosophers with studies (in the radical-interdisciplinary sense of the first generation), with reference to gender, feminist, queer, postcolonial, cultural, film or media studies, received as prototypes of radical epistemologies, institutionally underfunded, but capable of conceptual and methodological changes" (our translation, 15).

Regarding human-animal interaction, "precisely to transcend the dialectic of alterity," Rosi Braidotti emphasizes the idea that "postanthropocentrism relaunches an affirmative political project, of changing the operable relationship between/among speciesism in favor of an ethical approach to what bodies can do, in order to think of dogs, cats, and other couch companions as crossing species distinctions not only affectively but also organically" (our translation, 16). Regarding "cat-human behavioral semiotics when species meet" (Harraway, cited in Manolache 2024: 17), it is specified that "Insanity (certainly belonging to a particularizing space of thought – called in/actually Folie)" becomes – here – Derridian an *animot*, in the sense that the presence of the black cat in/from Foucault's arms can be equated to a motivation-exposure of a type of manifest power. Insanity, having transcended its status as a named animal, is no longer the figure of a cat, nor an allegorical sign, nor a zoopoetic projection" (18). The fact that none of the poets' and philosophers' cats speak leads Derrida to reconfirm "the integrated evidence of a single phrase in/from *Alice in Wonderland,* it was after all, indeed a cat, or in the French alternative, in the familiar meaning of Folie – 'and, after all, it was indeed a black cat'" (our translation, 18).

Chapter 2, entitled *The Primacy of Bio – from Biography to Biotabloidization,* first focuses on aspects of the dialogue between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault entitled *On Human Nature,* outlining, in the economy of the second part of the discussion, the explicit turn towards "politics in terms of human nature, power, injustice and justice", in a debate in which "two independent and courageous intellectuals discuss ideals and practices in Western culture and politics" (our translation, 20). Regarding the "Foucaultian argument of reformulating the option of interest: *in what sense do you care about politics*", Foucault assumes the tasks of "genuine politics, recognized through: indicating/exposing all power relations with the role and effect of controlling, oppressing or repressing the social body; criticism directed towards the apparently neutral/independent mechanisms of institutions, which obscurely use political violence; recognizing the infiltration of political power into the depths of society, by unmasking its invisible centers and points of support; exposing its solidity and resistance" (our translation, 21).

Maurice Blanchot in "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him", emphasizes his interest in philosophy, "but bypassing history and sociology", calling him a "parrhesiate", a concept explained in the study *On Human Nature*, as representing "a bold and free storyteller, who loves problematization as an act of creation" (our translation, 20). Regarding Foucault's "apoliticalism", Blanchot deduces it "by the refusal of a struggle that could one day become decisive (the final struggle), the absence of any universal reform project" (21). Blanchot, in the spirit of Claude Morali's phrase *Who am I today?,* concentrates in an essentialized formula the image of Foucault "*neither* sociologist, nor historian, *nor* structuralist, *nor* thinker, *nor* metaphysician", placing "the meaning of Foucault's paradoxical phrase *Foucault would not be Foucault,* as a way of deepening his concern for *Foucault*, an opportunity to make fictions function within the truth" (our translation, 22).

Regarding the *biotabloidization* of Foucault, some biographies dedicated to him overbid "the niche of his scandalous biography" (28). Foucault "firmly refuses labels",

such as "misogynist, seductive, brutal or generous, offensive, manipulator of sadistic irony, arrogant and mystifying, self-destructive, Sade-ian concelebrator of the orgiastic, with caustic and uncontrolled laughter, visionary of pleasure, unlimited experimenter of corporeality, of the state of borderline trance, obsessed with death relieved of the excess of tragicism". All of them "articulate a personal file that indirectly responds to the tabloidization of the philosopher", because "it comes at a time when everyone must confront what they have thought and done" (our translation, 32), a form of lucidity, commented by Viorella Manolache, as being maintained by *philosophy-as-living-act*, with reference to James Miller's study *The Passion of Michel Foucault.*

Analyzing Foucault "under the magnifying glass of the exterior", Roberto Esposito considers that the French philosopher was not "a person, but a field of contradictory forces, a switch on the return of the nameless event, engaged in a movement, both violent and peaceful, of extroversion" (our translation, 32). On the other hand, Maurice Florence, opts for writing about Foucault, correlating it with a certain "search and regaining of anonymity". He states that *"we must give up the name and deliver the discourse engaged in the anonymous murmur* – a Bourbaki-like formula, subsumed under the idea of abandoning the search for truth and beauty and discovering *the trace* (the individual/ name belongs to a group of elements that can be integrated into the coherence of discourses or the indefinite network of forms)" (our translation, 35). Erik Bordeleau relates *anonymity* to the process of *multi-faceting* "in the sense that, anchored in such a reaction, the first term loses its status of reference to politics and identity, to ethics and a particular voice, and is delivered as resistance to identity politics, especially to *the anonymous collectivity*" (our translation, 35). Bordeleau's presumption aims at "a triumvirate of Foucault's anonymities" that refers to three distinct periods: "the stage of resistance-event (equivalent to the ethos of life), strategic anonymity and ecstatic anonymity, permissive to new possibilities of experience and common existence; the interval of *no face*, marked by discourse as a modality of annihilating the self. Bordeleau-ian, all three formulas are consonant, imposing the boundary of a 'new-institution of the self' engaged in *protest regarding* and *in the categorical refusal* referred to representational politics" (36).

Foucault's problem of anonymity, put under the title of "Acerer la vie: la question du fronttement" (36), certifies the fact that "*Foucault's problem of anonymity* does not consist in the depth of the gap of resistance to identity politics, but in the problematization of the processes of subjectivation that arise from the self-relating to *the dispositif(s)*" (our translation, 36). Analysing the relationship between absence and the dispositif, J. Revel assessed that "it is precisely the absence that requires correction by 'renouncing the work of pioneering' and by engaging the 'fundamental polarities' in an organic-complex and unhesitating form". Regarding the reflections of different meanings given to biopolitics, Revel considered that "no interpretation is the same, but, on the contrary, each one *is based differently* on the logic of the fundamental antinomy (received by Foucault) between *bios* and *politics*, as terms that enter into the composition *of biopolitics*, preserving its theoretically unproductive, precisely *separate meaning*, to the prejudice of *the common substance*". Without operating a "conceptual welding", Revel emphasizes the "violent subjugation of one denomination in favor of the other" (our translation, 36). Revel concludes that "multiplicity is the rule....that presents him non-fetishizing, but *tabloidizing,* in the hypostasis of turning against the self, or in the hypostasis of an instrument 'toolkit' that is 'good for everything'" (our translation, 40).

Viorella Manolache broadens the scope of interpretations by mentioning Alexandru Negri, who, starting an analysis of the change perceived at the end of the 18th and the

beginning of the 19th centuries, shows that Foucault "deepens the specific dimension of power relations, of particular devices and strategies, identifying and deepening the power relations articulated on the development of capitalism". A. Negri specifies that "*the analysis of the transition to the post-industrial era constitutes the central element of Foucault's thinking*" (44).

Sticking to the tabloid-oriented level, Leo Bersani individualizes himself in his analysis of Foucault by insisting on the revaluation of the passive role, "as a sexual way of counteracting the overly serious efforts to redeem sexuality", in the sense that "being penetrating is equivalent to abdicating power". An open circuit is created "in which *sexuality* overlaps *power*"; this approach "reinforces the movement along the *hyperbolic axis of the self,* but also in the direction of the loss of self-consciousness: sexual autohyperbole represents a formula of repression, equivalent to self-suppression" (our translation, 45). In opposition to those who saw in Foucault "an attractive point of *neutral sexuality*", Bersani, quoted by Viorella Manolache, "emphasizes the fact that masculinity has an increased ability to choose between versions of pleasure, because 'its sexual equipment invites analogy' or facilitates *the phallicization* of the ego, without, however, giving up the perspective of 'sexuality as a struggle for power'" (our translation, 45).

Viorella Manolache, by referring to Foucault's study *Les technique du soi,* emphasizes that in fact Foucault places his reflections "at the open limit of two caputs of the first centuries – pagan practice and Christian practice – *exemplary nodes* – which can be accepted through a (body doctrine) and through a *textual exegesis* (of the body/corpus of doctrines)". Manolache appreciates that in fact "it is expected (by recovering strength and extracting from obscurity) to activate the precept of *epimeleisthai sautou* (recovering the self against the immoral perspective, evading all possible rules/prohibitions, difficult-rigorous morality and austere principles)". Regarding the "care for the self/care for activity" which "co-implicates a political state and an active erotic disposition" (our translation, 46), this places Foucault in the sphere of his concerns for the notions of *dominant* and *dominated, of the subject* alongside other phrases with sexual connotations, which fuel unfavorable opinions regarding this philosopher concerned with the problem of identity and the relationship with centers of power.

Subchapter 2.2. entitled *The Last Foucault* represents, even in the year of commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the death of Michel Foucault, an attempt to "accredit with meaning and particular-investigative significance, a formula, by reference to the period 1976-1984, from the biography dedicated to him which denominates, through the decisive phrase of *Foucault (the final one)*, the turn that M. Foucault operates in terms of reforming the (initial) project regarding *the History of Sexualities*" (our translation, 49). As Viorella Manolache shows, the approach is part of a "transformation of construct from a particular-interested research of analysis of the historical architecture of power and knowledge, both identifiable (by resorting to a collection of discourses traceable in the 18th and 19th centuries), through the term sexuality, to the mechanisms and devices through which the individual recognizes himself as a subject of sexual desire" (our translation, 49). The fourth volume of *the History of Sexuality*, entitled *Les aveux de la chai*, and which also represents the conclusion of his "last stage of research", provides the framework for "(re)launching" Foucault's (final) connection, on the one hand with religion, in the sense of his interest focused on the history of religions and Catholic doctrines" and, on the other hand, by concentrating on "decisive-transformative moments and specific cases" (our translation, 50), regarding the problem of sex in the Western world.

This approach of the French philosopher is situated, in temporal terms, within a "philosophical landscape", previously dominated by Sartre and his concern for Marxism. As Viorella Manolache forcefully highlights, Foucault, since his study *The History of Madness* (1961), "situates himself elsewhere" (our translation, 50). In Foucault's last interview, conducted with Jamin Raskin, a series of arguments are certified regarding "the support given to the socialist program in the absence of a better alternative (with explicit reference to Mitterand), the valorization of the status of philosophers not engaged in politics, meant to look back in time and change the perspective, the reaffirmation of the importance of sexuality, ... the accumulation of emotions and attitudes that we can follow from the Greek era to the Victorian era, a time when interest in sexuality reached dramatic levels, in counterbalance to a contemporary sexuality considered boring, lacking the aesthetics of denial", the ignorance by young people of the present, concerned only with "change and revolution, the instrumental nature of political ideology, hence the resort to studying history/the past and not the future, the present representing the product of the reunion of history and the imperatives of the moment" (our translation, 51).

In comparing Foucault to Fukuyama's *Last Man* by Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora, the French philosopher anticipates, through his warning, Fukuyama's approach to the end of revolution and politics "not as an act of passive gratification, but the very state within which the last man will 'deliberately seek struggle, danger, risk, and unfulfilled audacity towards peace and prosperity'" (52). Positioning himself in opposition to the Marxist-derived class struggle and the master-slave dialectics, Foucault prioritizes "the maximization of self-government and the expansion of autonomy, opposing himself to the heteronomy of subjectification" (our translaation, 52). As stipulated by Viorella Manolache, by detaching/distancing from the "Lamartine-Buddhist construct" regarding life as illness and death as a "source of healing", Foucault identifies and diagnoses illness, declaring it to be "a symptom of false opinion and reasoning", in the sense that a wrong opinion "is like a disease that touches the soul, corrupts it, takes it out of its state of health, and must be cured" (our translation, 53). The healing prescribed by Foucault refers to the Socratic-type activity of caring for oneself, taking care of one's own person and, as it appears in Socrates' testament, studied and invoked by Foucault, philosophy is seen "as a form of its own truthfulness", precisely of the philosophical discourse, whose "courage must manifest itself until death understood as a [putting to] trial of the soul that can no longer have its place at the public tribune" (our translation, 54). Paul Rabinow, quoted by Viorella Manolache, clarifies the option of the last Foucault, the one from the 1980s, to speak about Socrates' *last words,* explaining it from the perspective of the French philosopher as "an experimenter of new forms and renewed substances, directly interested in deepening the themes, practices and modes of governance of the self and others" (our translation, 54).

Due to the fact that Foucault's frame of mind at the College du France was marked by a sense of captivity and inhibition because of the lack of communication with the audience and the information transmission system, he would adopt "an attitude of direct protest" regarding the involvement in demonstrations, signing petitions, "condemning the French government for supporting the Polish Solidarity movement", dissatisfaction with the political program of the Socialist Party, attacks in the press on independent intellectuals, all considered "micropractices", in addition to his dissatisfaction regarding "the division techniques, imposed blockages or methods of subordination". Foucault addresses "spirituality" as the action of practical search and experience through which

the subject undergoes the necessary transformations to have access to the truth" (our translation, 55). Foucault's concern for the knowledge of truth and the ethical strategies of the subject led F. Gros to identify the three lines of the French philosopher's originality, resorting to a triple negation, namely: "not the epistemology of Truth, and the interest affirmed in studying the modes of veridiction, not so much the interest given to the theory of Power, as to the analysis of forms of governmentality; less the deduction of the Subject, and more the description of the techniques of subjectivation" (our translation, 56).

In Chapter 3 entitled *Michel Foucault's Method,* what Viorella Manolache called "the Foucault brand", referring to Foucault's method, this brand is characterized by "magnificent will and radicality" (our translation, 59). Given the poetic dissolution "of metaphysics into surrealism", for Foucault "structuralism and the post-metaphysical transformation of philosophy" remain decisive (60). Foucault is perceived by Sloterdijk as a follower of Wittgenstein on the grounds that "science or epistemic disciplines are nothing more than games of complex structured language, as discourses or discursive practices" (our translation, 60). Foucault's philosophy, in Scruton's understanding, is based on fundamental research "oriented towards the philosophy of events, assimilated (subtly-ironic) to arheology", fully turning to account the "theory of freedom" (our translation, 61). Foucault's philosophy is "conceived as an assault on power and as proof that power is monopolized by the bourgeoisie". As for freedom, in Foucault's understanding, it is "an unreal, fanciful, unserious one (in conflict with the relation to the serious moral choice), of substituting the historical compromise of absolute liberation, of deducing-from-anything the general theme of domination, of stigmatizing condemnation of the social universe and of valorizing the 'heresy of domination'" (our translation, 62).

Through a contextualization of Scruton's criticism, given the Parisian student events and the '68 generation, where Scruton was involved directly, Mark Dooley embraces Scruton's view of "rejection (at all costs) of Foucaultian ideas and acceptance of Gaullist visions, echoing Burkean precepts, of preserving the 'spiritual things' that Foucault and his followers repudiated" (our translation, 63). Scruton introduces the image of Foucault as "the standard thinker of the New Left". Foucault is presented as "follower of Sartre, in terms of unmasking the bourgeoisie and exposing forms of domination as the mark of civil society" (our translation, 64). Scruton reveals "the lack of terminological-firm lines of conceptual demarcation" and "the absence of answers regarding the methods that justify observations and of an ordering connected to the refusal to be 'normal', by cultivating 'virtuous contempt', the predisposition for hysterical or exaggerating fictional analyses". Regarding the concept of "normalization," its operative factor "would be found in Foucault's belligerent leftism, more than in its hypostasis as a product of a critique of reality" (our translation, 66). Lynn Fendler appreciates that "Michel Foucault is a philosopher precisely to the extent that *he normalizes,* limits, and disciplinaryly orders the stages of the search for truth" (our translation, 67).

Viorella Manolache displays Foucault's method, as presented in *the Philosophical Discourse* by Foucault himself, as "a dual one – after Nietzsche and in his sense of *doing philosophy as an act/action of diagnosis*, itself a diagnostic discourse, with an *empirical-tender, twisted-oblique task, between word and body*, affirming what exists in the very corpus today". Foucault believes that only from this perspective "structuralism can be accepted as a *philosophical activity* (analysis of the cultural conjuncture), and, through even and only through the diagnostic approach, the operative formula of *structuralist philosophy* could be justified" (our translation, 68). As Viorella Manolache emphasizes,

"extracts from Notebooks no. 4 and 6, July – October 1966" describe Foucault's way of working which "complicates the interrelationship *of diagnosis – difference – lack*" (our translation, 69).

In subchapter 3.1. *Reading Foucault – two options*, Viorella Manolache provides us with Option 1 – *Rorty on Foucault,* presenting the display of the shift and the orientation of the debate "*about* human nature, *about* justice, *about* the fulfillment of the human essence towards the perspective of coordinates of societal crisis, devaluing the exterior, a fundamental stake of the debate/volume *Michel Foucault Philosopher*" (our translation, 71). Richard Rorty perceives Foucault in a double hypostasis: the American and the French reception. Regarding the American horizon of Foucault's reception, Rorty shares Michael Walzer's opinion, namely that he would have liked "Foucault to have succeeded, at least once, in a positive evaluation of the liberal status" (74). Viorella Manolache shows that "the American perspective is doubled by that of liberal reformism, considering the project of power strategies a feasible but difficult undertaking" (our translation, 74). Rorty argues for abandoning the Plato-Foucault hypothesis due to the fact there is no connection "between what matters most to an individual and his alleged moral obligations to his fellow men, meaning that he has no such obligations" (our translation, 75). Rorty appreciates some aspects of Foucault regarding "emancipation, his proximity to John Dewey, his perspectives on the prescriptions of power, on discipline, surveillance, and punishment" (our translation, 77).

Option 2: Deleuze on Foucault is considered by Viorella Manolache to be a debate "in the corpus of the mechanics of a route directed from the archive/mapping to the diagram" (79). As for the power diagram, it presents, in Deleuze's understanding in his analysis of Foucault, "the particular features of resistance, such as *points, nodes, or foci* that act in turn on the layers. (….) Power relations operate completely within the diagram, while resistances necessarily operate in a direct relationship with the exterior from which the diagrams emerge" (Deleuze, cited by Manolache 2024: 84, our translation). Deleuze's argument regarding Foucault highlights the fact that through the diagram the French philosopher "identifies and exposes the logic of organization and distribution of power", the diagram being seen as "a singular force of organization of the entire social field of power" (our translation, 84). Regarding Foucault's diagrammatic thinking, Deleuze approaches it in various guises: either as an "agent of destruction of the given and generator of the new", or as "the mechanism that makes power relations function", the diagram becoming "the highest point of abstraction, but also of the moment when this becomes real(ity), in the very space of the encounter with the difference/intensity making the diagram an experimentation/experience in contact with the real" (our translation, 87).

Chapter 4. The differentiated model of political phenomena has as its starting point Jean-Luc Nancy's approach, according to which the term *biopolitics* would come from Foucault's "test laboratories", and would imply that "life determines politics" or, in other words, that the sphere of politics is "coextensive with the sphere of life" (our translation, 88). Following the line drawn by Jean-Luc Nancy, Viorella Manolache concludes that "biopolitics would indicate the order of a bioactively determined global politics, intended to study, take care of and control the phenomena determined by globalization" (89). The conceptual alloy of *biopolitics*, "semantically torn between zoe (accepted as a vital act, common to animals, humans and gods) and bios (as an individual or group's own way of living)", as Viorella Manolache shows, "remains invested with the imperative of

bioaccumulation, of 'the reproduction and care for life'" (our translation, 89). After the conceptual clarifications undertaken, the author declares herself in favor of Michel Foucault's assumption, according to which, "On the threshold of the modern era, life begins to be included in the mechanisms and calculations of state power, politics turning into *(bio)politics"* (89). Following the path inaugurated by Stagirit, the author conveys the acceptance of modern man "as an adapted variant of *Zoon politikon*, a phrase whose 'political texture' includes 'life', as a social bioaccumulation of governance" (our translation, 89).

Ferenc Feher argues that "*biopolitics* is a concept limited to the politicization of the body". Along the same interpretative line is the statement that "biopolitics presupposes the politicization of social issues, in the sense that it excessively turns to account the identity/otherness dichotomy and (re)places freedom in the service of the biopolitical objective, (re)biologizing politics, according to Carl Schmitt's criteria" (our translation, 90). Therefore, the author highlights, according to Feher's assertions, the fact that *biopolitics* has its equivalent "in the massive politics, assumed as dominant in recessive socio-cultural spaces", so that, given the "self-contradictory dynamics, it is recognized as a weak option that 'bio' is not stronger than 'politics'" (90). Comments have been made regarding the modern world where, since the Renaissance, "politics has asserted where the supremacy of (bio)logical connections and determinations end". Being regarded as a descendant of nineteenth-century radicalism, *biopolitics* comes to dominate "the non-spiritual essence of universal manifestations (economic, biological, sexual, instinctual)" (our translation, 90).

Placing the concept of *biopolitics* "inside a synthetic support in motion", through Meyerhold's biomechanics exercises, the status of the political actant, master of his (bio)logical role, is (re)configured, the actant being forced to "possess the capacity to face any challenge, by cultivating the ability to control, at any moment, the location of his center of gravity" (our translation, 91). The notion of sovereignty, of sovereign affirmation, is commented on, and the point of view of the sovereign man, according to Georges Bataille, stipulates "the weakness and the tempting representation in the world of practice, that is, of subordination" (95). Anton Adămuț is mentioned, as being concerned with the ontological difference *body-body*, the body being considered the space of "all the moral commitments of man" (our translation, 95). Gaston Bachelard is also mentioned, through his concern with the "ontological secret of social mechanics" (96). References are made to the 20th century and the affirmation of the "ideal of the new democracy based on individualism" (97), the relaunch of industrial aesthetics where the principle of form follows function (our translation, 98). Terence Turner and the Structuralist approaches that oppose without appeal the "corporeal domain to the discursive exercise of power" (99) are discussed; Chris Shilling "recovers the body in the hypostasis of a multi-dimensional environment for the constitution of society" (100). Donald G. Mac Rae promotes the "body as a social metaphor" (100). Giorgio Agamben supports "man as a living being and *subject* of political power, in the hypostasis of the *biological body* of humanity" (100). The same Giorgio Agamben states that "biological life has become, from a political point of view, the decisive factor – with reference to the diversion of parliamentary democracies from totalitarian(ist) states" (our translation, 102). The conclusion rests on the assumption that the notion of *bios,* only apparently politically dynamited, must be repositioned "within new variants of anthropocentrism, experimentalism, chimerism, connectionism, fracturism, utilitarianism, online virtuality, fantasy and/or cyberpunk" (our translation, 103).

As concerns the *biopolitical* path investigated with accuracy and with a colossal power of penetration and synthesis of the most different tendencies and interpreters of this phenomenon, Viorella Manolache comes with some highlights regarding the real object of Foucault's lectures, aiming at the fact that this object consists in "the conceptualization of (bio)politics attached to the genesis of political economy, through the interest manifested towards the generating principles of political formations and towards the new forms of development of the mechanisms of power and governance" (our translation, 105).

The last chapter entitled *Foucault's Therapies Regarding the Amelioration of the Philosophical Condition of Power* addresses topics such as bio-diplomacy, bioculture, the location of politics within the biopolis, built according to a Babel bio-architectural model, introducing in the last subchapter extremely informative details about *the medicalization of politics – the politicization of medicine*, shifting the readers' interest between "the philosophical-political diagnosis of *biopolitics* and political decisions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic" (our translation, 172), as it is clear from the very title of the subchapter.

Resorting to some extent to categorical thinking, by introducing *the biopolitical* into the real, Viorella Manolache's study establishes the presence of the biopolitical in our consciousness, offering the reader, through a rich grid of interpretations, the image of human existence contained in the concept of the possible, precisely because life must become stronger than politics by implementing the ethics of work and love.

Assoc. prof. dr. habil.
CLEMENTINA ALEXANDRA MIHĂILESCU,
Aurel Vlaicu Univ. of Arad