

From the linguistic turn to the referential turn: the metamorphosis of theory in Thomas G. Pavel's and Lubomír Doležel's criticism

ALEX GOLDIŞ

One of the most credible of the systemic alternatives to the guidelines of the French New Criticism – which, through all of its metamorphoses, has authoritatively dominated the literary studies of the last half-century – is the possible worlds theory. This theory was established in opposition to the paradoxical assortment of formalism and ideology represented by the French New Criticism. Its singularity within the context of current literary studies has a dual character: first of all, it rejects strictly formal approaches to literary interpretation by constantly pleading for the revalidation of semantic studies. However, the aspect that distinguishes it among the literary approaches that focus on the message of the texts rather than on their formal structures – quite a few, in the last decades, from New Historicism to gender studies and postcolonial studies – is its scepticism towards ideological approaches to the literary.

Starting from the foundational studies of two theorists of fictional worlds, Lubomír Doležel and Thomas G. Pavel, this paper tries to reconstruct the explicit and implicit polemic regarding the French New Criticism and the conditions for the establishment of a new discipline, fiction theory, against a cultural background dominated by adverse tendencies. This reconstruction is all the more interesting when both Doležel and Pavel, far from being *outsiders* to the methodological innovations of the second half of the last century, can be considered agents of the linguistic approaches to literature prominent in the said period. How and in what circumstances did two former promoters of structural poetics become theorists of possible worlds, dedicated to the rehabilitation of reference in literary studies? Since their intellectual evolution is similar, is it possible to invoke an experience specific to the Eastern-European scholar relocated in the Western academic space? To what extent has this experience of structuralist poetics been reapplied in defence of a theory of fiction?

THE LINGUISTIC TURN IN A TOTALITARIAN CONTEXT

Albeit indecisively, the political context of the two theorists' training favoured their option for a literary studies derived from linguistics. After the installation of socialist realism in the 50s an important faction of literary critics chose the formal investigation of literature in response to the aggressive politicization of the cultural

* This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0411.

field. For the Central and Eastern-European scholar, style and narratology studies were a means to dodge the cultural agenda of Stalinism. In Bucharest, one of the few active literary criticism circles of the first part of the seventh decade was the one supported by Tudor Vianu, a Romanian aesthetician and stylistician who gathered young researchers around him such as Thomas G. Pavel, Virgil Nemoianu, and Sorin Alexandrescu (all three left between 1970s and 1980s). Vianu's circle provided a small oasis of specialization unaffected by the principles of Marxist-Leninist literary criticism. In *Arhipelag interior* (Inner Archipelago, 1994), Nemoianu refers to structuralism as a form of circumventing dogmatism:

For me, the structuralist episode, a form of intellectual self-defence, an escape to a relatively safe zone, aligned with the series of superficial, but well-intended attempts to find a modern, rational idiom through which I could deliver my traditionally sentimental values. For me, structuralism was something definite, simple, solid, objective, unrestricted by ideologies, intricate and esoteric enough to keep intruders away (Nemoianu 1994, 353).

This passion for linguistic approaches to literature fuelled Pavel's work until the mid-1980s. The brief text (Pavel 1966)¹ of *Studii de poetică și stilistică* (Studies of Poetics and Stylistics), a statement-volume of the Romanian critics' first formalist attempts, was followed by a more profound specialization caused by the theorist's expatriation to France, in 1969, where he completed the doctoral program under the guidance of A. J. Greimas. While the level and scope of *La syntaxe narrative des tragédies de Corneille* (The Narrative Syntax of Corneille's Tragedies; Pavel 1976) and *The Poetics of Plot* (Pavel 1985) were different, the two works were the theorist's most convincing attempts at proving the linguistic model suitability for approaches to literature. The 1976 volume overtly tried to adapt Vladimir Propp's methods to Corneille's tragedies. The model of narrative structure description is borrowed here in order to identify the *hidden logic* of Corneille's plays, expressed by algebraic-like formulas. Committed to the scientific model of narratology and semiotics, the theorist pursued the objectification of intuition itself. The book also aligned with Roland Barthes's paradoxical attempts, in *Sur Racine* (On Racine, 1963) or *S/Z* (1970) to apply a strikingly innovating theoretical jargon to a number of classic writers of French literature. No wonder Pavel was criticized precisely because of the pronounced theoretical nature of the research, to the detriment of understanding its adequacy to the object. His book, more interesting for semioticians than for literary critics, "uses Corneille's theatre as a pretext for the elaboration of a new language" (Troitt 1979/1980, 186).² *The Poetics of the Plot* is more nuanced in the application of linguistic models – as a matter of fact, it was written at a time when criticism of pure and rigid structuralism had started to become increasingly vocal. The need to extend the scope of narrative analysis from folktales, short stories, and small poems to well-known Renaissance plays prompted Pavel to modify his relation both to the critical models and the theoretical tools. The departure from a rigid conception of structuralism is illustrated by the distinction between the "well-constrained structural descriptions" and the "programmatically structural descriptions". Following in the footsteps of Greimas, Todorov, Bremond, and Barthes, Pavel chooses the latter, which was "meant less to provide for a workable method and a well-constrained description than to prospect a field and to

suggest a series of problems” (Pavel 1985, 4). Although, as a structuralist, he was concerned with the creation of a “grammar” of Renaissance theatre, Pavel has to admit that “texts are too complex to account for a single grammar” (ibid, 12). This is only the first step of the theorist’s scepticism towards linguistic approaches of literature.

An evolution similar in many respects to that of Pavel can be traced in Doležel’s cultural formation, noting that the distaste in the 1960s for Marxist-Leninist approaches is compounded here by the strong tradition of the the linguistic approach to literature. In fact, it was the relation to this tradition, favourable to the perception of literature as a specific means of communication, which acted as a way to circumvent invasion by the ideological in literary studies. The sympathizers of the Prague School movement indirectly opposed any form of determinism in art or literature, like the stylistics scholars in Tudor Vianu’s school. His book *O stylu moderní české prózy. Výstavba textu* (On the Style of Modern Czech Prose Fiction. The Construction of the Text; Doležel 1960) is one of the first attempts to return to the Czech structuralist tradition, after a period of censorship. The analysis of the narrative modalities of modern Czech prose was more than a simple reassessment of modern Czech literature; it was an indirect defence of the Prague School’s poetics.

Nor does the theorist’s next book, published after his emigration to Canada in 1968, mark any significant departure from the principles of the Prague School. *Narrative Modes in Czech Literature* (Doležel 1973) analyses the work of five modern prose writers (Comenius, Čapek, Vančura, Rais, and Kundera), simultaneously targeting the wider field of clues that enable him to formulate hypotheses about literary structures of entire epochs. The methodological legacy of the Prague School is obvious in the interest in narratological aspects. Doležel understands the dichotomy between the narrator’s discourse and the characters’ as a privileged mode of accessing that deep level of the verbal structure (Doležel 1973). Like Pavel, upon the publication of his *La Syntaxe narrative des tragédies de Corneille*, Doležel was suspected of having applied the structural analysis “for its own sake rather than for that of the works under consideration” (Thompson 1974, 329). However, the methodological stance is not as pervasive as in Pavel’s research. Both of them are interested in the “deep level” of the text and both include a series of linguistic concepts in the discourse. However, while Pavel’s approach is more oriented towards theory in general and towards the invention of a new critical language (concealing, almost always, the text under consideration), Doležel tries to identify features specific to Czech prose discourse at the level of the linguistic content, whether about deictic elements, allocutions, or expressions relating to affective stylistics. This variation in the approach to the field of linguistic disciplines is owed to the intellectual environment in which the theorists grew: the Romanian context, in the interwar period, lacked a movement of systematic reflections on language in the literary studies, dominated by impressionism or by Benedetto Croce’s expressive poetics. When the methodological innovations of French structuralism pervaded Romanian literary research (after the mid-60s ideological thaw), it led to their frequently unreserved implementation – even in a distorted or incomplete manner. Instead, perhaps the scepticism towards the French structuralist discourse is indebted, in the case of Lubomír Doležel, to an autoch-

thonous mediation. The theoretical agenda of Roland Barthes, A. J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov did not seem so innovative to theorists who had already been familiarized with works by Jan Mukařovský, Roman Jakobson, and Nikolai Trubetzkoy.

In fact, without being reluctant to accept the methodological innovations of the French criticism, Doležel pleaded constantly for the reintegration of the Prague Circle in the circuit of ideas to be discussed in modern poetics. In *Occidental Poetics. Tradition and Progress* (1998), the major book of the theorist's structuralist phase, Doležel visibly tries to reintegrate the Prague criticism movement into the international circuit of literary theory. "Structural poetics is heir to a vast historical experience" (Doležel 1998, 1), the theorist observes. Therefore, we may say that Doležel defends more or less overtly a Prague School oriented poetics. Even if the volume tries to build a discourse on the traditional concerns of Occidental poetics, the structuralist bias and the retrospective reading of literary ideas filtered by it are obvious.

THE DEPARTURE FROM STRUCTURALISM

All the reviewers of Doležel's and Pavel's volumes observed, in the second part of the authors' activity, a shift of the theoretical centre of interest from semiotics and structuralism to narrative semantics and fiction theory: a spectacular evolution because, from many points of view, the two ways of approaching the literary phenomenon are both complementary and opposed. For this reason, a more careful analysis of the continuities and discontinuities in the works of the two scholars is needed: did the transition/shift from structuralist to semantic poetics represent a way of extending the existing premises or of disproving them?

In a comment on Pavel's *The Lives of the Novel* (2013), a comment which exceeds the mere review of the volume, Andrei Terian expresses belief that the theorist's activity was more than "an example of spectacular methodological reconversion", but was in fact a "real shortcut of the metamorphoses of Occidental literary criticism in the second half of the last century" (Terian 2013, 212-213). This statement, which may seem exaggerated, is nevertheless based on strong arguments. With *Poetics of the Plot*, we saw that Pavel started to doubt the capacity of the structuralist instruments "of grasping the specificity of texts", which means that he increasingly made room for semantic and referential notions in his critical system: "From a literary-grammatical point of view, literary monuments should rather be seen as the meeting place of several types of poetic regularities, from metric and stylistic ones, to narrative and semantic patterns" (Pavel 1985, 12). Compared with the author's first narratology studies, *Poetics of the Plot* is a clear attempt to restrict abstract designs in favour of the materiality of the text.

However, nothing could foretell the author's subsequent radical and systematized criticism. Pavel's literary activity in the second part of the 1980s does not illustrate only a professional reconversion (from Todorov to Genette and Barthes; many of the former structuralists disciplined their theoretical assumptions in the same period), but also an intellectual reinvention (see Spiridon 1996 and 2011). *The Spell of Language. Poststructuralism and Speculation* is the most substantial indictment of the French New Criticism written by a theorist who had been himself enthralled by its

mirage. Thus, Pavel joins the arguments proposed at the beginning of the 1980s by Pierre Nora and the contributors to *Critique* magazine, who rejected the theoretical premises of structuralism by applying reason, balance, and moral responsibility. Pavel, however, widens the reflections on the phenomenon by analysing its epistemic roots. If post-structuralism is one of the greatest shams of the 20th century (as suggested by the discourse of the reconverted theorist), it was because its premises are fatally flawed: A major feature of intellectual modernity, it is sometimes assumed, lies in philosophy's influence upon developments of the sciences. The structuralists, however, proposed to achieve modernization in the reverse manner, by subjecting speculative philosophy to the influence of one particular science: linguistics (Pavel 1989, 1).

Nonetheless, the theorist does not denounce the linguistic approaches to the literary altogether. A great many of the stylistic studies, the close reading of American New Criticism and in Russian formalism (which are completed by the Prague School) produced findings that are eluded in Pavel's criticism – or, even better, protected under the phrase “moderate structuralism”. In this volume, only the French extensions of the phenomenon, which he calls “speculative structuralism”, are at stake: “Many linguists and anthropologists noticed that the linguistic notions used by the various trends in the French structuralism had little to do with the discipline patiently developed, from 1929 on, in Prague and Copenhagen, and at Yale and MIT” (Pavel 1989, 1). The eye of this theorist who pleads for rationality and for intellectual common sense³ focuses on the terminological deviations often applied by structuralist philosophers – the so-called misuse of linguistic concepts. These branches of French structuralism that created new disciplines based on new methodologies (rather than the reverse, which had occurred in the 19th century), share three key characteristics firmly rejected by Pavel: the abuse of linguistic terms, the critique of humanism, and the critique of subjectivity and truth. *The Spell of Language* exposes most cleverly the contradictions of post-structuralist rhetoric.

Doležel's departure from the poetics of structuralism is less drastic and dramatic. In fact, the evolution of the two theorists can be described by the rhetoric of the chiasmus: Pavel, who fully supported renewal within the vision and language of structuralism, applied a more radical denunciation of its fallacies. The gap between the theoretical premises at the beginning of the theorist's career, strongly influenced by structuralist jargon, and the one of the works after the first half of the 1990s is considerable. On the other hand, the one who had dallied with the linguistic mirage, without surrendering to it, Doležel, did not feel the need for a tumultuous breakup. While in Pavel's case one can speak of an intellectual reinvention, when it comes to Doležel it is only a reform of the initial premises.

Indeed, if we were to accept Pavel's distinction between moderate structuralism and speculative structuralism, Doležel was never an adherent of the latter. In his works, the contact with the linguistic approaches to literature was always mediated by the rationalist, academic, and substantially contextualized perspective of the Prague School. Thus, his departure from it can be traced to the differentiating objections to this theoretical movement. Not even *Occidental Poetics. Tradition and Progress*, recon-

structured around the concepts submitted by the Prague theorists, can hide the delineations of a theorist increasingly concerned with semantic issues at the expense of those relating to literary forms. To this end, the subchapter on “Poetic (fictional) poetics” is symptomatic: it criticizes the little attention that Doležel’s predecessors paid to the contents of literature. “In Prague School linguistics”, notes the author of *Occidental Poetics*, “because of its Saussurian orientation, the referential relationship was abandoned; Prague semantics focused on the immanent relationship between *signifier* and *signified*” (Doležel 1998, 162). Instead, Doležel paves the way for a theory of fictionality by insisting on Leibnizian poetics, which, despite its limitations, “offered an original and wide-ranging interpretation of the relationship between literature and the world” (ibid, 56). It is easy to note that, by analysing Leibniz’s influence on Bodmer and Breitingger, Doležel tries to build in retrospect a tradition of the possible worlds concept, abandoned with the advent of Romanticism and retrieved only when “the idea of self-referentiality revealed its limits” (ibid, 56). Therefore, already concerned with referential poetics when he was writing *Occidental Poetics. Tradition and Progress*, Lubomír Doležel was trying to trace out its secret evolution in the history of ideas.

It is the theorist’s more recent views that are overtly critical of the linguistic approaches of the second half of the 20th century. In the attempt to align poststructuralist philosophy with the Prague School postulates, *Poststructuralism: A View from Charles Bridge* still cannot conceal the differences between the two movements of ideas. Doležel’s eternal adherence to the structuralist pioneers involves instead a sense of scepticism in relation to Derrida’s deconstructive model, which generalizes the model of the “poetic language”:

In a Derridean world all social communication has to be conducted in a language that is poetic. The diverse, often contradictory, purposes, aims, and truth-conditions of language transactions are reduced to the principles, goals, and truth-conditions of poetic language. How a society could function and survive with such a language is anybody’s guess (Doležel 2000, 639).

The rejection of the Derridean model is visible, however, in the theorist’s most recent volume, *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History*. Although lacking Pavel’s polemic intentionality in *The Spell of Language*, the book denounces the generalization of the linguistic model in post-structuralist critique: “The notion of language substituted and superseded such notions as world, consciousness, mind, thinking and acting” (Doležel 2010, 7). This “narratological imperialism” is the generator of what Doležel calls “the postmodern challenge”, the post-structuralist philosophers’ tendency to disprove the distinction between historical and fictional representations. While narratological analyses inevitably reach an epistemological *cul-de-sac*, unable to distinguish fictional discourse from the historical one, Doležel suggests the reassessment of these types of discourses by the concept of possible worlds. This criterion, which reintroduces the referential dimension of communication, allows the distinction between the fictional and the historical text, in accordance with a series of structural, functional norms or based on the “treatment of incompleteness”. However, the theoretical contributions of the Prague School remain a constant point of reference in Doležel’s thought, never fully abandoned.

We can easily see that, with both Doležel and Pavel, their late works are revisions of their own earlier premises and, implicitly, of the cultural premises that shaped them. Beyond their discourse specificities, the evolution of their attitude is visibly marked by the effort to overcome the immanent approach to literature, criticized for having reached an unprecedented dead end.

THE REFERENTIAL TURN

The reluctance to exclusively linguistic approaches to literature, dominating in the wake of structuralist innovations, was not only declarative, but it materialized into the theoretically daring project of possible worlds. Although Pavel and Doležel are not the only ones to have contemplated the impact of modal semantics on the literary phenomenon, they are the ones to whom we owe the attempt to set the limits and define the scope of this new discipline. *Fictional Worlds* (1986) and *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds* (1998) have become mandatory references for all those interested in the question of possible worlds in literature.

The theoretical assumptions of each work try to solve the impasse of literary studies in the age of post-structuralism (Pavel) or postmodernism (Doležel). The specificity of this new approach to literature can be guessed starting from three elements that cannot be grasped in the absence of a polemic on the linguistic paradigm:

(1) The possible worlds theory represents a way to rewire the study of literature to the philosophical discourse. If, since structuralism, the only type of philosophy deemed adequate to literary investigations has been linguistics, it is obvious that Doležel and Pavel attempt to widen the sphere of references. As put by the latter, the semantics of fiction “is a field emerging at the crossroads of literary criticism and philosophy” (Pavel 1986, 1). The critical references of the two theorists are no longer restricted to a few prophetic voices of structuralism; they extend to fields such as analytic philosophy or modal logic.

(2) The widening of the sphere of references is not equivalent to dissolution of the analysis and assessment criteria applicable to literature; on the contrary, it is a plea for accuracy. “The spirit of critical thinking and conceptual rigor” (Pavel 1986, 2) is one of the key principles of the fictionality theory formulated by Pavel and Doležel. This need for clarity, also visible in *The Spell of Language*, is invoked in a theoretical context that constantly challenges the principles of scientific epistemology. Both theorists see in the possible worlds theory a way of bypassing the artifices and conceptual ambiguities of linguistic-oriented criticism. The imperative of staking out a solid ground after half a century of deconstruction of all humanist values becomes the central drive of a systematic theory of fiction.

(3) The most complex theoretical effort of the two scholars is given by what we could call “the referential turn” – the return to the question of the representation of reality in fiction. Whether “a semantics of fiction” (Pavel) or “a theory of poiesis” (Doležel), both propose a perspective meant to restore the connections between literature and reality. Two qualities, borrowed from modal logic, are central to the notion of possible worlds: through its referential load, it enables the restoration of the connection between the text and the world, completely severed

by structuralist criticism. Yet, the concept of possible worlds, as defined by Pavel and Doležel, is fluid enough to overcome the traditional notion of mimesis, which envisaged a deterministic and unidirectional relationship from reality to fiction.

The general contributions of the two theorists to the theory of possible worlds can be approached as complementary: if in his 1986 volume Pavel tries to pave the way for a new field of literary investigation by filling it with dilemmas and questions, Doležel is the one who draws more firmly the limits of the disciplines and its prospects of evolution.

For this reason, *Fictional Worlds* preserves visible traces of the attempt to delineate the new literary discipline from the older ones. Already announcing the attitude of *The Spell of Language*, Pavel proposes a semantics of fiction by denouncing the main flaws of the linguistic approaches. Whether we are talking about mythological studies (which consider that plot syntax is everything) or the analysis of discursive techniques in general, structuralism is equivalent to a ‘moratorium on representational topics’. Leaving aside a considerable amount of text in favour of the identification of some invariants is a symptom of a semantic ‘fundamentalism’. Thus, more focused on adequacy to the literary work, the theory of possible worlds tries to make use of an increased amount of textual matter. Pavel’s central effort in *Fictional Worlds* is, however, to reduce the distance – which the French New Criticism had turned into an abyss – between real worlds and fictional worlds.

The territory of fiction is not limited, according to Pavel, only to artistic works, but to areas of reality which entered a form of epistemological marginality: “Fictional realms sometimes arise through the extinction of the belief in a mythology; in other cases, conversely, fictionalization originates in the loss of referential link between the characters and events described in a literary text and their real counterparts” (Pavel 1986, 81). The lack of context-independent barriers between fiction and reality leads to the application of concepts to the former and of specific assumptions to the latter. The concept of “global relevance” (concerning the means of evaluating a literary text), the “principle of minimal departure” (the participation of reader’s conscience to the literary work) and the one of “referential density” (“the relationship between world dimensions and text dimensions” [ibid, 101]) restore a conceptual constellation which should retrieve the world behind the text.

The main virtue of Pavel’s book, i.e. the thawing of the relationship between fiction and reality to the point where the two nearly fuse, also disguises its central risk: the creation of a theory of possible worlds which obscures the specificity of literature. Too concerned with the reconstruction of the referential dimension of texts, the theorist delays the construction of a theory of fictionality centred on literary works. With *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*, Doležel takes over more specialized questions, such as “How do fictional worlds come into existence? What are their structures and types? How do they depend on the literary text? How are they reconstructed in reading? How do they move through literary history?” (Doležel 1998, X), hint at the ambition to build a unified theory of fictionality.

Pavel established the theoretical premises of a new discipline by settling the polemic accounts with the previous linguistic approaches. Instead, Doležel is preoc-

cupied with the inner operating mechanisms of the theory of possible worlds. While narratologists were trying to explain the inner operation of texts by studying the syntax of the plot, Doležel extends the field to the entire semantic sphere of the literary work: “the categories of person, nature, force, state, event, action, interaction, mental life, and so on”, i.e. “the elementary building blocks of narrative worlds” (ibid, 113). *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds* is what I would call a sample of generative semantics, because of its attempts to explain the formation of fictional worlds from simple to complex; i.e. from One-Person Worlds to Dyadic Worlds.

The risk that the fictional worlds of the literary works might intermingle with the real fictional worlds, often visible in *Fictional Worlds*, is circumvented by Doležel’s insistence on what he calls “an intensional semantics of fictional worlds”. In addition to the retrieval of the referential dimension, a complete theory of fictionality cannot elude the analysis of texts as such, nor of their stylistic specificities: “textural regularities generate intensional structuring of fictional worlds, complementary to, and no less important than, their extensional structuring” (ibid, 139). A theory of referentiality cannot completely replace a theory of discourse, and the references to the linguistic approaches to literature will eventually surface, especially since the aesthetic function of literature is only visible at the level of this “intensional semantics”.

Despite the different accents in *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*, Doležel does not polemicize with Pavel precisely because their arguments for a theory of fiction are complementary. In his turn, Pavel praises *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds* for its efforts in providing the possible worlds theory with more flexible instruments: “The network of concepts Doležel builds recommends itself by its clarity, subtlety, and explanatory power and provides contemporary criticism with much-needed tools for the reasoned analysis of texts” (Pavel 2000).

The theoretical experience of the two scholars is, however, representative of the metamorphoses of literary studies in the last two decades of the last century. After a period during which the French New Criticism seemed to have deconstructed all the premises of humanism and of occidental rationalism, this elaboration of the fictional worlds theory represents an attempt to restore solid ground to the field of literary studies. We should not ignore, perhaps, the fact that the two restorers of the referential approaches to literature came from cultures influenced by the former Soviet states, where the ideologies of truth and of adherence to reality were required for intellectual survival. The reserve in relation to the pointlessness of fiction and the sterile games of language could originate, in the cases of Pavel and Doležel, from the rejection of the *langue de bois* frequently found in the official ideology of the states they had emigrated from.

Their intellectual transformation, underlying two important turns in the occidental cultural movement, has the same symptoms as the ones described by Galin Tihanov in a provocative study. According to him, the intellectual origins of 20th-century literary theory lie in the Eastern and Central Europe. The complex political and cultural context of Russia, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland is decisive for its physiognomy: “Exile and emigration were the extreme embodiment of heterotopia and polyglossia. Drastic historical changes had brought on traumas of dislocation, but

also and concomitantly, the productive insecurity of needing to use more than one language and live in more than one culture”, Tihanov observes (2004, 68). Perhaps more fragrantly than the authors mentioned by the theorist (Goldmann, Greimas, Todorov and Kristeva), Doležel and Pavel illustrate the case of “travelling theory”, in the sense consecrated by Edward Said: “The point of theory is (...) always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile” (1994, 264). The theory as exile was applied experimentally by the two theorists not only in their home cultures (where structuralism had served as a means of refusing the Soviet doctrine), but also in their adoptive cultures: when the linguistic model started to become a form of intellectual totalitarianism. Both felt the urge for another cultural exile: that of the possible worlds theory.

NOTES

- ¹ For a further analysis see Goldiș 2011.
- ² “The only major work on Corneille’s theater included in the Pavel’s bibliography is Octave Nadal’s *Le Sentiment de l’amour dans l’oeuvre de Pierre Corneille* and Paul Benichou’s *Les Morales du grand siècle*. The list of works is dominated by Claude Bremond, Chomsky, Greimas, Lévi-Strauss, and Todorov” (Koppisch 1980).
- ³ The emergence of the “common sense” perspective in literary studies is seen by Antoine Compagnon as a means to counterbalance the esoteric language of French poststructuralism (Compagnon 2014).

WORKS CITED

- Barthes, Roland. 1963. *Sur Racine*. Paris: Ed. du Seuil.
- Barthes, Roland. 1970. *S/Z*. Paris: Ed. du Seuil.
- Compagnon, Antoine. 2014. *Literature, Theory and Common Sense*. Translated by Carol Cosman. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Doležel, Lubomír. 1960. *O stylu moderní české prózy. Výstavba textu*. Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd.
- Doležel, Lubomír. 1973. *Narrative Modes in Czech Literature*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Doležel, Lubomír. 1998. *Occidental Poetics. Tradition and Progress*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Doležel, Lubomír. 2000. “Poststructuralism: A View from Charles Bridge.” *Poetics Today*, 21, 4, Winter, Published by Duke University Press.
- Doležel, Lubomír. 2010. *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History. The Postmodern Stage*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Goldiș, Alex. 2011. *Critica în tranșee*. Bucharest: Cartea Românească.
- Koppisch, Michael A. 1980. “Thomas G. Pavel. La syntaxe narrative des tragédies de Corneille.” *MLN*, 95, 4, French Issue, May: 1080–1081.
- Nemoianu, Virgil. 1994. *Arhipelag interior*. Timișoara: Amarcord.
- Pavel, Toma. 1966. “Desfășurare epică și lirism în ‘Balada vechii spelunci’ de Al. Philippide.” In *Studii de poetică și stilistică*. Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură.
- Pavel, Thomas G. 1976. *La syntaxe narrative des tragédies de Corneille. Recherches et propositions*. Paris: Librairie Klincksieck.
- Pavel, Thomas G. 1985. *The Poetics of the Plot. The Case of English Renaissance Drama*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Pavel, Thomas G. 1986. *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press.
- Pavel, Thomas G. 1989. *The Spell of Language. Poststructuralism and Speculation*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Pavel, Thomas G. 2000. „Lubomír Doležel. Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds.” *Comparative Literature*, 52, 3, Summer: 266–268.
- Pavel, Thomas G. 2013. *The Lives of the Novel. A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Said, Edward W. 1994. "Travelling Theory Reconsidered." In *Critical Reconstructions: The Relationship of Fiction and Life*, ed. Robert M. Polhemus and Roger B. Henkle. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Spiridon, Monica. 1996. *Apărarea și ilustrarea criticii*. Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.
- Spiridon, Monica. 2011. *Europa centrală de peste Ocean. Exil și construcție identitară*. Craiova: Fundația Scrisul Românesc.
- Terian, Andrei. 2013. *Critica de export*. Bucharest: Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române.
- Thompson, M. B. 1974. "Lubomír Doležel. Narrative Modes in Czech Literature." *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 16, 2, Summer.
- Troitt, David A. 1979/80. "Approaches to Corneille's Theatre." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 49, 2, Winter.
- Tihanov, Galin. 2004. Why Did Modern Literary Theory Originate in Central and Eastern Europe? (And Why Is It Now Dead?). *Common Knowledge*, 10, 1, Winter.

From the linguistic turn to the referential turn: the metamorphosis of theory in Thomas G. Pavel's and Lubomír Doležel's Criticism

Thomas G. Pavel. Lubomír Doležel. Linguistic turn. Structuralism. Semiotics. Referential turn. Fictional worlds. Possible worlds. Travelling theories.

This paper delineates the conditions of theoretical transformations in the works of Lubomír Doležel and Thomas G. Pavel, starting from the assumption that their cultural evolution has been similar. Not only did they share the same ideological background, common to the East and Central European countries under the Soviet regime, but their theoretical options were coloured by the same dilemmas. Originally promoters of the structuralist linguistic methods, they both embraced linguistic approaches to literature in their first books only to depart from them later in favour of the possible worlds theory. That's why a comparative focus on the stages of their evolution from the linguistic turn to the referential turn is needed. The study emphasizes both the specificities of this evolution – indebted to the autochthonous tradition of the two authors – and its paradigmatic aspect: the mobility of their theoretical reflection enacts the metamorphosis of the literary studies throughout the last half century.

S. R. 3 Alex Goldiș, Ph.D.
Center for Philological and Intercultural Research
Faculty of Letters and Arts
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
5-7 Victoriei Blvd.
550024 Sibiu
Romania
al3xgoldis@gmail.com