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AN IMAGINARY MAP: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF ROMANIA IN POLISH LITERATURE AFTER 1989¹

ABSTRACT

The paper proposes five literary microanalyses focusing on the representations of Romania in Polish contemporary literature and their impact both on the collective Polish imagination and on the construction of the discourse regarding Romania in Poland. Its main objective is to study a constellation of (dis)similar motifs, the presence/absence of national stereotypes and their identity-creating role. Such an approach results from the conviction that literature creates and transmits national landscapes, myths, stereotypes, and ideological places, influencing the collective imagination.

KEYWORDS: imaginative geography, imagology, literary representations of Romania, Polish literary imaginary

In general, in Polish literature written and published after 1989, Romania appears primarily as a place, a destination, or a pretext to expose national stereotypes; hence, the work which creates the most inspiring methodological context of my research is the study of a Polish researcher, Przemysław Czapliński, *Stirred Map. The Geographical and Cultural Concept of Polish Literature between the 20th and 21st Centuries* (2016). In his book, the author examines the narrative proposals and geographical ideas of Polish literature after 1986 as inscribed in four main coordinates: Germany in the West, Central Europe in the South, Russia in the East, and Scandinavia in the North. In his study, the emphasis is on the interpretative potential of “reorienting the imagination” (Czapliński 2016: 7), taking it from the traditional horizontal paradigm East-West to a vertical one, i.e., North-South. The essential idea of his book assumes that literature reflects the geocultural mentality of the society and that by analyzing different literary representations of neighboring countries, we gain a vital source of knowledge regarding the ambitions and perceptions of Poles about their place in Europe. However, Romania is absent from the performative map proposed by Czapliński, in what is an understandable decision since it does not represent

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a central and obvious reference within Polish ‘imaginative geography’² given its relative cultural and geographical distance. The main goal of my research is thus to fill this gap and to shift the map to the southwest, towards Romania, in order to study the imaginary of Romania in Polish contemporary literature and to describe the way its perceived image impacts both the collective Polish imagination and the construction of the discourse regarding Romania in Poland. As I claim, it is an issue worth examining, because some significant elements bring both cultures together: they are both post-communist states, both trying to recreate and reconceptualize the myth of Central Europe, and both are struggling with the insecurities of not being “Western” enough.

Before 1989, when the political and cultural boundaries were sustained by the policy of communist-befriended countries, Romania represented an appealing travel destination for Polish tourists. In that period, the image of this country presented in the guides and informative materials expressed enthusiasm for the beauty of Romanian nature, architecture, and culture.³ Nevertheless, the perceptible ideological plan is manifested by drawing the reader’s attention to the values of the socialist system established after the end of World War II (Brenk 2016: 409–421).⁴

After 1989, the situation changed diametrically: Poland displayed a progressive decline in interest in Romania. In fact, the Polish collective imagination started to be dominated by the impression of an underdeveloped and impoverished country decimated by Ceaușescu’s regime, TV images of the bloody Revolution, and of a society immersed in the chaos of transformation. The migration of Roma from Romania has contributed further to the formation of the belief that Romanian means Roma/Gypsy, the latter being negatively stereotyped and identified with begging, destitution, and theft. This negative stereotype has entered a latent state because Romania is a sufficiently distant and inactive country from the point of view of Polish memory or martyrology, and knowledge of Romania among ordinary Poles is very limited, which in turn allows these stereotypes to persist and be thoughtlessly repeated (Jurczak 2015: 122–123).

However, in the 2000s, a growing group of admirers began to travel to Romania (mostly to the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania), and started (hyper)positively stereotyping it, describing it as an exotic, enthralling, and extremely beautiful country, with its wild and undiscovered nature and still-vibrant folklore tradition (e.g., Kruszona 2009). As a result, the negative image was then replaced by an alternative, contrasting valorized counter-image. Moreover, given that efforts to expose the degraded, and poor side of certain places can make them appear even more attractive and desirable to some, this exoticization and aestheticization of the ugly has also become a common strategy used to represent Romania. The development of the tourism industry and the use of social media platforms have helped to consolidate and spread this image.

² Understood in Edward Said’s approach, primarily as a cultural domain that includes both representations (of places, people, landscapes, and nature), and the way these representations reflect the desires, fantasies, and prejudices of their authors (cf. Said 1979: 49–73).

³ To read more about the coastal tourism in communist Romania and its influence on the image of the country, see: Brzostek 2018.

⁴ All quotations from Polish and Romanian are translated into English by the author, unless stated otherwise.

The few representations of Romania in Polish contemporary literature presented in my paper are then the results of travel experiences to this country, or constitute a conscious, sometimes perverse game which plays with the national stereotypes mostly created and preserved since the 1990s. In order to focus on these representations, I have selected four examples of literary prose (fiction and non-fiction), and one work of drama. I did not find any poetic work that refers to the image of Romania.⁵

TERRITORIAL IMAGOLOGIES: BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE IMAGINARY

Romania has been ushered into the broader contemporary literary Polish consciousness with the writings of Andrzej Stasiuk, who traversed a large part of the Balkans, Ukraine, Hungary, and Romania by car in the 1990s. The memoirs of his travels combine an essayistic style with poetic reportage. For a more detailed analysis, I chose the book *On the Road to Babadag. Travels in the Other Europe*, published in 2005. The first reason for this choice is that the title of the book itself already orients our reading in a well-defined place. Stasiuk established the direction of his journey, whose destination was a provincial small town, Babadag, located in southern Romania. His purpose was then to escape from the center, to explore the periphery.⁶ A second reason to consider the book is that it received the most prestigious Polish literary prize, The Nike Literary Award, which greatly influenced its reception and increased its readership in Poland.

Stasiuk's prose has a fragmentary character; its structure is slightly chaotic and sometimes repetitive, the texts can be read separately, the facts are not subject to a natural chronology, and the author's imagination and fictional sensibilities play an essential role here. This is signaled partly by Stasiuk's repetitive use of formulations such as "I imagine", "I tried to imagine", and "my imagination". A topography is constructed by the author, which is useful in finding and attempting to understand the Central European identity,⁷ and in which reference points are represented by certain characters associated with the Romanian topography, such as Emil Cioran or Mircea Eliade. In creating his narrative map, he gravitates towards the most prominent places in the Romanian province, far from any historical and tourist urban centers; these locations allow Stasiuk to transgress to another symbolic order. Hence, he reverses the vector of civilizing stereotypes and imparts this chaotic, provincial space with the dimension of the center of the world.

⁵ Recently, on the Polish literary market quite an important number of books on Romania have appeared, but I do not qualify them as literary prose as they do not resort to the literary strategies, such as e.g., fictionalization or poeticization of language. They can be classified as memoirs, travel impressions and essays on Romanian geography, history, or cuisine (Krawczyk 2021; Filipiak 2021; Chwałko 2022; Kołodyńska-Walków 2021). In my analysis, I did not include one children's book (Szelegiewicz 2018) due to its overly local coverage, and two novels (Archimowicz 2019; Łapczyńska 2024), which I intend to make the object of study in another article.

⁶ Andrzej Zawadzki (2008) proposes an inspiring interpretation of Stasiuk's book within the concept of the so-called "weak thought", elaborated by the Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica in his ontology. In *On the Road to Babadag*, all that is existentially fragile, deficient, crippled, or defective becomes the key to describing the reality of Central Europe.

⁷ A broader recent discussion of the idea of Central Europe can be found e.g. in Dhand 2018.

The locations mentioned in Romania belong to the same part of Europe that the author identifies with Polish provinces, which brings Grójec closer to Abrud in Transylvania, or Sokołów Podlaski nearer to Huși in Moldavia, where one can find “the same darkness and doubtful light, the same uncertainty of human presence” (Stasiuk 2011: 157), and whose authenticity is underscored by the writer. According to the author, the Romanian province here reflects their Polish counterparts:

I love this Balkan shambles, Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, the amazing weight of things, the lovely slumber, the facts that make no difference, the calm and methodical drunkenness in the middle of the day (...). The heart of my Europe beats in Sokołów Podlaski and in Huși. It does not beat in Vienna. Or in Budapest. And most definitely not in Kraków. Those places are all aborted transplants (Stasiuk 2011: 195).

Through the figure of the oxymoron (“I love this shambles”, “lovely slumber”, “calm drunkenness”) Stasiuk creates a kind of poetics of the paradoxical idealization of this overlooked provincial space, to which he opposes the “aborted transplant” of Western elements from the metropolises of Central Europe; in this fashion, he criticizes all the efforts of Poland to become more Western since, for him, these are merely artificial and imitative gestures. Stasiuk deliberately plays with the stereotypical characterization usually attributed in our culture to the peripheries, viewed as “timeless” and “backward”. This stance corresponds to the human chronotopical view of the world, in which, as Joep Leerssen notices, “journeying away from the center of societal activity means metaphorically journeying backward in time” (Leerssen 2000: 277). The writer is fully aware of this mechanism and consciously builds his “peripheral myth” on this basis.

Stasiuk’s identity grows out of a journey and can therefore be understood within the category of heterotopia: as a place where several spaces meet, seemingly incompatible, but which, after all, prove to be similar. He dreams of a new geopolitical configuration of Europe, an imaginary one: “(...) I need my own country. Where I can travel in a circle. A country without clear borders, a country unaware that it exists and doesn’t care that someone invented it and entered it” (Stasiuk 2011: 196). The writer desires to run away from any kind of domination and artificially established boundaries, and in doing so, draws a new map – an interconnected network of peripheral territories in which Romania is a kind of mental extension of Poland, and Babadag becomes “the quintessence of the periphery, of degradation” (Godun 2007: 14).

ROMANIA AND THE POETICS OF DESIRABLE UGLINESS

Ziemowit Szczerek, in his book *Intermarium: Travels through the Real and Imagined Central Europe* (2017), in a similar manner to Stasiuk, proposes a personal conception of Central Europe, seeing this region as chaotic, as an area of continuous interaction between center and periphery. The disintegration and mythomania that characterize national communities are presented as some of the main reasons why it is impossible to implement the idea of unification in the region, even though it is so desired and dreamed of. Therefore,

in both Stasiuk's and Szczerek's writings, the literary figure of Romania serves as a narrative tool to display the complicated identity of Central Europe, where the categories of an obsessive feeling of separation from the Other and of being a distorted mirror of the West are dominant (Czapliński 2020: 152).

In addition to political analysis and reporting ambitions, Szczerek's prose has great literary potential, based on imaginary constructs, something that is immediately announced in the title of the book, and a 'warning' at the beginning: "This is a travel book. This will be a book about travel and impressions. Whoever doesn't like it, should put it down right now" (Szczerek 2017: 8). Szczerek employs the poetics of transparency; the subjectivism manifested from the outset averts any possible accusations of inconsistency, division, repetition, simplification, biased impressions, or the anecdotal character of the prose.

Conversely, Szczerek also refers to multiple historical events, placing his narrative in a concrete sociopolitical context, and his style, although often acquiring poetic and metaphorical hues, is predominantly essayistic, stemming from his background in journalism. He also broaches the concept mentioned in the title of *Intermarium*, referring to the model of the federation designed by Marshal Józef Piłsudski in the 1930s, which aimed at an alliance between the countries between the Baltic, Black and the Adriatic Sea in order to ensure their security, both in relation to Soviet Russia and to Nazi Germany. Indeed, the Three Seas initiative was relaunched quite recently, in 2015, by the Polish government, as a project intended to stimulate closer cooperation, especially on energy issues, between the 12 EU member states between the seas alluded to above (Poland and Romania included). This concept represents a starting point for Szczerek – showing the old ambitions of the territory known as the Intermarium (depicted in the map which opens the book, and presenting the interwar aspirations of *Greater Poland*, *Greater Romania*, *Greater Hungary*, etc.). In doing so, he determines the geopolitical context of his text, placing this region on the axis of Eastern and Western influences and admits, like Stasiuk, the provincial character of Central Europe. Yet, he discusses it from a broader perspective, accentuating the significance of the colonizing view of the West in the formation of Central European identity.

An obsessive image appearing in the book several times constitutes the exact moment of crossing the Romanian-Hungarian border, described as a moment of transition:

Later, the train slid across the border. In essence, the landscape has not changed: Hungarian tile-roofed houses were the same on either side of the border. Everything was the same. Arrangement of villages and towns. The substance of civilization. And, of course, the landscape: it had been flat and steppe, and so it had remained. Only the top layer had changed. The tile was older and blacker in Romania (...). The landscape was invaded by concrete constructions, penetrated by rust and degradation, and immobile in the morning heat. I remember how I held my breath looking at Romania for the first time in my life. (Szczerek 2017: 183)

The landscape should reflect the place where Romania is situated on the author's map – in this intermediate area between West and East, hence the dominance of formlessness and ugliness, which allows Szczerek to see that Romania belongs to Eastern Europe. However, even though East is negatively connoted (as "older", "black", "penetrated by rust and degradation"), paradoxically, Szczerek finds it more salubrious here as this

landscape resembles his internal topography, a Polish one: “Poland resembled Romania much more than Hungary”, “Hungary is orderly and rigid, gives the impression of being sterile and somehow impenetrable, and Romania is more reminiscent of a southern version of Poland” (Szczerek 2017: 183, 185).

This comparison with Poland will dominate the later paragraphs of the book. Szczerek, who calls Romania “a sister country of Poland”, convinces the reader that understanding Romania is instructive in elucidating Polish mentality seeing as both countries have a similar socio-political-cultural model.

A KALEIDOSCOPIC PORTRAIT OF ROMANIAN SOCIETY

Małgorzata Rejmer’s book, *Bucharest. Dust and Blood* (2013) has achieved outstanding success in Poland with both critics and audiences. Unlike Stasiuk and Szczerek, she does not create a comparative platform with Poland but focuses on the political transformations and trauma in the private and public spheres of Romanian society. Therefore, Bucharest becomes a metonymy of Romania,⁸ Rejmer’s literary reportage being an attempt to sketch the mindset of contemporary Romanian society.

In addition, unlike the previous two writers, Rejmer moved to Romania, to Bucharest, to write her text. As such, her work is no longer a “travel book”, so its map is more static, and its central point of reference is the capital. This is the first reportage completely devoted to Romania that has appeared on the Polish publishing scene in the post-1989 era. The book is structured in three parts. In the eleven chapters of the first part, *Communism. Gold and Mud*, the author puts forward a presentation of Bucharest from the period before 1989. The second part, entitled *Interwar Period. Eye and Edge*, presents selected events from the history of interwar Romania, and the third part, *Contemporaneity. Orient and Madness*, focuses on today’s issues.

Rejmer constructs her book by referring to seismic events in Romanian history, and she often presents them with journalistic features, giving the floor to her interlocutors, the key protagonists of the book. Still, she does not hide the fact that all her material is filtered through her own consciousness and experience. She speaks openly about her emotions and impressions, appealing to poetic language that conveys a strong and persuasive image of Bucharest to the reader. Furthermore, she fictionalizes and uses different literary strategies to relay Romania’s history: so, for example, in one of the chapters, *Romanian Fairy Tale*, she forges her version of Ceaușescu’s life, from his birth to the moment he was elected president. Another chapter starts with *The Ballad of Master Manole*, where the construction of the Argeș Monastery is compared with the construction of the People’s House in the 1980s. Rejmer also refers to another well-known myth of Romanian culture, *The Ballad of Miorița*, which forms a pretext to discuss the alleged passivity of Romanians. The history of the Revolution is conceived, obviously with satirical intentions, as a drama in five acts with the following dramatis personae: the Ceaușescu couple, Ion Iliescu, Terrorists, Security Agents, opponents, communists, and world-weary Romanians. In the chapter

⁸ For a broader discussion about the place of Bucharest in European history, see: Brzostek 2015.

entitled *Everywhere, Nowhere*, we are met with a collage, cobbled together through the monologues of taxi drivers – Rejmer, therefore, engages in various styles, always crossing the boundaries of genres.

Throughout the book, the narrator proves her erudition by referring to multiple texts and cultural figures (Tzara, Ionescu, Cioran, Eliade, Brâncuși, but also unrecognized artists, such as Ion Bârlădeanu). She shows herself to be well-read interviewing many experts (such as the historian Lucian Boia) in order to be credible. In a way, Rejmer becomes for a moment part of Romanian society, directly involved in its plight and dilemmas.

The only Polish thread in the book is the tragic story of Claudiu Crulic, a Romanian citizen who died in a hospital after a hunger strike lasting 130 days in protest at his abusive arrest, and at the way he was investigated by the Polish authorities.

In Rejmer's book, the ugliness, the monstrosity, and the tragic side of history are highlighted. The capital of Romania is portrayed as a city of contradictions, which repels and fascinates simultaneously. The Romanian space, hence, appears as a slightly exotic one due to its incomprehensibility and impenetrability. It also correlates with some of the elements of Polish self-image and autostereotypes, such as pessimism or an exuberant fantasy. In an interview, Rejmer admitted: "In a way, I invented Romania, and it responded to my request for the absurd, the tragic, the grotesque" (Rejmer 2014).

THE LITERARY RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ABOUT ROMANIA

The most famous Polish text that used the negative stereotype of Romania as a mirror reflecting societal hypocrisy is Dorota Masłowska's play, *A Couple of Poor, Polish-Speaking Romanians* (2006). Iulia Popovici, in her review of the spectacle based on the play, directed by Cristian Theodor Popescu in the Hungarian section of the National Theater in Târgu Mureș in 2011, stated that "The main – and almost the only – reason why Masłowska's play did not appear in the first anthology of contemporary Polish drama published in Romania is its title. There are sacred things in diplomatic work, incompatible with the metaphors of writers" (Popovici 2011). Masłowska's drama, advertised as a "grotesque travelogue", is about a night out with two protagonists, Dżina and Parcha, who pretend to be "poor, honest Romanians who happen to speak Polish". The whole atmosphere is absurd and unreal, which is expressed through the language of the characters: its vulgarity and brutality serve Masłowska's aim to build an alternative, and caricatured reality. It transpires that we cannot discern the identity of the protagonists, who hitchhike throughout the night, since they are always changing their stories (at first, Dżina is pregnant, after which she says that she left her child in kindergarten, and Parcha claims to be a well-known television actor whose life depends on being on the set the next morning). At one point, we discover that both are under the influence of drugs, a revelation which utterly ruins their credibility. Very soon the reader realizes that neither Dżina nor Parcha know much of anything about Romania but persist regardless in telling the Poles they meet on their way a great deal about "their country". Their stories convey an amalgam of negative stereotypes perpetuated in the imagination of

Polish society, referring solely to poverty, misery, backwardness. The essence of such an image and attitude, resulting from vast ignorance of a large part of Polish society, is presented in a hyperbolized observation made by one of the characters encountered by the couple during their travels:

WOMAN DRIVER: F-fuck, Hungary, Turghee, Romanya, I know, a verrrry beautiful country. Evbody saysch, Romania a mess, schhhit, faeces, Islam, chillren eading schit from the pavement. Thisch Cincinatti dischtator isch in scharge, peeble are are eading rubble, but thees is a grrreat country with pepper, and frud, and holidaysss, and I there, we go ess-ski-ing with my husand there. Sooo great (Masłowska 2008: 29).

In a subversive gesture, Masłowska exploits the negative stereotype of Romanians (without precisely defining their gender or sociotype) to deconstruct Poland's post-transformational reality: social exclusion, a lack of prospects, and desensitization to the Other. The costume in which the central figures disguise themselves, the garb of "poor Romanians", allows them to experience the fate of marginalized people and realize that this identity, initially false, has somehow become an integral part of their own identity, and that they are now powerless to abandon it. The tragic ending of the play shows that they have internalized this spiritual state of the poor Romanians, and Parcha's cry of despair: "What fucking Romania is this? What loneliness. (...) I'm a nobody. I'm finished" (Masłowska 2008: 39–40) illustrates that this mockery was an attempt to get rid of existential suffering, of the feeling of disappointment, frustration, failure, and fear.

Another narrative strategy operating with a negative stereotype, this time with the goal of overthrowing it, is a Beata Majewska's 2018 novel *Saved in the Cloud*.⁹ The writer based the plot of her book on her own travel experiences, reflecting, as I conjecture, the effect of a "wave of Polish tourists" in Romania, whose number has soared markedly since 2012.¹⁰ Thus, the places mentioned in the book recreate the journey of the author herself, and the protagonist's itinerary is very easy to recreate as events occur chronologically, and, as such, this route resembles the offers of many travel agencies in Poland (Borș – Timișoara – Hunedoara – Sibiu – Curtea de Argeș – Brașov – Râșnov – Sinaia – București – Constanța).

The novel repeats a well-known convention – the road-trip motif is understood as the rediscovery of the self of the protagonist (Magda), related to the discovery of unknown territories, all presented with the backdrop of a love affair (her Romanian guide Iulian becomes her lover).

At the same time, Majewska went to great lengths to introduce the reader to the subject of Romania, adopting sometimes an overly didactic tone – each chapter begins with a quote from a Romanian poem,¹¹ and at the end of the book, there is a rich bibliography listing all the sources used by the author (she even gives a list of the songs she listened to while

⁹ To read more on this topic, see: Bartosiewicz-Nikolaev 2023.

¹⁰ Average number of visitors from Poland for the years 2005–2010 = 177,000 (RSY 2011: 623), 2009–2014 = 270,000 (RSY 2015: 649), 2013–2018 = 315,000 (RSY 2019: 669).

¹¹ The carefully selected poems of Mariana Marin, Simona Popescu, Nicolae Prelipceanu, Gellu Naum, Mircea Cărtărescu, Dorin Tudoran and Marta Petreu in Polish translation come from the literary magazine *Literatura na Świecie* (1–2/2000) – an issue entirely devoted to Romanian literature.

writing the novel), and Iulian's descriptions sound as if they were taken straight out of a tourist guide (he gives Magda exact numbers, percentages, data etc.). The protagonists' exchanges at times seem somewhat artificial, since their purpose is to give the reader as much detailed information about the geography, culture, history, and cuisine of Romania, as possible. This promotional purpose has been achieved, because by examining readers' views on a popular Polish book review site, lubimyczytac.pl, one gains the impression that almost everyone would now like to visit this "beautiful, undiscovered country."

The plot of the story shows that Majewska is determined to fight the negative stereotypes that exist about Romania (that it is an impoverished, perilous country) since the character who verbalizes these stereotypes is Renata, Magda's sister-in-law, with whom the protagonist has a toxic relationship (e.g., "Be careful, they are stealing a lot in Romania! Every second is a beggar and every third is a thief" [Majewska 2008: 88]). And Magda's entire journey must then go on to prove to the reader how wonderful Romania is: "You do not have to worry about me. Nobody robbed me, the roads are great, the people are hospitable, and Romania is beautiful. I recommend it" (Majewska 2008: 88).

Majewska's intention, although quite straightforward, is a worthy one: she makes every effort to engage in a polemical discourse on the pejorative stereotypes attributed to Romania in Polish consciousness. She utilizes a model of opposition: on the one hand, presenting some hypothetical mental constructs, based on stereotypes, and on the other hand, detailing the experience of the protagonist which reveals something completely at variance with these constructs. Majewska works according to the following formula: introduction, explication, and then deconstruction of the stereotype. However, in her attempt to manufacture an image of Romania by referring to the actual lived reality, on occasion, she unconsciously resorts to a strategy of exoticization of the country and its inhabitants, through which the Romanian's differences are underscored and sentimentalized.

CONCLUSIONS

The above microanalyses of several literary texts that evoke Romania, allow us to notice two major tendencies that create a representational set of conventions present in Polish literature after 1989. The first one portrays Romania as a country of cultural, social, and political relevance for Poles. In Stasiuk's and Szczerek's reportages, it appears in the broader context of Central and Eastern Europe and is described as belonging to the same landscape (exterior/interior, psychological) as Poland, and thus represents a mirror that reflects Polish realities, thus entering into a dialogue with Polish identity narratives. Both countries are depicted as symmetrical and both are seen as cultural peripheries, always presented in relation to the long-standing western-oriented center of civilization. The second one consists in referring to images and preconceptions that have already been prevalent and have become sedimented and normalized in the cultural discourse of representation of Romania in Poland, with the aim, as in the case of Majewska, of deconstructing negative and deleterious stereotypes, or, as in Rejmer's reportage, of creating a new, fascinating (although sometimes described as grotesque and chaotic) portrait of Bucharest and its citizens. On the other hand, Masłowska uses the existing negative stereotype of Romania

in a subversive way to present the ‘sins’ of Polish mentality and to reveal the hypocrisy of the Polish self-image.

Starting from a similar assumption as Czapliński that “the condition for self-knowledge is to confront yourself with what is different” (Czapliński 2016: 9), I claim, that the above modest analysis might become a good starting point for new research directions in the field of cultural imagery, of which the most important one could be to create a comparative platform of the representations of Romania in other literatures, thus entering into dialogue with their self-perception and with perception of Romania in the global context.

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