THREE CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN JEWISH ESSAYISTS: LEON VOLOVICI, ANDREI OIȘTEANU, ANDREI CORNEA

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Abstract: Jewish writer from Romania, Leon Volovici proves, in his books, a demand for clarification of controversial issues, as the foundations of the most stringent writing. An intellectual of great stature and scope, Leon Volovici has distinguished himself as a literary historian with a strong ethical vocation, through an approach of probity and concern for the foundations of truth. Andrei Oișteanu is one of the most reputed contemporary Romanian intellectuals, specialized in cultural anthropology, ethnic imagology and history of religions. He is a Jewish intellectual of the rare lineage of demanding and refined scholars, which Romanian culture urgently needs in order to re-examine its stereotypes and complexes. With an inexhaustible publicistic verve and an impeccable logical disposition, Andrei Cornea exposes, in the subtext or in the text of his books, crucial, defining ideas for the world we live in, for the dialogue with the past or for the continuous confrontation with a decentralized present.

Keywords: essayst, jewish, anthropology, truth, ideologies

Leon Volovici, writer, truth and ideologies

Jewish writer from Romania, Leon Volovici proves, in his books, a demand for clarification of controversial issues, as the foundations of the most stringent writing. An intellectual of great stature and scope, Leon Volovici has distinguished himself as a literary historian with a strong ethical vocation, through an approach of probity and concern for the foundations of truth. A graduate of the National High School in Iasi, he graduated from the Faculty of Philology of the "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași (1962) and Ph.D. in Philology from the same university (1975), Leon Volovici was a teacher in the village of Bivolari (Iași County), and then a scientific researcher at the "Al. Philippide" in Iași. In 1984 Leon Volovici moved to Israel as a researcher at the Yad Vashem Institute for Holocaust Studies (1984-1989). Since 1989 he has been a researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Volovici made his debut in "Iașul literar" (1964), and contributed to important journals: "Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară", "Cahiers roumaines d'etudes littéraires", "Convorbiri literare", "Cronica", "Iașul literar", "Revista Cultului Mozaic". His debut book, Apariția scriitorul în cultura românească (1976), contains applied analyses and interpretations of literary criticism and literary history, with a rigorous and clear approach. The author's emotional timbre is constantly colored by the relief of a sober, methodical, thorough writing, even in the case of sensitive topics, such as the "Jewish problem". The author's epistemological detachment from the object of study is programmatic, as is his distancing from himself, always finding a point of balance, of equidistant understanding and building a critical construction dedicated to the search for truth. A search not without its wanderings, detours, hesitations. Two essential themes have marked Leon Volovici: "the emergence of the writer" and "the Jewish problem", themes that are often controversial, difficult to clarify, even inhibiting, themes that require lucidity, a critical spirit, a passion for questioning and demonstrative rigor.

The Emergence of the Writer in Romanian Culture (1976) aims to clarify the problem of the emergence and evolution of the writer in our culture, "in the period of formation and consolidation of modern Romanian literature". The author starts from an important distinction between the emergence of the writer and the emergence of cultured literature, convergent fields, with different motivations and causes, accurately highlighted: "It is not a

question of the emergence of our cultured literature (without even considering it as such, Dosoftei is already a great poet, Ion Neculce or Antim Ivireanul - great writers), but of the formation of the idea of the poet and the idea of the writer. We begin our attempt at synthesis from the moment when the writer considers himself neither a chronicler, nor a historian, nor a commentator on religious or moral texts (he is, however, a writer in terms of artistic expression, and therefore from our point of view), but the author of works of more or less fiction, of creation. The first writers would therefore be those who compose literary works, reflecting at the same time on their act, in the knowledge that they are making 'literature' (even if they do not call it that), for their own 'enjoyment' or with moralizing and patriotic intentions". Leon Volovici observes ways, forms and paths of modernization of the Romanian culture, which lead to the autonomization of literature, delimiting the emergence of a new "intellectual and artistic category - the writer". In his demonstration, the author highlights those elements "in the literary work or in the testimonies left behind" which could reveal "an attitude, a mentality, a point of view in relation to the writer's idea of his own vocation". The importance of programmatic texts and contexts in which writers express their views on the act of writing, on the condition and role of the writer in the social-historical context is emphasized. As an expression of a "collective conscience", the writer assumes the repertoire of the professionalization of writing through his own creations with more or less subliminal programmatic reflections, or through explicit questions about his aesthetic, social, moral, etc. status, questions necessary for his optimal position in the cultural space.

The book Nationalist Ideology and the "Jewish Question" (1995) valorizes a much more sensitive theme, dealing with the relationship between writing and ideology, between intellectuals and history. It is a delicate, sensitive, controversial subject, if we think of the involvement in the sphere of nationalist ideology of some intellectuals of the "young generation" of the 1930s (Vulcănescu, Eliade, Cioran, Noica). A lucid examination of anti-Semitism in Romanian culture and society is necessary, with all the disadvantages arising from the perspective of the image of Romanian culture which, seen through the prism of anti-Semitism, can be 'unflattering'. A severe and demanding examination of this theme is necessary, in its fullness and truth, without duplicity and compromise, in the light of authenticity and moral transparency, because, as Leon Volovici writes, "the image of a culture, like that of a great personality, is the result of countless 'mirrors' and it will be all the more convincing the more complex and true it is". The Preface to the Romanian edition provides a clear definition of anti-Semitism, with clear delimitations, dissociations and characterizations in terms of ideologies, historical epochs and geographical spaces. Anti-Semitism is a "complex of prejudices and stereotypes", conspiracy myths, "ideological fantasies" and "political programs": "Anti-Semitism is not the same as racism and is not only a component of fascist and totalitarian ideologies. It is, to the same extent, even before the emergence of ideologies, a cultural code, a complex of prejudices and stereotypes that have generated, over time (as today), irrational myths of Jewish conspiracy and danger, ideological fantasies and political programs, as well as more rudimentary or more sophisticated mental clichés. They have affected European culture to varying degrees and have, at certain periods, played a part in religious, political and intellectual history, with direct consequences for Jewish history".

The significance of Leon Volovici's book is evident in at least two aspects: on the one hand, it explores a controversial social-historical phenomenon, with obvious consequences for the evolution of modern Romanian society and, on the other hand, it captures certain stages in the development of the Jewish community in Romania, with the clarification that truth expresses its essence in so far as it is integral and unconditional. Leon Volovici's approach is diachronic, revealing the roots of nationalism and anti-Semitism, but it is also distinguished by the radiography of the 1930s from the angle of two dominant and

convergent myths: the myth of the intellectual and the national myth, convergent myths, unified in an ideological network of Nietzschean origin with a strong hold on some of the young Romanian intellectuals of the time that I have already mentioned. The fervor of nationalism, the fantasies of salvation (the salvation of the nation) are dismantled and interpreted in a critical spirit, through lucid and detailed analysis. Leon Volovici's book offers an objective picture, free of emotional complexes, of a troubled era in the history of modern Romania, situated between ideological extremes, bloody confrontations, intolerance and suspicion.

It is clear that, as Volovici observes, the truth is only one, integral and unbound by contextual variables and equations. Therefore, speaking the truth about anti-Semitism in Romanian culture is necessary and inevitable, the image of Romanian society and culture must be presented in all its manifestations, objectively and firmly. Renouncing idealism and useless rhetorical ornamentations, Volovici expresses his conviction that it is necessary to sincerely examine the theme of anti-Semitism in Romanian culture in the light of truth, considering it extremely dangerous to evade, ignore or mutilate it: "In the political and cultural history of Romania, the 'Jewish problem' and anti-Semitism have also had an evolution that cannot be neglected or diminished. The theme therefore has its own importance and 'autonomy', however much it may be linked to the overall social and political picture. Avoiding research into it has a more distorting effect than the possibly questionable interpretations or conclusions of a serious study". Leon Volovich's books are expressions of ethical rigor and a vocation to truth. The revelation of controversial cultural-historical phenomena from the perspective of the obsession with revealing truth is a guarantee of the most accurate knowledge, naturally assumed, without distortions or rhetorical inflammations.

Andrei Oișteanu or about the avatars of cultural anthropology

Andrei Oișteanu is one of the most reputed contemporary Romanian intellectuals, specialized in cultural anthropology, ethnic imagology and history of religions. He is a Jewish intellectual of the rare lineage of demanding and refined scholars, which Romanian culture urgently needs in order to re-examine its stereotypes and complexes. The essential quality of Andrei Oișteanu's books is, perhaps, curiosity, "an unbridled curiosity" that "embraces all aspects of life", the curiosity of a man who "rummages in places where few of us would rummage, a man who searches for things that are "interesting" in Kierkegaard's sense, searches for things that we all feel mean something more than people expect them to mean. His most recent books, on the image of the Jew in Romanian and European culture, on narcotics in Romanian culture and on sexuality, are a culmination of this special intellectual curiosity." (Mircea Cărtărescu). Oișteanu's books are peremptory proofs of his accuracy, exigency and objectivity, from The Garden Beyond. Zoosophia. Mythological Commentaries (1980), Mythos-symbolic Motives and Meanings (1989), The Old Men's Box (1995), Mythos & Logos. Studies and Essays in Cultural Anthropology (1997), Cosmos vs. Chaos. Myth and Magic în Romanian Tradițional Culture (1999), la Imaginea evreului în cultură română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central european (2001), Ordine și Chaos. Mit și magie în cultura tradițională române (2004), Religie, politică și mit. Texts on Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu (2007), Narcotice în cultura română. History, religion and literature (2010), Sexualitate și societate. History, Religion and Literature (2016), Moravuri și năravuri. Essays on the history of mentalities (2021).

The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture (2001) is a book "urgently necessary" (Andrei Pleșu), which aims to examine, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the mechanisms, forms and instruments of the representation of the foreigner (the Jew) by the Romanian cultural mentality. All the more so as the theme of the image of the Jew has been subject to mystifications, distortions and misunderstandings. The author exposes, with the naturalness of erudition, the defining aspects of the historical, cultural and symbolic condition

of the Jew, in an imagological approach that explores the state of "clichés that make up the physical, professional, spiritual and moral portrait of the 'imaginary Jew'", emphasizing, at the same time, how "popular (unconscious and passive) anti-Semitism has influenced intellectual and political (conscious and active) anti-Semitism", knowing that the opposite of anti-Semitism is not philosophical anti-Semitism, but the very absence of anti-Semitism. Andrei Oișteanu focuses his demonstrations on the idea that there is a notable difference between the 'real Jew' and the 'imaginary Jew' fed by obsessions, mental stereotypes and prejudices. The "imaginary Jew", the author writes, is characterized by evil (cowardice, fear, filth, demonism, etc.), mental stereotypes based on "mythological beliefs, legends, superstitions, popular traditions, iconography and Christian texts (canonical and apocryphal), poorly digested knowledge, phobias and prejudices". The negative stereotypes refer to fear, satanization, solomonism, deicide, hagiocide, iconocide, infanticide, etc. As for fear, the author rightly considers that it was "acquired", not "innate", generated by centuries of terror and persecution. The book also analyzes some positive stereotypes (intelligence, education, financial ingenuity, elegance, religiosity, solidarity, etc.), pointing out that they all operate in the social mentality in a dynamic of negativity or relativization. Andrei Oișteanu's erudite arguments, applied demonstrations and subtle analyses in the sphere of ethnic imagology encourage reflection, dialogue and a calm, unprejudiced re-examination of the depths of the Romanian mind, which still contains "all sorts of waste, useless things, clichés, poorly digested information, certain fears, certain frustrations". The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture is a necessary book insofar as the analysis of some portraits, the rethinking of some "traps of history", the revision of some clichés and images articulate the relief of a symbolic geography, of an imaginary identity in which the Romanian mental is confronted with its own stereotypical articulations, with vectors of comparison, recoil, or gap, situated within a historical contextualization that is not lacking in imagological dysfunctions, anti-Semitism, xenophobia or inadequate self-esteem, because, says Andrei Oișteanu in an interview, the resources of self-imageology would also be necessary, the perception of the Romanian by himself, with "much to be said in this regard", insofar as the Romanian has about himself "a stereotypical view, which excessively emphasizes his virtues, but also his vices. " The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture exposes "the history of the symbolic interaction between Romanians and Jews" in a way that is "intelligent, superdocumented, empathetic and critical in both directions of the relationship" (Sorin Antohi).

One of the most read and quoted books by Andrei Oisteanu is Narcotics in Romanian culture. History, religion and literature. The first edition of the book, from 2010, has 500 pages, while the fourth edition, revised, added and illustrated, published in 2019, has 700 pages. Here we also find the constants of the author's style, an erudite and laid-back style, marked by naturalness, accuracy and precision of documentation, as well as the same insatiable curiosity in exploring new details. There are known cases of writers who theorized narcophilia (Aldous Huxley, for example) and noted the mutations of perception and perspective of drugs on the consciousness of the creators, given their ability to open the "doors of perception". The book is structured in two parts (Narcotics and hallucinogens in the Carpatho-Danube area. The religious and magical-ritual use of psychotropic plants and Narcotics and hallucinogens in modern Romanian culture). Mythological, historical and religious sources and testimonies are used, the phenomenon being traced in diachrony, from the use of psychotropic plants for medical, magical-ritual or artistic purposes. Narcotics, which, by definition, have the ability to alter the psycho-mental state, include benign, stimulating substances (coffee, tea, tobacco), but also others with a violent hallucinogenic character (opium, heroin, LSD). There are numerous examples of Romanian intellectuals reporting to psychotropic substances. Cantemir, Eliade, Culianu studied narcotics in relation to ritual-religious manifestations, other writers tried to stimulate their creativity by resorting

to hallucinogens (Macedonski, Ion Barbu, Tristan Tzara, Geo Bogza, Victor Brauner, Andrei Codrescu), or they committed suicide by ingesting narcotics (Alexandru Odobescu). The two Caragiales (Ion Luca and Mateiu) abuse alcohol and tobacco, the author noting the presence of narcotics in the novel Craii de Curtea-Veche (Opium, cannabis and hashish in Curtea-Veche).

In the Prose writers chapter. In the interwar period, the author emphasizes the presence of narcotics in the case of prose protagonists, corroborating sources and hermeneutic typologies in an interdisciplinary approach, by bringing together several hermeneutic resources (history of mentalities, ethnic imagology, gender studies, history of ideas, ethical perspective). The multiple interferences between literature and narcosis are illustrated with significant episodes cut from letters or diaries (Cioran, Ionesco, Geo Bogza, Gellu Naum, Victor Brauner, etc.). The titles of the subchapters are suggestive (Camil Petrescu: morphine without morphine addicts, Max Blecher: "As if I had taken opium", Sorana Gurian: "Narcoza", Ioana Postelnicu: Intoxication with ether, Henriette Yvonne Stahl: "Drugs bring a total degradation of being", Cezar Petrescu, "An hour of lying illusion", Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu: "Havana opiate"). An important case is Ion Barbu, treated as such, from the angle of biography ("Daily ether and weekly cocaine") and creation, the poem Riga Crypto and the Lappish Enigel being interpreted in a narcotic key (The king of hallucinogenic mushrooms and the shaman Enigel). Extensive exploration, from interdisciplinary and complementary perspectives of the "escapist-narcotic dimension of the autochthonous identity" (Paul Cernat), Andrei Oisteanu's book stands out for its erudition, for its original interpretative angle, constituting an exhaustive, well-documented synthesis.

In Morals and Tempers. Essays on the history of mentalities (2021), Andrei Oisteanu examines, in the spirit of objectivity, stereotypes, morals and manners. The chapters of the book are suggestive in themselves (We are what we wear. Changing Romania's clothes, About cloths, down to the white cloths, Politics and delicacies. Culinary connotations of power and corruption, The artificial body, The land of Master Manele, Cu rogojina-n cap and jalba-n proțap, The island, the sea and the river in the collective imagination, The charm of the dichotomy, Rohmani-Brahmani, History and ethnogenesis. Christians, Jews and Muslims in controversy. Public theological disputes in medieval Europe, Jews from Romania in a European context, Duel and masculine honor among Romanians, Crime of bibliocide). The "Jalbei institution", of oriental origin, is analyzed in the chapter Cu rogojina-n cap and jalba-n proțap, as in the sub-chapter The Code of Elegant Maneles we find suggestive reflections on manea/manelism/manelisti ("Turkish love song, with lyrics in quatrain and with a tender and drawn-out melody"), a musical phenomenon that during the communist dictatorship "survived more in the underground", only to experience a deplorable revival after 1990: "Today's maneles have exacerbated their part of vulgarity, starting with the simplism (infantilism) of the texts sung by the gourists and ending with the sensuality, sometimes obscene, of the erogenous movements of the belly dancers". In the Crime of Bibliocide chapter. A short historical inventory is made of the iconoclastic gestures of revolt and the intention of bibliocide, from Eminescu (Emperor and proletarian), to the avant-garde, in the spirit of manifest radicalism, to the "burning of the effigy", a magical act that causes the "symbolic elimination of the opponent", in frame of bibliocide: “In general, as far as the tort of bibliocide is concerned, the 20th century was no gentler, whether the ghosts that haunted Europe wore black, brown, green or red shirts. Reminiscent of barbaric rites - rites of exorcism and the setting fire to dogma - fanatic bibliophobes squealed and leapt around the pyres, their faces illuminated not by the contents of the books but by the flames that consumed them. When they heard the word culture, some took out the gun, others - the gasoline can". History is sometimes examined, in this book, through anecdotal episodes and details with a picturesque background (how Vladimir, the tsar of Kievan Rus' opted for

Orthodoxy, the problem of the Gagauz, I came from the Oguz tribe, a Turkic tribe from Central Asia that migrated to Europe , after the dismemberment of the Khazar Empire, a brief history of duels, etc.). Through his books, through his remarkable erudition and synthetic vocation, Andrei Oisteanu defines himself as one of the most important contemporary Romanian intellectuals, a voice of exemplary ethical and aesthetic scope.

Essay with personality: Andrei Cornea

Andrei Cornea is one of the most important contemporary essayists. With an inexhaustible publicistic verve and an impeccable logical disposition, Andrei Cornea exposes, in the subtext or in the text of his books, crucial, defining ideas for the world we live in, for the dialogue with the past or for the continuous confrontation with a decentralized present. His books (Writing and Orality in Ancient Culture, The Khazar Moor, The Miracle. Despre neverosimila făptură a libertății, Cuvintelnic fără frontiere, Penumbra, Realitatea și umbra, Povești impertinente și apocrife, Noul, o veche poveste, O istorie a neființei în filozofia greacă, Excepția etc.) are pleadings for truth, configuring the image of an essayist attracted by problematic areas, by the shortcomings of our age, through a polemical, militant, not at all austere, moderate or impersonal attitude. The writing of Andrei Cornea's books is, on the contrary, intensely personalized, taking on the color of the author's temperament, a thinker by profession, an essayist by vocation, a responsible and ardent civic fighter. The author's voice seems all the more vivid because many of the causes he defends are, one might say, hard won, if not irretrievably lost (the updating of classical studies, the revival of ethics at the expense of cultural relativism, the reassessment of the role of memory in a time of guilty amnesia, etc.).

The book Writing and Orality in Ancient Culture (Humanitas, 2006) discusses the relationship between two major concepts of Antiquity, which are found in the Phaidros dialogue, the essayist analyzing two "techniques" of writing ("anamnestic" and "hypomnestic"), correlated to cultural principles ("organicity principle" and "list principle") from the horizon of Greek and Hebrew civilization. Thus, the Greek technique expresses "the reduction of information by developing 'networks of links' within the material", while the Hebrew technique is based on "the external recording, by means of a list, of rich information", these elements being associated with secondary oppositions: social ("political mode"/"administrative mode"), linguistic ("word-thought"/"word-work"), aesthetic (sophist/"sopher") or scientific ("theourgie"/philosophy). Through textual analysis, skillful demonstrations, and excursions into etymology, geopolitics and philosophy of culture, Andrei Cornea hermeneutically re-evaluates some of the texts that lend legitimacy to his approach, such as the commentary on a fragment of Genesis, seen from the perspective of a list, an inventory of the making of the universe: "Here lies its origin, stylistically at least, the feeling of the absolute transcendence of the divine, a feeling so specific to the Old Testament: the events enumerated by a 'list' cannot, in principle, be organized in an intelligible and predictable sequence; the logic of the list is none other than the list itself which is devoid of logic. Never is a minute a record to the reality it records; always its account is summary and imperfect. In the present case, it amounts to recognizing that the omens are not to match the divine, and the imperfect shadow of the rendering now becomes merely the right to glimpse the incomprehensible, to the creature, glow of the Creator." By establishing differences and antinomies, the essayist succeeds in resurrecting "some obscured, opacified, covered meanings of banal, commonplace words and 'tools' of civilization," demonstrating the usefulness of the quality philological approach. For example, the emblematic destiny of some words with the role of cultureme is represented, condensing in their structure the dynamics of Greek thought and civilization. One such word, with a double meaning (to write and to paint) is graphein, which has had "an interesting and unsuspected consequence: a relatively humble role in the social hierarchy of the painter and painting, perhaps also because the latter seems

to be insufficiently distinguished at the notional level from the much-suspected writing". Andrei Cornea's book is thus, in its content and its composition, a plea for the role and the role of the humanities in a world of globalization, computer virtualization and relativization.

In the book A history of non-life in Greek philosophy. From Heraclitus to Damascius (Humanitas, 2010), Andrei Cornea revalorizes the theme of the penumbra, of ontic negativity, in contrast with the solarity of being, with clear, apollonian representations. A nuanced revisiting of the group of philosophers who were tempted by the reflection on non-being (Plato, Socrates, atomistic philosophers, Stoics, Plotinus), emphasizing the particularities of "meontological thinking" (from "meon", Greek for 'that which is not'), which accepts among its objects of knowledge 'that which is other than being', ambiguity and relativism, the mixture of light and shadow, in contrast to 'anti-meontological' thinking, which emphasizes the unity and density of being, separating the essential from the accidental, illusory, apparent. In other words, as the essayist puts it bluntly, "there is an essential distinction between 'talking about nothing' and 'talking about nothing'". In a first instance of the perception of non-being, "the supremacy of rational thought is excessively and exclusively affirmed, for (it), reality must bend to rational thought - and not the other way around; and if it is unable to do so, all the worse for reality", in order then, by means of a "meontological hypostatization", to arrive at the way in which one can "give body to an operational reality". Andrei Cornea considers, on the other hand, that apophatic thought is oriented towards a horizon of ontology, bracketing the representations of non-being, as is relevant to the Neoplatonist philosophers (Plotinus, Proclus, Damascius), the representation of what is "beyond Being" and "beyond thinking", in a way in which, in essence, "thinking loses itself". The nuanced distinctions between ontological, meontological and anti-meontological thinking are the foundations of conceptual models of understanding the world, paradoxically including here the problematic of non-being. Attentive to the accidents of the immediate, the limits of knowledge and the tensions of opposites, the essayist reveals the benefits of meontological thinking, which, within the framework of rationality, expresses the shadows, details, nuances, crises and diminishings of reality, refusing simplifications and rigid postures, arbitrary models and absolutist representations. Andrei Cornea's book is, as has already been said, a fascinating journey through the miraculous landscape of Greek thought, in search of the paradoxical modulations of the theme of non-being, or, in other words, in search of plurality. The methodological assumption of the problematic of non-being and of a meontological attitude is the fruit of a careful, nuanced reading of Greek philosophy, with a conquering clarity.

The Exception (Humanitas, 2021) is, right from its subtitle, an "attempt at philosophical anthropology". An excerpt from the book is revealing of the author's content, vision and intentions: "The exception that we are, in one sense, is also the rule in another sense; we live, without doubt, as 'one-day' creatures and as 'the dream of a shadow', as Pindar's verse goes, but, however rarely, we sometimes find ourselves in the role of the torch that illuminates the whole for a moment and provides it with the standard of greatness. Tiny and sordid minions "all the week" and, in fact, almost all the tiny time we have at our disposal, we nevertheless become, on some rare and marvelous "seventh day", the great squires of all the worlds". A provocative philosophical debate, Andrei Cornea's book can be seen as a sequel to the book on the miracle and the "unimaginable creature of freedom", through an interpretation of the binomial exception-rule. At the beginning, the essayist refers to the "shame of being human": "If I am never ashamed of being simply human, it means that I will consider the great transgressions or even defects constitutive of man as practically normal situations according to the law of human nature, recurring in a given historical and social context or a given political regime". Making the most of numerous references and conceptual iridescence, Andrei Cornea configures the horizon of his problematizations in a

chain of ideas that fascinate through subtle slippages and interweavings, through definitions, delimitations and adherences. The rule of rectitude, for example, is "the standard or canon with which they are compared, by which they are evaluated and measured, and which they somehow seem to strive to approximate, imitate, and resemble as best they can, as if it were the goal of their becoming".

Andrei Cornea is also a gifted prose writer. His undeniable epic talent is born from the interweaving of idealistic exercise and civic engagement (Impertinent and Apocryphal Stories, 2009, The Amazing Story of Shabbatai Messiah, 2015, The Golden Chain, 2017). Memories from the Age of Bibi. A Post-utopia (2019), a novel set almost three decades after the Orwellian 1984, is defined by a sense of immersion in the core of immediate reality, with heroes animating a post-utopian scenario. Between these characters, Winston Smith plays an unstable game between the confused present and the clearly drawn past. The relief of the past stems from the alluvium of a memory that gives the hero the quality of a witness; its ontic and intellectual dynamic examines the aura of negativity of ideas that, once translated into reality, reveal their malevolent force, or the versatility of the present that is born from the traps of a past that is difficult to understand. The essayistic filiation is also undeniable in the novels, through the circulation of ideas, the configurations of moral debates, the tight argumentation and the necessary timbre of the recourse to method, to the spirit of geometry. Andrei Cornea's books illustrate to the full the temperament of a thinker of great strength and the subtle-refined writing of a gifted essayist.

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