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## **Play and Interplay of Paradigms**

(Călin Teuțișan, *Scenarii ale criticii. Protagonisti, metode, interpretări*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala ardeleană, 2021; on Călin Teuțișan's *Scenarios of Criticism. Protagonists, Methods, Interpretations*, Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleana Publishing House, 2021)

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It is with remarkable acumen that Călin Teuțișan (2021) delves into the nooks and crannies of the literary criticism scene of Cluj, now and then, as it were. His is a study in the various manifestations of the recent and not-so-recent trends in literary critique perpetuated by critics-cum-academics whose epistemic allegiance is that of ‘the Cluj school of thought’.

Teuțișan's endeavor is for his texts published in this book to yield both a panoramic view of the Cluj scene, with the ideological and methodological filiations thereof, and of the intricacies of the paradigms touted by well-established literary critics as Popovici, Petrescu, Pop, Muthu, Braga, Goldis, Modoc, Baghiu, Gardan, Olaru, to name but a few of the Romanian lot, but also critics like Moretti, Glenny, Hazard, Said etc.

Chapters such as *Criticism Between Metaphysics and Rationalism*, *The Organic Utopia*, or as *The Temptations of The Method*. Between ‘Pure Criticism’ and *The Science of Literature* shed light on the staples of critical thought of the last decades in Romania and elsewhere. The analysis thereof speaks for Teuțișan's subtle lens. The following extract is a case in point:

In al doilea rand, descoperim, in 1973, la inca tanarul critic Liviu Petrescu, o pledoarie pentru impresionism, chiar daca drapata in faldurile tezei despre necesitatea imprumuturilor conceptuale. Desigur, nu despre impresionismul de tip calinescian e vorba aici. Iar, pe de alta parte, aceasta teza a asumarii influentelor critice este deopotriva expresia unei pulsuni teoretice, deja vizibile in paginile

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universitarului clujean (...). Teoria anti-originalitatii conceptuale nu-l impiedica, inasa, pe Liviu Petrescu sa deschida o discutie asupra lui Tudor Vianu, de pilda, prin acumularea masiva(!) ale unor opinii ale criticii contemporane care-i imputa lui Vianu tocmai lipsa acestei originalitati, prin formule de tipul “Tudor Vianu nu este niciodata cel dintai” (citatul vine de la Nicolae Manolescu, dintr-un articol publicat in revista “Contemporanul”, din 1966) (Teutisan 2021: 55)

Secondly, we discover, in 1973, with the still young critic Liviu Petrescu, a plea for impressionism, albeit draped in the folds of the thesis on the necessity of conceptual borrowings. It goes without saying that it’s not about the Calinescu-like impressionism that we are talking about here. And, all the more, this very thesis of owning up to critical influencing is equally the expression of some theoretical impulse, already visible in the writings of the Cluj academic. (...) The theory of conceptual anti-originality does not, however, prevent Liviu Petrescu from initiating a talk on Tudor Vianu, for instance, by the ‘massive’ (!) accretion of some opinions of contemporary criticism that call out Vianu for this very lack of originality, through such wording as “Tudor Vianu is never the first one” (a quote from one of Nicolae Manolescu’s columns in “Contemporanul”, 1966) (Teutisan 2021: 55; translation mine, A. Alb)

Not only does Teutisan unveil the arcane meanderings of concepts such as ‘originality’ with Vianu, as critiqued by Manolescu, but he does so in all salience and subtlety. His is hardly a harsh voice, but one that begets space for skepticism, indeed food for thought.

Convergences and divergences in point of episteme get tackled forcefully, with a plethora of salient references and insightful analysis. For instance, in Chapter IV, Convergent Poetics and Stylistics. Literary History as Critical Mediation, issues such as extensions of the monographic, synthesis and mediation, the Equinox community of Cluj, poetical logic and metaphor-driven lucidity are laid out and Teutisan’s point thereof is one replete with theoretical prowess.

All in all, *Scenarios of Criticism. Protagonists, Methods, Interpretations* (2021) is a valuable read for the expert and the novice alike.