

“Babeş-Bolyai” University

Faculty of Letters

DOCTORAL THESIS

**LITERARY HISTORY AS ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE AND
METHODOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS ACCORDING TO THE VIEW OF D.
POPOVICI.**

REGROUNDING, REFLECTION, RESTITUTION

– summary –

Scientific adviser:

Prof. Ioana Bican, PHD.

Proponent:

Emanuela (Porumb) Rețe

Cluj-Napoca

2016

Key words: *D. Popovici archive, literary, history academic courses, archive records, syllabi, lecture, didactic discourse, logical procedures, rhetorical procedures, the 1948 Education Reform, Marxism, communism, positivist historicism, impressionism.*

Abstract:

The present study is an attempt to restore the position of D. Popovici as a member of the academia of Cluj in general and in particular as a member of the Faculty of Letters. The study also proposes a reassessment from a didactic perspective of the professor's academic teaching activity. Our questions have looked for an explanation of the way in which he managed to convey to his students a new vision of literary history as discipline considered globally and especially his own perspective over the Romanian literary history. The changes which he proposed pertaining to both the methodology employed in the approach of the literary phenomenon, depending on the investigated material, and of the mode of transmission of the content recorded in the scholarly discourse of D. Popovici represent a significant step in the evolution of the teaching of this discipline at academic level. It is a fact that several generations of students from among whom emerged notable personalities of the Romanian cultural and academic postwar life have already benefitted from the results of the professor's research.

Summary:

Major concerns over time, the contemplation of the past, its restitution (due to the urge to understand it) bring together different generations around certain narratives in the process of experience and knowledge transfer from those who already lived the past to those who are about to live the future.

Nevertheless, when sometimes human memory is no longer able to testify about events too remote in time, the only solution is to resort to the memory of annals, because they can "tell" us about happenings and destinies. From archival records can be reconstructed the color (even the nuances), the spirit and the mentality of an epoch. Scientific research, especially historical and philological research is supported and greatly enriched through access to written records that capture different aspects of quotidian, literary and academic life.

There are many notable persons in the history of the University of Cluj who have contributed significantly to the development of this prestigious institution. Despite the fact that they seem to enjoy equal esteem, to some however numerous studies have been dedicated whereas others are only acknowledged by collective memory.

Literary historian, comparatist, researcher and professor – are but some of the D. Popovici's attributions which are recorded in the evocations of those who knew him.

Although some academics accept as evidence his impact on the history of the University of Cluj, mostly on the Faculty of Letters, the activity of Professor D. Popovici has not yet been restored, that is, neither on personal nor on professional level. Since D. Popovici has played a significant role in the evolution of the University of Cluj when it was only at its dawn, namely by the official decision to include literary history among the academic disciplines, our research aims to reconstruct the scientist's academic activity, whose name is most often associated with the foundation of a true school of philology within the Faculty of Letters that is still celebrated not only among the Romanian academia but also at European level.

We are also interested to reopen a potential debate around the personality of D. Popovici as literary historian especially since his "life and work" has made the object of mere sporadic, unsystematic research that have failed to result in a sensible scientific synthesis, crucial, in our opinion, in the Romanian culture.

This research was organized into five chapters, each proposing a different theme but complementary to the rest of them and different working methods.

In the first chapter we made an *Appeal to the memory of documents*, particularly to those contained in the Popovici-Petrescu fund of "O. Goga" Public Library in Cluj-Napoca.

By reconstructing the evolution of D. Popovici, his scholastic becoming, we have sought to provide the landmarks that are necessary for his positioning in the academic period between the two World Wars.

Considering the way general history impacted the life of the university, we re-created partly the historical and political context of the period during which D. Popovici worked in the University of Cluj. We opted for a chronological presentation of events, and grouped them according to the most important periods in the life of D. Popovici, and we allowed the personal and the historical dimension to intersect in the economy of the subchapters.

More than a mere inventory of events, we have intended to formulate a depository of *Reflections on a destiny*, starting with a few initial *References to childhood ... on basis of documents* in order to monitor the career which *D. Popovici had succeeded to build over time*.

Of significant importance for the understanding the process of forging his personality are the *Studies and mentors*, which influenced the course of D. Popovici's personal and professional development in a noteworthy way.

Another momentous episode is the year 1936, when, after winning a *Famous Competition*, D. Popovici was appointed professor at the University of Cluj. However, dire moments followed and the adage according to which 'man is under times' is verified once more in this case. Then *D. Popovici*

takes refuge in Sibiu where he makes extraordinary efforts to carry on the formative mission of the university.

His returning to Cluj in 1945 has a twofold significance. On the one hand, it marked the fulfillment of some of his academic's expectations, but, unfortunately, it coincided with the loss of autonomy of the university as a result of the policy of *forging the "new man"* that dominated the political scene of that period.

Despite his too early departure from life D. Popovici played a decisive role not only in the history faculty of Letters of Cluj but, more significantly perhaps, he managed to change the life of the people who, with their mentor gone, turned into his *Disciples and followers*.

The second chapter starts from the debates elicited by the necessity to establish a national literary history that precede the approach of the status of literary history as a discipline within a specific culture and beyond it. Thus, our interest has turned towards the development stage of the discipline during Popovich's formative years in Paris and the subsequent transformations as they result from the Romanian debates around the analysis methods of the literary phenomenon.

We have traced the polarization of the Romanian literary historians between positivist historicism and critical impressionism, with the overt intention to emphasize Popovici's attitude and the manner in which he approached the two extremes manifest in the Romanian literary landscape.

Beginning with the first studies published in periodicals, marked by historicism, and moving on via formalism towards the synthetic concept of structuralism combined with historicism on the basis of genetic criticism (as it results from his last academic course), the evolution of D. Popovici's critical outlook is convergent with that of the main theoretical lines of the literary history of his time. However, his critical evolution took place by accumulating within a totalitarian system the major findings and critical methods and by organizing them according to their viability and applicability in the approach of literary history.

In the third chapter, we focus on the didactic activity of D. Popovici. He then he conducted interesting debates with his students during the courses in the *History of Modern Literature*. Stored in the archive that bears his name, these printed courses shed more light on the entire scholastic endeavor of D. Popovici, which facilitates the putting together the scholar's work.

The regularity and duration of his courses, their themes, methods and judgments made pertaining to various literary trends and authors were represent equally valuable issues which we have tried to interpret in the light of the author's personality.

We consider that a chronologic overview of the discipline of Romanian literature in the Romanian universities would serve as valuable tool for the contextualization of the courses taught by

D. Popovici during the historical period in which his professorship took place. On this basis, we could bring arguments in favour of the novelty of D. Popovici's didactic activity and the contribution his courses in Modern Romanian Literature have brought to the development of this discipline. We have also reconstructed the way his courses were received by his contemporaries. For this, we have resorted to a series of comparative analyses of the courses taught by D. Caracostea (Popovici's mentor), by G. Bogdan-Duică (his predecessor at the Department in the university of Cluj, although with him Popovici had no direct contacts) and by I. Breazu (his rival in the contest for the post of professor and after 1952 his implicit successor). In an original reconstitution, postwar history, as it is recorded in the project documents of D. Popovici's courses, has made available to us the important aspect of the transformations the communist regime imposed on university teaching.

In the fourth chapter, we have tried to restore the professor's image by analyzing some of his activities, some prior to his actual teaching period (the lectures from his personal library) and others (the elaboration of literary works) that successfully complete it.

If the presence of D. Popovici in the privacy of his personal library can be inferred relatively easily from the wealth of information (yet unostentatious) that abound in its courses, the image of the writer involved in the act of elaboration of the literary work and in search of the most appropriate expression of the creative spirit appears as surprising and is one of the unique perspectives of which we are glad to be able to offer here. In this context, we turn our attention towards the links established between D. Popovici the literary historian and D. Popovici the writer in reference to topics and ways of perceiving the literary phenomenon.

In the last chapter, dedicated to his (dis)courses, we have resorted to discourse analysis procedures meant to aid us in our enterprise to identify, analyze and restore in this way those elements that make D. Popovici's lectures actual "spoken" texts with a precise destination and communicating a type of science that is "translated" and conveyed to students (both) with formative and informative purposes. Our research has taken into consideration in this chapter only the final version of the course texts, organized and preserved in their entirety, and not some unfinished fragments.

We have regarded as equally important the analysis of the whole course and the configuration of each lecture taken separately. The four university courses under analysis are: *The Literature during the period of "enlightenment"*, *Modern Romanian Literature*, *Integration in the European cultural context*, *Eminescu in critical literary studies* and *Eminescu's poetry*. We have sought to understand the way in which they are constructed: their structure and also their digressions, bibliographical references inserted in the discourse, definitions and explanations, demonstration and argumentation all of which representing ways to achieve the logical dimension in Popovici's courses.

On rhetorical level, through the didactic discourse, D. Popovici aims, on the one hand, to convey ideas, but equally important to him is his rhetoric, as an implicit model for students, which he renders through rich and rigorous argumentation enhanced by an elevated style and an agreeable language, by the fluency of speech, in one word, by the skill of expressing the truth in an attractive and convincing manner. The persuasive use of rhetorical figures and procedures (metaphor, rhetorical interrogation, repetition and irony) is based on the distinction between the proper meaning and the figurative sense of the words: when the teacher employs the art of figurative language, didactic communication becomes more efficient. In our research we wish to demonstrate that D. Popovich is the author of performant (dis)courses.

Since the title of our research is so conceived as to lay emphasis on the phenomenon of *Literary History as an academic discipline and methodological synthesis according to D. Popovici's view*, we proposed to start by identifying the scholar's conception related to this field of knowledge and the personalities and schools which influenced his training. We followed his line in addressing the literary phenomenon and his adjustments to study methods according to the material subject to analysis. And because his (dis)courses D. Popovici represent actual methodological syntheses, we have sought to demonstrate the importance of logical and rhetorical methods at work in the process of validation and authorization of the didactic speech with transforming effects on the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of student.

Each chapter necessitated the call to different studies and different research methods. It goes without saying that each chapter is open to elaboration and most certainly there are many aspects that deserve a more thorough analysis, but each could be a starting point for further research. The methods of investigation used here were aimed, first, at selecting and organizing documents by obeying the chronology of the material to be processed. Then the collection of handwritten documents (course programs and lyrical creations belonging to or by D. Popovici) have been included in the *Annexes*. The information obtained was subjected to operations of analysis and synthesis with analogy as main method. In our approach we privileged the original text of the archived courses and we made reference to the edited text (the *Literary Studies* series) only where appropriate. The critical genetic exercise was also an important method for comparing the syllabi on the period following shortly the Education Reform of 1948 that helped us to highlight the ideological transformations which he regarded as irrefutable evidence of political intrusion into the teaching of literary history during the postwar period. Although the project documents of the courses conceived by Popovici suffered from the imposed changes, the scholar from Cluj opposes change and remains consistent in his beliefs regarding the important mission of teaching students as faithfully as possible about scientific truth.

In the current context when our interest is turned again towards cultural history, for the rehabilitation of the image of certain hallmark personalities in the formation of cultural institutions,

this study attempts to reconstruct as faithfully as possible the image of the scholar D. Popovici (1902-1952), literary historian and professor with the Faculty of Letters of the University of Cluj. We have tried to understand – by contextualizing the professional activity of D. Popovici – how “a man of his time” (for he so it appears in the interwar period, keen on innovating the way literary history is perceived in the Romanian cultural environment and on reforming it as academic discipline) becomes due to the postwar upsets an intellectual who is inadequately viewed by the new political order, “a man incompatible with his time.” The present study was not an easy endeavor because although he posthumously enjoys the respect of some of our literary historians such as T. Vianu, P. Cornea, M. Zamfir, M. Anghelescu, I. Vlad etc., D. Popovici it was not accepted as a “bookshop window name” of literary history, neither recent nor contemporary. He did not enjoy the privilege of becoming the subject of monograph studies, except perhaps for the opusculum written by some citizens of the town of Slatina.

Recently entered the public domain, the private family archives have been our most important research and study sources – and it would be inappropriate to conclude without insisting here as well on how appropriate it would be to include today the Romanian private archives in the national patrimony to facilitate the recovery of a specific collective memory and a correct restitution of a (recent) history whose understanding is crucial to many areas of Romanian science and culture.

CONTENTS

List of abbreviations in D. Popovici's works	4
INTRODUCTION	6
1. D. POPOVICI. RECOURSE TO THE MEMORY OF DOCUMENTS	13
1.0. Introduction. Reflections over a destiny.	13
1.1. From documents... on childhood	17
1.2. D. Popovici forging his career. Studies and mentors	24
1.3. A famous contest. The beginning of D. Popovici's academic activity	31
1.4. Man under times. D. Popovici takes refuge in Sibiu	38
1.5. D. Popovici and the ethical duty of shaping the "new man"	51
1.6. D. Popovici along time. Disciples and followers	64
2. THE LITERARY HISTORIAN IN THE HISTORY OF ROMANIAN LITERATURE	70
2.0. Introduction	70
2.1. The European literary history in the period between the two World Wars – "a history of literary forms"	74
2.2. The history of the Romanian literature during the period between the two World Wars between "positivist historicism" and the "impresionism" of criticism	77
2.3. D. Popovici's literary outlook – "between history and literary typology"	85
2.4. Popovici about Popovici or "the portrait of the author rendered in the text"	90
2.5. Between general history and literary history – the aspect of chronologization	95
3. THE LITERARY HISTORICUL IN CLASS	100
3.0. Introduction	100
3.1. Short history of teaching Romanian literature in Romanian universities	102
3.2. Courses of Romanian Literature taught in class –Popovici's innovative approach	106
3.2.1. On the threshold of an academic career – Romanian literature during the "enlightenment" period and Modern Romanian Literature. Intergration in the Western cultural context	108
3.2.2. Eminescu in the literary history and in criticism and Eminescu's poetry – or another way of teaching the Eminescian phenomenon	116

3.3.	“Taking over the relay”: A comparative analysis of the courses taught by D. Caracostea, G. Bogdan-Duică, D. Popovici și I. Breazu	122
3.4.	Academic curricula – History reflected in Popovici’s course project documents	129
4.	THE LITERARY HISTORIAN IN REFLECTED IN HIS FICTIONAL WORK AND PRESENT IN HIS PERSONAL LIBRARY	135
4.0.	Introduction	135
4.1.	D. Popovici, a writer?	136
4.2.	The literary historian in the intimate environment of his personal library	149
5.	A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF POPOVICI’S (DIS)COURSES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DIDACTICITY	153
5.0.	Introduction	153
5.1.	Didactic communication in the academic environment	155
5.1.1.	Scientific discourse vs. didactic discourse	157
5.1.2.	Lecture as form of knowledge delivery in the academic environment	165
5.2.	The cognitive dimension of discourse – logical methods	174
5.2.1.	Definition	175
5.2.2.	Explanation	176
5.2.3.	Demonstration	179
5.2.4.	Argumentation	182
5.3.	Rhetorical methods or the emotional dimension of the didactic discourse	184
5.3.1.	Metaphore	187
5.3.2.	Repetition	189
5.3.3.	The rhetorical question	191
5.3.4.	Irony	193
	CONCLUSIONS	197
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	201
	ANNEXES	216