

GABRIEL GHERASIM

RALUCA MOLDOVAN

**A MODEL OF CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY:
THE CASE OF LEON VOLOVICI**

Gabriel Gherasim

Babeş-Bolyai University, Department of American Studies, Cluj, Romania.
Email: ggherasim@euro.ubbcluj.ro.

Raluca Moldovan

Babeş-Bolyai University, Department of American Studies, Cluj, Romania.
Email: raluca@euro.ubbcluj.ro.

Abstract: The present study is an ideography applied to the work and intellectual activity of the Romanian-born Jewish scholar Leon Volovici. A careful analysis of his writings reveals a series of essential directions – landmarks and recurrent themes of his work – that Volovici himself followed without hesitation throughout his intellectual becoming. Succinctly, the case of Leon Volovici represents a remarkable model of practicing cultural dialogue and achieving intellectual histories from several perspectives. In addition to brief introductory considerations and concluding remarks, this study focuses upon the following dimensions of his writings: i) the role of intellectual dialogue and the meaning of dialogic culture in Volovici's view; ii) the systematic presentation of the dimensions of Romanian antisemitism in the period between 1850 and 1940; iii) the presentation of the historical and sociological dimensions of the idea of writer in Romanian culture and iv) the remembrance of Volovici's identity in the context of his wanderings through distinct geographic spaces. Our conclusion is that all these dimensions are coherent with one another, making up the general image of Leon Volovici's work.

Key Words: dialogic culture, intellectuals, nationalist mythology, nationalist ideology, antisemitism, literary history, poet as intellectual, writer as intellectual, Iaşi, Warsaw, Jerusalem

Introduction

The success of any monographic sketch on Leon Volovici's work depends, strictly speaking, on the understanding of the way in which the Romanian-born Jewish writer himself lived through his writing. The fact that Volovici's destiny as a writer is closely connected to his personal life is undoubted; beyond this rather banal observation, any approach to his work is not a risk-free endeavour. One plausible explanation for this would be that, given his preferred topics, one has the possibility of analysing his work through a partisan lens. The immediate outcome of this fact would be something that Volovici himself would have unequivocally rejected, namely, the loss of objectivity in writing; for Leon Volovici, a writer's objectivity and intellectual honesty should be placed beyond any biased considerations. Consequently, a passionate approach dedicated not only to his basic topics, but also to Volovici's work as such should be excluded in principle if one wishes to keep alive both the memory and the respect for what Leon Volovici thought and wrote.

With these observations in mind, what any commentator of his work should adopt is an "objectivist" approach in the "spirit" of Leon Volovici: one should not understand "objectivism" as a mimetic relationship to his work, but rather as a perspective that should comprise both the man and his work. Since the understanding of this indestructible unity between man and work is the key to the objectivity of the analysis, one should investigate the endeavours of writer Leon Volovici. First, one should detect the prevalence of dialogic culture throughout Volovici's entire work: his preference for dialogue, i.e., for openness and objectivity, may explain the non-militant character of his work and thought; in order to comprehend the entire complexity of issues, Leon Volovici always believed that the emotional commitment to any cause and the monologue are obstacles preventing an unbiased assessment of facts and events. Moreover, the merit of dialogue – even imaginary – is that of eliminating subjective uncertainties, of enriching one's own understanding and experience, of finding new meanings and opening up new horizons. The fact that a large number of books published with Volovici's initiative and support are dialogues with various personalities on complicated issues that affected Jewish history in the 20th century is not accidental.¹

Second, one can identify a two-fold perspective of the way he approached intellectual history, starting from a succinct observation concerning his double position as an historian and man of letters. Here, one stumbles upon an interesting fact: given his intellectual openness, one can notice that, when Leon Volovici wrote about literature, he did so by resorting to history and sociology; on the other hand, when he used a historical approach, Volovici actually wrote the literature of a particular

historical phenomenon. The consequence of this fact is both a certain ambiguity and the suggestion that the richness of a topic could be found beyond a particular disciplinary approach. Therefore, one discovers both the intellectual dimension of historical facts and, respectively, the historical dimension of intellectual facts. We will illustrate this double perspective throughout the present study.

Finally, one can also speak of an important worldly dimension of Volovici's work, a dimension whose focal points are places in his life: Iași, Warsaw, Jerusalem are the "capitals" of his *Lebenswelt*. Naturally, before concluding this article, we will analyse in turn these four fundamental dimensions that make up Leon Volovici's life and work.

The culture of dialogue

In addition to the few observations concerning dialogue already mentioned in the introduction, one should emphasise that Leon Volovici's memory is closely connected to his tireless advocacy for the culture of dialogue. Before anything, he succeeded in shifting the focus from a limited understanding of cultural dialogue as entertainment, as a means of becoming acquainted with a personality and his/her work, as a means of promoting certain cultural issues of public interest, etc. towards a culture of dialogue – in which case conversation as such brought something more to the various instances of cultural dialogue, in the sense that the meetings between the protagonists of a dialogue enriched cultural products, revealed hidden complexities of cultural facts, contributed to objectivity through inter-subjectivity and represented typical examples of the critical rationality that Volovici valued so deeply. Consequently, one should observe that the dialogues initiated and coordinated by Volovici throughout his intellectual career represent a body of works in themselves, albeit a less visible one, fragmented in diverse themes and personalities and difficult to organise. We mentioned earlier a few volumes based on Volovici's passion for the culture of dialogue; but the form of dialogue that the author favoured was a more complex one, comprising – for instance – imaginary dialogues,² dialogues between cultural spaces,³ and even unconventional dialogues.⁴

In any case, for Volovici, dialogue was a complex structure with several components: first of all, one needed a stage for dialogue, i.e., a place where the show could take place: "[a show] [...] with one or more actors, with a hopeful or more sceptical audience, waiting to be won over." Then, one needed a director so that the dialogue could materialise; the large number of discussions and the diverse personalities who were involved in setting up the dialogues included in the two volumes (*Întâlniri la Ierusalim* and *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim*) required the collaboration of several directors, the most important of them being Leon Volovici, Costel Safirman and, later, Virgil Duda. As the discussions progressed, the roles

would change: the directors became actors, the actors became the audience, so that the viewers present were in a constant and unpredictable dynamics. It goes without saying that the dialogues could only take place in an ambience of civility, mutual respect, and rational exchange of opinions; thus, the atmosphere of these dialogues needed to be amicable, which did not mean that controversies were avoided.⁵ In this suggestive way, Volovici put forward a kind of “sociology of dialogue”.

In addition to these observations concerning the forms and generic structure of dialogue in Volovici's understanding, it is very important to note that he also insisted upon what he called the dialogue between modernity and tradition; specifically, two manifestations of such a dialogue are the meeting between Romanian literary modernity and what made it possible in the pre-modern tradition and the dialogic contrast between the Jewish modernity and tradition, respectively. Let us dwell upon this latter aspect, while the former will be discussed later on in this study. Volovici repeatedly emphasised the fact that the perspective regarding the confrontation between the tradition of Judaism and aspects of Jewish modernity should take the form of a dialogue, not that of a conflict. Why? Because modernity becomes paralysed when faced with the obstacles of tradition, while tradition tends to disappear as it advances towards modernity; here are a few explanations given by Volovici himself: first, it would seem that modernity was yet not mature enough, considering that it had not succeeded in absorbing tradition without conflicts; at the beginning of the 21st century, Volovici believed that a few more generations still needed to pass before this could happen, as Jewish cultural modernity seemed powerless before the religious dogmatism of Jewish tradition.⁶ Volovici also gave us an example of a possible fusion between Jewish modernity and tradition: in Romania, the theatrical performances of the Yiddish theatre were a genuine illustration of the way in which the fundamental biblical myths of Judaism were reinterpreted in a modern form.⁷ Somewhere else, in the preface to Schwefelberg's volume of memoirs, Volovici noticed that the condition for the emancipation of the Jews in modernity was linked to the possibility of assimilation or integration of middle class urban intellectual Jews in the Romanian communities to which they belonged. Although essentially problematic, the new Romanian-Jewish cultural identity seemed to be the solution to a reconciliation between modernity and tradition. Regarding this possibility, one distinguished between a radical and more moderate faction, in which the former, a nationalist-Zionist one, insisted upon minimising Romanianism and maintaining Jewish ethnic identity, while the latter, represented by Wilhelm Filderman's Union of Romanian-born Jews, supported the idea of integration and preservation of Jewish secular identity.⁸ There was also an internationalist and markedly pro-modernist multicultural, ecumenical and humanitarian faction for which the traditional Jewish religious themes represented universal values.⁹ The

distinctive understanding of the path to follow represents perhaps the most visible embodiment of the two possible directions of Jewish culture at the end of the 19th century; these were taken up by Moses Gaster and Ronetti-Roman. The former was the typical example of a pro-modernist who saw neither a principled incompatibility between modernity and religion nor an insurmountable difference regarding the possibility of assimilation; the latter was rather a supporter of tradition, being sceptical about the possibility of a union between modernity and tradition; in Ronetti-Roman's view, the price of this cohabitation would be the disappearance of traditional Jewish values and culture. Essentially, both of them were still rather traditional: even Moses Gaster himself remained a moderate modernist, in the sense that Romanian culture should sooner be absorbed by the traditional Jewish world.¹⁰

The intellectual dimensions of the history of antisemitism

Undoubtedly, Leon Volovici's most important work is *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism*;¹¹ this book employs all the intellectual abilities of its author, developing not only a simplistic historical perspective upon the connections between nationalism and antisemitism but also highlighting a very complex view on a phenomenon exceeding oversimplifications, unidimensional perspectivism and mere disciplinarity. Volovici's intentions should be placed beyond an emotivistic approach in an attempt to a rational – as much as possible unbiased – understanding of complex historical events in Romania's first half of the twentieth century. The book is paradigmatic for the most accurate way of doing intellectual history: Volovici's method, as announced, is that of i) explaining facts and events, both cultural and historical, by adopting a mainly historical and sociological pluri-perspectivist approach, and ii) analysing various forms and facets of antisemitism promoted by their respective forms of nationalistic passions.¹² Romanian nationalism eventually evolved because of various tensions and controversies about Romanian democracy in the first four decades of the twentieth century: Volovici insisted that the phenomenon of Romanian antisemitism in the era of modern nationalism should be understood in the context of problematic transitions from a vulnerable parliamentary democracy, through fascist fascinations (both timid and explicit), to extreme, violent right-wing dictatorship.¹³

The cultural mentalities, and the historical and socio-economic realities of modern Romania in the period roughly between 1850-1950 instantiated multiple versions of nationalism; from a historical standpoint, for instance, different phases of Romania's historical evolution brought about momentous nationalistic trends, passions and understandings. The starting point can be historically placed in 1848 when democratic popular revolts and nascent nationalistic endeavours led to the creation of both the myth and doctrine of Romanian nationalism; later, in 1866, the first

exacerbation and proliferation of Romanian nationalism became a visible reality when Article 7 of the Constitution established that Romanian Jews should be treated as foreigners;¹⁴ some public debates and controversies around 1877 maintained the status of this community's members as foreign citizens, underlying the force of political and common sense nationalistic stereotypes;¹⁵ then, following the political and historical events of 1918, when global internationalism at the end of the World War I was deemed possible in the context of cooperation between national states, the Constitution of 1923 granted citizenship to all Jews born in Romania and to those who had served in the Romanian army during the war.¹⁶ The years 1932-1933, marking the emergence of Nazi power in Germany and the overall exacerbation of fascist movements in Europe, were paralleled in Romania by the outburst of diverse ideological orientations adhering to right-wing politics: the reviews *Axa* and *Gândirea*, autochtonism, orthodoxism, and the pro-legionary intellectual attitudes of the "young generation".¹⁷ Volovici finished the diagnosis of Romanian nationalistic facets by mentioning the climax of both irrational and mystic nationalism in Romania and the propagandistic antisemitism of 1937-1938, resulting in national right-wing dictatorship and, respectively, neo-antisemitism.¹⁸

According to Volovici, everything started with what could be called national awareness; beginning with the second half of the 19th century, the awareness of national belonging gave birth both to an ethnicist perspective on nationalism and to the myth of national identity.¹⁹ Consequently, the issue of nationalism beyond the formulas of political propaganda and ideals cannot be well understood in the absence of discussing its intellectual dimension. For Leon Volovici, the intellectual history of nationalism should be explained in terms of a national mythology, on the one hand and nationalist ideology, on the other. Once on the territory of nationalist myth, one should assume from the start that rational thinking is abolished by what Volovici called "thinking by commitment"; this type of commitment meant renouncing critical thinking and abandoning one's rational position in order to adopt a different criterion of truth (i.e., vital truth versus rational truth). On the other hand, this new type of commitment defended these "vital truths" through "evasion, mystification and smooth readjustment to the new shape of the national myth".²⁰ It goes without saying that the nationalist myth could not have been so seductively formulated without the intellectuals' explicit contribution; a number of positive characteristics of the nationalist myth can be observed in the rhetoric of romantic literature that generated, for instance, the emergence of the idea of national poet and national bard,²¹ the idea of intellectual missionarism and of an intellectual serving his nation, and the issue of national awakening and national rebirth. Naturally, instead of rational argument and critical thinking, in the late phase of the development of national myth rhetoric,

one could observe the use of concepts such as “experience”, “adventure”, “orthodoxism”, “authenticity”, “living”.²² National mystique, or the mysticism of national identity, occupied a special place in the context of nationalist myth. The nationalist mystique of the later period, understood as a national crisis or metaphysical despair, was a call to mystical revolution, spiritual revolt, national messianism, fanaticism.²³ Thus, the mystical element of nationalism became the ultimate fulfilment of nationalist myth.

But the nationalist myth should be carefully separated from nationalist ideology understood not necessarily only in the sense of a political agenda formulated with the purpose of organising and running the national state, but also in the sense of the intellectual foundations that make it up as an ideology. The nationalist idea comprised both elements of moderate nationalism justifiable in the general historical context between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (i.e., homeland, people, nation, democratic nationalism) and some others that led to the gradual exacerbation of the nationalist idea, beyond the limits of any rational justification. The first among the factors that brought about the radicalisation of the nationalist idea was exclusivist Romanianism in relation to which one tried to justify the idea that the Jews were both external and internal foreigners;²⁴ a second element was built around the idea of national specificity, including here considerations on Romanian language, organic nationalism and patriarchal structures defining the traditional understanding of Romanian nationality.²⁵ The element of national specificity was exploited beyond reasonably accepted limits: commenting on a conference given by Mihail Sebastian, Leon Volovici tried to discover the aims of the intellectual debate concerning this issue: thus, the conflict between the traditionalist metaphysicians who adhered to the values of autochthonous peasantry and orthodoxism and the modernist and Europeanist literary critics who supported intellectualism, criticism, rationalism can be observed in the first half of the 20th century in various articles published in magazines such as *Duh și slovă* and *Kalende*, respectively. The limitations of national specificity could be discerned by analysing the elements separating the two sides whose spiritual fathers were Nicolae Iorga and Eugen Lovinescu, respectively; their respective mentors at the time were Nae Ionescu and Camil Petrescu.²⁶ The third factor was ethnicism that emphasised the ethnic features defining the Romanian people, as well as the rural component to the detriment of intellectual proletariat including not only pedagogues, lawyers or students, but also the ideological wing of progressive Judaism.²⁷ A fourth element of national ideology was orthodoxism, used to justify what Volovici called the Orthodox ethnic state based both on an ethic-spiritualist dimension (its mentor being Nichifor Crainic) and a logic provided by philosopher Nae Ionescu.²⁸ Revolutionary nationalism played a crucially important part in the radicalisation of nationalist ideology; this

was defined by patriarchalism, traditionalism, ruralism and xenophobia and was based on the belief that the nationalist state and democracy could not coexist.²⁹ A sixth component of radical nationalist ideology that had only a minor following was *poporanism* (i.e., the ideology of politician Constantin Stere), founded on the idea that the Romanian people had a strong archaic nature that admitted no social infestations or adjustments.³⁰ Essentially, all these elements of radical nationalist ideology were more or less visibly centred upon a dogmatics of antisemitism; there are some classic authors in the tradition of antisemitic ideological nationalism: the poets Vasile Alecsandri and Mihai Eminescu, lawyer Simion Bărnuțiu, economist Ion Ghica, philosopher Vasile Conta, historian Nicolae Iorga, encyclopaedist B.-P. Hașdeu,³¹ this constellation of Romanian intellectuals fuelled over time a xenophobic, radical and exclusivist nationalist mentality.

The directions in which nationalist ideology evolved represented different views on the possibilities of turning the nationalist idea into political practice: the initial structure of organic nationalism (founded upon the ideas of ruralism, traditionalism, national specificity *stricto sensu* and Romanianism),³² spawned later developments in the form of new nationalism (whose focal point was the spiritual doctrine of orthodoxism),³³ radical nationalism (the Legionary state built up on the idea of revolution, the cult of elites and the new man, salvation and regeneration, biblical mythology),³⁴ and ethnocratic nationalism (founded, according to Nichifor Crainic, on “soil, blood, soul and belief”).³⁵

As the very title of his work shows, Leon Volovici discussed the issue of nationalism in order to illustrate the way in which the passions and arguments of this orientation in Romania’s modern history gave birth to various antisemitic attitudes. Throughout his work, Volovici tried to distance himself emotionally from the events recounted, so that he could analyse in earnest all the so-called “arguments” belonging to antisemitic rhetoric; following in his footsteps, we will now attempt to systematically approach these “arguments” in the chronological order in which they emerged. The *economic arguments* were rooted in a series of diffuse prejudices against the Jew seen primarily as profiteer and exploiter; Mihai Eminescu was among the supporters of such arguments by stating that the Jews opposed socio-economic progress because of their consumerist orientations and lack of productivity. And, since such arguments could well make allowance for their negation too, the idea that the Jews were actually the supporters of economic progress to the detriment of rural civilisation started circulating in the second half of the 19th century; according to this latter argument, the Jews were supposed to have contributed decisively to the destruction of peasantry or to the disappearance of landowners.³⁶

The antisemitic *cultural arguments* were either derived from economic ones or represented generalisations of the Jews’ personality traits based

on their economic behaviour: for instance, prominent antisemitic theorists put forward the idea that Jewish culture was marked not only by economic but also by moral decline, using the Jewish inclination towards ownership as a starting point for a speculative argumentation according to which the aim of the Jews was cultural domination in a broader sense.³⁷ The use of cultural arguments was probably the most readily available means to discredit Jews according to the interests of whoever was voicing those arguments; very many antisemites spread the idea of a crisis of the European spirit because of its Judaisation through Marxism, communism, class struggle, humanism, internationalism or cultural avantgardes.³⁸ Considering the sheer scale of this danger, one could even speak - not only in Romania - about a justified "antisemitism of reason"; this was all the more so given that Jewish mysticism was supposed to have been the true enemy of European rationalism embodied in the so-called controversy between Spinozism and Cartesianism.³⁹ Thus, Romanian culture in particular would have been infested by the Judaisation of literature: the promoters of this antisemitic campaign, Nicolae Roșu and Nicolae Davidescu, argued in favour of the insurmountable opposition between the Jewish spirit and traditional national literature.⁴⁰ As a consequence of this considerable antisemitic propaganda, the national press of the 1930s published many articles on antisemitic rhetoric, as well as slanderous drawings and cartoons.⁴¹

The antisemitic *sociological argumentation* started from the premise that Jews were alien to the religious customs, traditions and even language of Romanian national communities;⁴² in our view, one can derive on such basis two more restricted types of arguments: a more radical one that used ethnicity to argue in favour of antisemitism, and a more moderate one revolving around class issues, namely emphasising the damaging effect that the Jewish middle class had on the overall development of Romanian society. The ethnicist antisemitic argumentation can be found in the racist theory (its Romanian mentor was sociologist Traian Brăileanu) that advocated racial purity or in the political propaganda in favour of ethnocracy (peasantry, Christian nationalism, corporative state).⁴³ The class argument stemmed from the premise of a Jewish ethnic threat that affected both peasants and the urban intellectual middle class; according to their social background, the most dangerous Jews were, in order, the rabbi, the banker and, finally, the journalist. The existence of this strong middle-class modernist Jewish core was a genuine danger affecting social harmony.⁴⁴

As far as the *political arguments* were concerned, the opposition between Romanian nationalism and the Jewish question took the form of a political antagonism between cosmopolitan democracy and corporate state ideology. A whole range of antisemitic intellectuals and politicians, including Gheorghe Brătianu, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Nicolae Iorga or the patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Miron Cristea, publicly

pleaded for the expulsion of Jews to Palestine and the creation of the Romanian ethnocratic and corporatist state; this unrelenting propaganda eventually led to the formulation of the theory of integral corporatism by university professor Mihai Manoilescu; this theory advocated the suppression of liberal democracy and the Jewish democratic press.⁴⁵ In time, a series of explicitly antisemitic organisations emerged: the “Universal Anti-Israelite Alliance” (1886), “Antisemitic Alliance” and “Universal Antisemitic League” (1895), “Democratic Nationalist Party” (1910), “National Awareness Guard” (1919), “Christian National Defence League” (LANC) (1923), “National Christian Party” (1935). Prominent figures such as N. Iorga, A. C. Cuza, N. Paulescu or O. Goga were among the main promoters of these political organisations; moreover, the first International Antisemitic Congress took place in Bucharest on August 26, 1886.⁴⁶

The *religious arguments* of Romanian antisemitism revolved around the theological position of certain intellectuals who called for the de-Judaisation of Jesus and biblical teachings in a highly speculative manner; some of them even condemned the Orthodox Church for not having rejected the doctrines of the Old Testament, while others considered that the Talmudic spirit brought about both Jewish rationalism and entrepreneurship. To conclude, all these intellectuals, by resorting to metaphysical and theological arguments, tried to discredit Jewish religion and (some of them) even to promote the idea of a Romanian orthodox ethnic state.⁴⁷

Nicolae Paulescu marked the transition between religious antisemitic arguments towards *scientific antisemitic arguments*; he was interested in the religious side of antisemitism while at the same time formulating arguments taken from the fields of medicine or psychopathology. Vasile Conta, perhaps the most important Romanian philosopher of the 19th century, also tried to provide a scientific foundation for antisemitism; if we were to add here A. C. Cuza’s attempt to formulate a science of antisemitism, we should not be surprised by the fact that the 1930s witnessed the development of a strand of antisemitism inspired by Nazi scientific terminology, which seems to have had a decisive influence on the Romanian journalist Nicolae Roşu.⁴⁸

We have discussed throughout the present section Leon Volovici’s intellectual perspective on antisemitic nationalist views between the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. The conclusion of the present study will put forward additional considerations concerning this attempt to systematically organise the body of Volovici’s most important work, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism*.

The historical dimensions of the idea of writer

If the previous section discussed the way in which Leon Volovici put forward the intellectual anatomy of an historical phenomenon, now we will speak about another dimension which the Romanian-born Jewish writer explored because, until the end of his life, Volovici remained committed to his profession of faith – literary historian. Consequently, the present section will analyse the historical consideration of the intellectual in Romanian culture and the relationships between intellectuals and the facts/events of their time.

The most difficult thing to clarify here is Volovici's conception on what an intellectual is; when discussing the issue of how the Romanian intelligentsia became polarised during the inter-war period with regard to the understanding of concepts such as ethnicity, Romanianism, liberalism, democracy or rationalism, Volovici put forward a somewhat problematic distinction between intellectuals who supported ideological extremism (xenophobic fanatics and speculative rhetoricians) and doctrinaire intellectuals of nationalism, who promoted a so-called rational foundation of antisemitism.⁴⁹ One should note the fact that, more often than not, the two categories of intellectuals tended to become indistinguishable, because the limits of rationality were being much too easily transgressed. Curiously enough, this distinction could be supplemented with an even more problematic one that Volovici seems to have suggested: one the one hand, we have historians, writers and poets who promoted and militated in favour of the nationalist idea and, on the other, intellectuals – namely, what the nationalist ideology produced by resorting to the cult of historians, writers and poets.⁵⁰ Following this suggestion, one could examine a distinction between propagandistic nationalist and intellectualist nationalism.

We observe, at least from the above considerations, Volovici's profound understanding of the notion of intellectual. Before analysing the conditions that a poet or a writer needs to meet in order to be acknowledged as an intellectual according to Volovici, we would like to draw attention to the fundamental premise expressed by the Romanian-born Jewish writer (which is tantamount to a definition) regarding the *sine qua non* link between being an intellectual and being aware of one's calling as an intellectual. But it would be perhaps more accurate to conceive Volovici's approach on the meanings of the intellectual in relation to the possibility of identifying him by formulating a sort of a "table of categories". This goal appears necessary if we are to consider Volovici's intellectual view on what being a writer means. In the preface of one of his books (which is based on his doctoral dissertation), Volovici differentiated between *one's existence as a writer* (i.e., having a mentality, being aware of a calling, having a certain social and professional status, living in a milieu of

myths and stereotypes) and the intellectual consideration of *the idea of writer* (i.e., which also implies, beyond elements of literary history referring to a writer's life and work, a sociological perspective or a post-factum approach on the meanings of a particular writer's work).⁵¹ Volovici's effort to sketch an intellectual's profile is evident in his numerous articles and studies: in a short study on I. P. Culianu, Volovici wished to preserve his memory as the prototype of an intellectual committed exclusively to truth;⁵² on other occasions, Volovici seemed to put the amorality of professionals in opposition to unselfish moral and aesthetic criteria;⁵³ the intellectual was also the one who shaped public consciousness or at least someone who was bothered by political failures;⁵⁴ in a public conference held at Goethe Institute in Bucharest, Leon Volovici concluded his intervention by saying that the intellectual was the one who put forward a lucid and informed critical reflection.⁵⁵ In a recent 2008 interview, Volovici stated that the intellectual represented an individuality distinct from collective mentalities, stereotypes and prejudices, who wanted to know and understand, who was honest, non-duplicitous and non-idolatrours, who accepted open dialogue.⁵⁶ Those who knew Volovici or simply wrote about him also spoke about his wisdom (including here his balance, tranquillity and elegance)⁵⁷ or even about the "Leon Volovici spirit", in the sense that the recently departed intellectual was a spiritual role model.⁵⁸ Thus, the intellectual's conscience is made up of all these elements.

But, in order to see some examples of intellectuals in the proper sense, let us first examine the way in which Volovici conceived the relationship between poet and intellectual or, better said, the ways in which the poet became an intellectual. The genesis of the idea of poet (which, in Romanian literature, starts with Miron Costin) should be understood in connection to a poet's strong points: imagination and meditation, preoccupation for the art of reading verse, teaching this art, vision;⁵⁹ the poet, making use of these qualities, rises above the amateurism of an occasional writer of verse, but is not yet – in Volovici's opinion – an intellectual. The poet as intellectual is born as a result of the preoccupation for theory, for aestheticism, being aware of his belonging to a cultural space to which he relates more or less unselfishly. The poet as intellectual marks the transition from a solitary love minstrel towards the idea of national bard, when he becomes solidary with the destiny of his fellow citizens.⁶⁰

As far as the relationship between writer and intellectual is concerned, this issue should be analysed from a double perspective: on the one hand, the intellectual writer emerged on the basis of the 1848 ideology, while on the other, he should have been considered as a professional, something that included his status derived from his rapports with his fellow citizens or, in other words, the sociological dimension of an intellectual writer. Let us take these two perspectives in turn: the

intellectual writer was the product of 1848 ideology according to which the writer was entitled to absolute freedom, had a privileged social standing, manifested political messianism, had a grandiose vision and an exaggerated figure, was a visionary and suffered from mystifying narcissism; his writing was ethically grave, moralising, reformist, patriotic and encouraged the progress of consciousness. The writer became a pedagogue of the nation, his writing was emancipating and had an ethical mission (i.e., was committed to a noble cause). He was also committed to civic causes, a propagandist, a responsible citizen, a man of action.⁶¹ The sociological dimension of the idea of writer emerged concomitantly with the acknowledgment of copyright, with the appearance of the professional writer, of journals, libraries and bookshops, censorship, literary societies, and the existence of a literary life within society at large.⁶² From a sociological point of view, the emergence of the writer as intellectual implied all these directions; but perhaps the distinction between writer and intellectual is most clearly visible in the preface written by Volovici to Mihail Sebastian's journal: thus, the distance that separates the writer Mihail Sebastian from the intellectual Mihail Sebastian is expressed in the three-fold dimension of his journal. As a private diary or a journal of creation, Sebastian's work is nothing more than a writer's journal; Mihail Sebastian becomes an intellectual writer only when this work becomes a political and intellectual journal.⁶³

Volovici's statement, "Sebastian's journal is, for the most part, a writer's journal, but not a literary journal too, belonging to the category of those journals written with one's future readers in mind [...]",⁶⁴ should be further discussed. This is the point where we encounter another one of Volovici's distinctions, that between philologist and man of letters: being a philologist, in Volovici's understanding, means being a researcher in the classical sense of the term, i.e., strictly in the field of literature. A man of letters refuses strict disciplinarity in order to approach cultural, historical and sociological themes outside the limited field of literature.⁶⁵ This is probably the reason why Volovici aspired to be a literary historian as early as his student years.

The case of intellectual Leon Volovici should be then discussed from the perspective of the relationship between an intellectual's calling and his identity; this connection is all the more problematic taking into account the difficulty of being at the same time an intellectual of a certain nationality and a Jewish intellectual. What we are interested in here are the dilemmas brought about by this double belonging to both Romanian and Jewish identity. In one of his articles, Volovici noted that most intellectuals chose a radical path, either by belonging to Romanian identity or – at the opposite end – by belonging to Jewish identity. According to him, both such radical attitudes failed precisely because ethnic and ideological commitment annihilated the ethic and aesthetic criteria which represented an intellectual's genuine instruments.

Consequently, such radical choices on the part of intellectuals were doomed to failure. Paradoxically, although more vulnerable, the intellectuals who chose the middle ground of integration succeeded in overcoming any inherent ambiguities due to the inner struggle between the two extremes.⁶⁶ Why the middle ground? Because, in a certain sense, the inner tensions made them stronger and renewed,⁶⁷ while a “double life”, albeit not free from uncertainties and difficulties, is more rewarding than a mere radical choice.⁶⁸ As should be expected, Leon Volovici analysed the examples of several Romanian-born Jewish intellectuals caught between the temptation of “legitimate alterity” and a purist radical solution.⁶⁹ The dilemmas of the Jewish intellectual faced with the refusal of others to acknowledge his double identity are extremely thought-provoking: if he answers back, he will be lost; if he does not, he will ask himself why: out of cowardice, or out of moral superiority?⁷⁰

Finally, the intellectual’s behaviour is more often than not judged according to his attitude towards politics. If Volovici’s main work, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism*, avoids labelling in any way the various antisemitic intellectual positions, the Romanian-born Jewish writer set forth the coordinates of the “normal” intellectual position in relationship to politics in some of his other writings. First, before 1989, the scandalous cases of intellectuals who became subordinated to politics were those of moral perversion or of wholly or partially willing servility.⁷¹ After the fall of communism, one could note other compromising attitudes for an intellectual, such as the refusal of memory or intentional duplicity.⁷² Faced with such dishonourable compromises, the moral integrity and the refusal to collaborate represent almost heroic, unlikely attitudes;⁷³ such attitudes should not be understood in radical terms – they are merely normal reactions. In Volovici’s view, radicalism meant something totally different: for instance, the secularisation of the Jews is an example of radical renouncing a strong identity, which is why the temptation to choose an equally strong ideology to replace the former is significant.⁷⁴

We would like to conclude the present section by discussing what could be called Volovici’s political lucidity; a series of articles published by him in various magazines bear witness about his solid choice in favour of political rationality, balance, negotiation and dialogue. Here are only three examples proving Volovici’s interest for Middle Eastern issues: on the one hand, he noted a dispute between the rationality of Israeli politics under Ariel Sharon and the irrationality or fanaticism of the Palestinian terrorist faction Hamas;⁷⁵ in a different article, Volovici wrote that rational logic would be forever outraged by what was happening in the Middle East: the multitude of particular forces and interests meant that the solution of rational compromise seem virtually impossible.⁷⁶ Finally, the lucid intellectual Leon Volovici rightfully observed that international policies against terrorism fuelled a generalised suspicion, increased security

spending, in attempt to achieve “normality under abnormal circumstances”.⁷⁷

Places: Iași, Warsaw, Jerusalem,...

“[...] I know only three planets – one whose centre is Iași, another – the one where Hania came from, whose centre is Warsaw, and a third, the most mysterious one, whose centre is Jerusalem. As you can see, I wander from one planet to another [...]”.⁷⁸ This quote seems to evoke at the same time static (centres) and essentially dynamic dimensions. The latter is all the more interesting considering that, beyond mere freedom of movement, it implies concepts such as exile, uprootedness, unknown, neurosis, inadaptation, etc. Undoubtedly, the centre of Volovici’s soul is Iași, a city in relation to which any other geographic position represents uprootedness. For Volovici, Warsaw seems to represent the alternative space of a diseased political order, while Jerusalem is the condition of exile that is accompanied by inadaptation, neurosis and nostalgia. Nevertheless, both Warsaw and Jerusalem represent conditions for the possibility of the objectivity of otherness in relation to Iași.⁷⁹

Let us “establish” then the three centres of Volovici’s universe. We will start with Iași, the city of his father’s blacksmith shop, of his mother’s devoted memory and of his older brother who emigrated long before him. Later on, as Volovici told us, Iași became the intersection of two Romanias: a liberal, cultural and dialogic one and another, “dark, nationalist, antisemitic”.⁸⁰ Undoubtedly, Volovici’s reference to the Iași of latter Romania is linked to the 1941 pogrom. Iași also meant a “double nostalgia”: the positive nostalgia of the Jewish shtetl and all its elements, on the one hand,⁸¹ and on the other, the negative nostalgia triggered by Holocaust trauma, generalised suspicion and the tragic degradation of everyday life.⁸²

The other fixed point of Volovici’s universe – albeit a transitory one – was Warsaw, the place where he met his wife, Hania, the place where freedom of expression represented a shock compared to his experience in Iași, the place where he encountered Polish dissidence and people whose dignity or zest for life marked him profoundly.⁸³

Eventually, Volovici “became stuck” in Jerusalem, the place of his difficult adaptation, of a new and uncomfortable language experience, the place where he worked for the rest of his life, first at Yad Vashem Institute and then at the Hebrew University. It was still there that Volovici succeeded in creating a spiritual bridge with Romania, a country to which he always remained attached, by creating the Jerusalem Cultural Centre where he invited many Romanian personalities for dialogues about alternative spaces and experiences, amnesias, provincialisms and cultural and spatial peripheries.⁸⁴ However, Jerusalem meant more for him than any other geographic space: its triple mythology (Jewish, Christian and

Muslim) or its symbolic location by contrast in relation to Rome or Athens bestowed upon this place a metaphysical and, respectively, an intellectual dimension.⁸⁵ Jerusalem was also the place where, despite all hardship, Leon Volovici lived until the end of his life. It was here that he probably found peace: “One is less frightened of a grave if one knows that the ground is warm. If I was not meant to live here, I would like to die here.”⁸⁶ And it was in Jerusalem that he died, as he had wished to.

In lieu of conclusions

We would like to conclude the present study by providing an overall assessment of Leon Volovici’s perspectives. The culture of dialogue is probably the one that the Iași-born intellectual (we believe this is a title that he would have liked) most often cultivated; the experience of conversations, among which the dialogues with members of contemporary Romanian intelligentsia are notable, certainly enriched him spiritually, opened up new horizons of the mind and represented the means by which objectivity (i.e., resulting from inter-subjectivity) could be put to good use in the least problematic way possible, as Leon Volovici always sought objectivity in knowledge, balance and rationality to the detriment of passion and affective commitment. Dialogue was probably the key to knowing himself, the modality that enabled him to gain access to the historical reality of a 20th century filled with tensions, uncertainties, mysteries, paradoxes and perplexities. Dialogue also represented a form of healing traumas and neuroses, a means of understanding a collective experience, a way of capturing parallel destinies. Ultimately, for Volovici, dialogue meant the experience of a lifetime.

The next two perspectives meet each other so often that they seem to become indistinguishable one from the other. The historian Volovici is not an historian in the traditional sense of this profession; he is both an historian and an intellectual. Paraphrasing Hegel, his histories are not event histories proper (in the positive understanding of historical science), but “reflected histories”. Conversely, the intellectual Volovici is not a speculative intellectual: his “play upon ideas” is not one driven by intellectual traditions; rather, it is one illuminated by historical, cultural or sociological elements. Volovici’s assumption is that one cannot objectively write about the anatomy of an idea without thoroughly researching its history, without discovering its cultural sources and resources or without situating it spatially, temporally and socially.

Finally, the places that marked his destiny are probably Leon Volovici’s genuine intellectual and historical experiences. His wandering among them made him more mature, strengthening his belief that complexity is not just a characteristic of the world of ideas, but is to be found in unique experiences that depend on where one encounters them.

Paraphrasing the writer, the present study attempted “to slowly populate” Leon Volovici’s universe “with faces and images that are known and dear”.

Notes:

¹ Certainly, one can identify as books of dialogue three of the books where Volovici’s contribution is important: chronologically, the volumes organized and transcribed by Costel Safirman and Leon Volovici, *Întâlniri la Ierusalim* (București: Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, 2001), and *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim* (București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2007) or his autobiography, *De la Iași la Ierusalim și înapoi* (București: Ideea Europeană, 2007) which is based on a dialogue with Sandu Frunză. In addition, one can also speak of a culture of dialogue in the case of Leon Volovici, for instance due, on the one hand, to a prolific conversation with writer Norman Manea, included by the latter in a volume entitled *Sertarele exilului. Dialog cu Leon Volovici* (Iași: Polirom, 2008); on the other hand, Leon Volovici initiated a series of imaginary dialogues, from a distance, with literary and historical figures materialised in a series of prefaces to their books or in edited volumes of their works. Here are a few examples: Leon Volovici edited, prefaced and annotated Arnold Schwefelberg’s volume, *Amintirile unui intelectual evreu din România* (București: Hasefer, 2000); he also prefaced and edited Eugen Relgis’s book, *Eseuri despre iudaism. Mărturii de ieri și de azi* (București: Hasefer, 2011). Volovici signed the preface and the notes of Mihail Sebastian’s *Jurnal, 1935-1944*, and also edited (together with Remus Zăstroiu) Benjamin Fundoianu’s book, *Iudaism și elenism* (București: Hasefer, 1999). All these are telling examples of Volovici’s focus on the culture of dialogue.

² A series of articles written by Volovici for various magazines or collective volumes are both impressive and illustrative for the way in which he cultivated the imaginary dialogue: we would like to mention just one of them by giving a short quote exemplifying its literary force. It comes from an article entitled “Însemnările unui călător străin”, published in 1972 in a Polish magazine: as a conclusion to his dialogic meeting with a very vivacious Polish man, Volovici wrote: “[...] Kowalski [...] died on New Year’s night in Krakow while visiting his nephew. He presided over everyone gathered there, inexhaustible and sparkling. As the morning approached, he excused himself – he probably made a joke about being tired – and went to rest for a bit in the next room – life’s next room. I am certain he softly laughed once more before he died.” (in *De la Iași...*, 177-178). All translations from Romanian were done by the authors of the present study.

³ Volovici often considered the dialogue between cultural spaces as a dialogue between two historical, ideational, cultural, etc. worlds (see, for instance, Volovici’s introduction to the dialogue with the Romanian publicist Radu Cosașu on June 17, 1993, included in the volume *Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 41-42). Somewhere else, Volovici wrote that the culture of dialogue was nevertheless different in different spaces: for instance, the issue of antisemitism – more in Poland than in Romania – was significantly more complex and took the form of a dialogue between Judaism and Christianity; this dialogue had two forms: the intellectual dialogue and the theological one. (Leon Volovici, “Evreii în România post-

Ceaușescu: între centralitate și fobie” (Conference held at the Goethe Institute, Bucharest, December 9-11, 2002)).

⁴ The form of “dialogue” that Volovici carried out through letters with the well-known Romanian-born Jewish writer Norman Manea is extremely interesting; this dialogue is the basis of the volume *Sertarele exilului*. This dialogue initially started with an exchange of letters: in 1982, Volovici came from Iași to Bucharest, handed a question to Norman Manea and, when he returned to Bucharest again, received the answer to the first question and handed him another; this practice represents the core of Norman Manea’s book for which Volovici’s questions are the starting point. After Manea’s exile in America, the so-called “drawer dialogue” between the two was completed with two face-to-face meetings, in 1999 and 2007. (Ovidiu Șimonca, “Eu vreau să cunosc și vreau să înțeleg. Interviu cu Leon Volovici”, in *Observator Cultural*, no. 423, May 15, 2008). Referring to this type of dialogue, the writer Virgil Duda made a joke by calling Volovici and Manea “bootleggers”. (Virgil Duda, “Literatura este, dacă nu vis, măcar amintire”, in *Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 87).

⁵ *Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 5-6. Volovici’s observation in the preface to Mihail Sebastian’s journal should also be understood in this way; the complexity of this journal, which will be discussed later, means that “[...] the one or ones who edit it posthumously are nothing more than technical directors in a theatre play, making sure that everything is prepared so that the audience receives the “show” in its entirety, unaltered, as close to the spirit and intentions of its creator as possible”. (Leon Volovici, preface to *Jurnal 1935-1944*, by Mihail Sebastian, 5).

⁶ Volovici, *De la Iași...*, 12-13.

⁷ Volovici, *De la Iași...*, 17.

⁸ Leon Volovici, preface to *Amintirile unui intelectual evreu din România*, by Arnold Schwefelberg, 7-12. Volovici concluded that “Under normal circumstances, such double roots are possible and even fertile, although they do not lack inner dramas and breaks.” (17) Somewhere else, the author observed that the possibility of a Jewish intellectual’s affirmation in Romanian culture was possible if Jewish communities accepted modernization, under the circumstances of a massive acculturation, or if the Romanian Jews became culturally integrated. (“Romanian Writers – Jewish Writers: The Dilemmas of Cultural Identity”, *Studia Judaica*, XIII (2005): 151-152). Claudia Ursuțiu noted that this double identity represented one of Volovici’s very own dilemmas. (“Leon Volovici – Historian of Jewish Cultural Life in Romania”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 7, issue 21 (2008): 120-139).

⁹ One of the Jewish internationalist personalities was, according to Volovici, Eugen Relgis (Leon Volovici, preface to *Eseuri despre Iudaism. Mărturii de ieri și de azi*, by Eugen Relgis, 5-7). Volovici mentions Martin Buber, who provided a comprehensive description of the possible directions for the Jewish culture of the future: the humanitarian direction, the nationalist direction and the conservative religious one. (8)

¹⁰ Leon Volovici, “Moses Gaster and Ronetti-Roman. Two Romanian Jewish Intellectuals Facing Modernization”, *Studia Judaica*, XV (2007): 127-137.

¹¹ Originally written in Romanian, but the first edition was published in English under the title *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism. The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, trans. from the Romanian by Charles Kormos (New York: Oxford,

Pergamon Press, 1991); the Romanian edition was published five years later: *Ideologia naționalistă și problema evreiască* (București: Humanitas, 1995).

¹² Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, viii.

¹³ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, vii.

¹⁴ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 6.

¹⁵ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 10.

¹⁶ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 21. But Leon Volovici endorsed the fact that this reparation done to Jews by granting them certain civil rights was not a sign of the presence of moderate and rational nationalism in Romania, but these accomplishments happened only at international requests, eventually revealing the political opportunism, duplicity and hypocrisy of Romanian political leaders. Consequently, Romanian nationalism radicalized with the passing of time.

¹⁷ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 71-72.

¹⁸ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 75.

¹⁹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 1. Volovici also noted a focal change in the Jews' attitude regarding Europe, from a nationalist-Zionist perspective excluding Europe to a kind of "rapprochement" towards it. (Volovici, "Israel and Eastern Europe – A Difficult Spiritual Relationship", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 7, no. 21 (2008): 140-149).

²⁰ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 187, 77. The damaging effects of replacing critical rationalism with idolizing the national myth were "chauvinist demagogy, the mystification of history, idolatry, the persistence of stereotypes, xenophobia, superiority complex." (187)

²¹ Leon Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului în cultura română*, 2nd edition revised (București: Ed. Curtea Veche, 2004), 34, 42.

²² Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 73.

²³ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 11, 76, 91-92.

²⁴ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 4-5, 15, 51, 89-90, 153. One should mention that there is also a moderate, non-chauvinistic version of Romanianism in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru's philosophy, for instance.

²⁵ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 128-129.

²⁶ Leon Volovici, "Comment expliquer aux étrangers le "spécifique national". Une conférence de Mihail Sebastian", in *Nation and National Ideology, Past, Present and Prospects. Proceedings of the International Symposium held at the New Europe College, Bucharest April 6-7, 2001* (Centre for the Study of the Imaginary, New Europe College, 2002), 128-132.

²⁷ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 60.

²⁸ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 81-82.

²⁹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 30-31.

³⁰ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 35-36.

³¹ Barbu Theodorescu, "Dogmatica antisemitismului roman", in *Vremea*, no. 566, December 4, 1938, quoted in Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 181-182.

³² Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 57.

³³ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 58-59.

³⁴ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 61-62, 66.

³⁵ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 86.

³⁶ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 10, 12, 17.

³⁷ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 28, 122.

- ³⁸ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 111-112, 189.
- ³⁹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 100, 126.
- ⁴⁰ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 168-169. There were also those who opposed the idea that the modern spirit of Jewish literature was damaging for Romanian literature: Eugen Lovinescu's supporters, including many Jewish writers, were pro-modernist and non-xenophobic.
- ⁴¹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 174.
- ⁴² Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 183.
- ⁴³ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 40, 43, 53-54, 162.
- ⁴⁴ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 9, 13, 38, 46, 66.
- ⁴⁵ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 40, 52-55, 129, 159.
- ⁴⁶ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 18-22. Some of these organisations were not exclusively Romanian, but international too; their explicit aim was mainly that of denouncing the worldwide Jewish conspiracy.
- ⁴⁷ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 25, 44, 80-81, 98, 106. Among the intellectuals who used metaphysical and theological antisemitic arguments, one can mention Nichifor Crainic, Nae Ionescu, Emil Cioran or Mircea Eliade; in some respects, the influence of Russian mystical and theological writings on their thinking cannot be questioned.
- ⁴⁸ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 14, 26-28, 93.
- ⁴⁹ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 56, 190.
- ⁵⁰ Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology...*, 185. There is also a difference between pragmatic political programmes in the proper sense with a propagandistic and educational impact and their use in the form of a cult justifying an idea (i.e., antisemitic nationalism). (185-186)
- ⁵¹ Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 9.
- ⁵² Leon Volovici, "Ioan Petru Culianu - itinerariul unui mare intelectual român, *Revista 22*, year XV, no. 905, July 13-19, 2007.
- ⁵³ Leon Volovici, "Când Eyal se întâlnește cu Vadim", *Revista 22*, year XIV, no. 722, January 6 - 12, 2004 and *Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 57.
- ⁵⁴ *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 217.
- ⁵⁵ Volovici, "Evreii în România...", 6.
- ⁵⁶ Ovidiu Șimonca, "Eu vreau să cunosc și vreau să înțeleg. Interviu cu Leon Volovici", *Observator cultural*, no. 423, May 15, 2008. We should also add here – something rather unusual in Volovici's case – the profile of the intellectual as pamphleteer, although Volovici himself often used self-irony ("O privire profetică din Ierusalim", *Dilema Veche*, no. 180, July 23, 2007).
- ⁵⁷ Adrian Cioflâncă, "Omul decent", *Ziarul de Iași*, November 11, 2007.
- ⁵⁸ Liviu Rotman, "Leon Volovici", *Observator cultural*, no. 604, December 9, 2011.
- ⁵⁹ Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 19.
- ⁶⁰ Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 18-54. The consideration of the poet as intellectual should be linked to a mythology of the poet characterized by genius, inspiration, prophecy, tragedy, romantic interrogation, aspiration towards the absolute, mystery, divine gift, contemplation, solitude, the embodiment of national and social ideals, suffering, martyrdom, moral law. (37-41)
- ⁶¹ Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 55-65.

⁶² Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 71-98. One could also speak about a so-called sociology of authorship, which includes the literary career, the rejection of pseudonyms, or the definition of plagiarism.

⁶³ Volovici, preface to Mihail Sebastian's *Journal*, 6-8.

⁶⁴ Volovici, preface to Mihail Sebastian's *Journal*, 10.

⁶⁵ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 45. A man of letters can only be conceived in a precisely established social, cultural and historical context. He emerges on the verge of the 20th century as a result of the proliferation of private printing houses, libraries and bookshops, the press and a more diverse readership with wider reading preferences. (Volovici, *Apariția scriitorului...*, 17).

⁶⁶ Volovici, "Romanian Writers – Jewish Writers", 159-160.

⁶⁷ Volovici, *Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 13. The poetess Nina Cassian is a case in point here.

⁶⁸ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 144.

⁶⁹ For instance, Volovici's study, "Comment expliquer aux étrangers le "spécifique national". Une conférence de Mihail Sebastian" analysed Sebastian's case, who was inclined towards a willing acceptance of this double identity; also, in the preface to Schwefelberg's book, Volovici noted that the Schwefelberg's difficulties of integration caused him to feel a certain "nostalgia for normality", namely a feeling of frustration at being refused this double Romanian and Jewish root (7). It was precisely the desire to be integrated in Romanian culture that made some Jewish intellectuals willingly choose an ambiguous identity, reflected in their adoption of pseudonyms; the acceptance of this compromise did not mean that Jewish intellectuals did not have to face difficulties. (Volovici, "Numele, pseudonimul și problema evreiască", *Dilema Veche*, no. 375, April 21-27, 2011).

⁷⁰ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 80-81.

⁷¹ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 61-63.

⁷² Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 112-113. This duplicity on the part of the intellectuals is unfortunately supplemented by the politicians' double talk: we would like to mention in passing the attitude of two top post-communist politicians, Ion Iliescu (*Întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 51) and Adrian Năstase ("Eu vreau să cunosc și vreau să înțeleg").

⁷³ In this sense, Volovici mentions the case of writer Petre Caraman. (*De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 95-96). Another example of non-capitulation by accepting solitude is that of Norman Manea (*De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 220).

⁷⁴ *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim*, 178.

⁷⁵ Leon Volovici, "Orientul Mijlociu – Actul II", in *Revista 22*, year XX, no. 985 (January 20-26, 2009).

⁷⁶ Leon Volovici, "Paradoxurile unui război neprevăzut", in *Revista 22*, year XV, no. 855 (July 28 – August 3, 2006.)

⁷⁷ Leon Volovici, "Terorismul și valorificarea traumei", in *Dilema veche*, no. 92, Octombrie 20, 2005.

⁷⁸ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 154-155.

⁷⁹ As another uprooted intellectual, Virgil Duda, noted, exile and uprootedness bring about "a double psychology, a two-act existence, a mixture of affective memory and living in the moment". (Leon Volovici, "Dialog electronic: Leon Volovici și Virgil Duda, in *România literară*, (2006): 16).

⁸⁰ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 152.

- ⁸¹ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 31-32.
⁸² Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 34, 102-105.
⁸³ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 87-88, 91, 93-94, 177-179, 184-185.
⁸⁴ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 124, 128, 134, 143, 193.
⁸⁵ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 188, 201.
⁸⁶ Volovici, *De la Iași la Ierusalim...*, 122.

References:

Cioflâncă, Adrian. "Omul decent". *Ziarul de Iași*. November 11, 2007.

Fundoianu, Benjamin. *Judaism și elenism*. Edited by Leon Volovici and Remus Zăstroiu. București: Hasefer, 1999.

Întâlniri la Ierusalim. Organized and transcribed by Costel Safirman and Leon Volovici. București: Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, 2001.

Manea, Norman. *Sertarele exilului. Dialog cu Leon Volovici*. Iași: Polirom, 2008.

Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim. Organized and transcribed by Costel Safirman and Leon Volovici. București: Institutul Cultural Român, 2007.

Rotman, Liviu. "Leon Volovici". *Observator cultural*. no. 604, December 9, 2011.

Șimonca, Ovidiu. "Eu vreau să cunosc și vreau să înțeleg. Interviu cu Leon Volovici". *Observator Cultural*. no. 423, May 15, 2008.

Ursuțiu, Claudia. "Leon Volovici – Historian of Jewish Cultural Life in Romania". *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*. vol. 7, issue 21 (2008): 120-139.

Volovici, Leon. Preface to *Jurnal, 1935-1944*. by Mihail Sebastian. București: Humanitas, 1996.

Volovici, Leon. "Când Eyal se întâlnește cu Vadim". *Revista 22*. year XIV, no. 722, January 6 – 12, 2004.

Volovici, Leon. "Comment expliquer aux étrangers le "spécifique national". Une conférence de Mihail Sebastian". In *Nation and National Ideology, Past, Present and Prospects. Proceedings of the International Symposium held at the New Europe College, Bucharest April 6-7, 2001*. 128-138. Centre for the Study of the Imaginary, New Europe College, 2002.

Volovici, Leon. "Evreii în România post-Ceaușescu: între centralitate și fobie". Conference held at the Goethe Institute, Bucharest, December 9-11, 2002.

Volovici, Leon. "Ioan Petru Culianu - itinerariul unui mare intelectual roman. *Revista 22*. year XV, no. 905, July 13-19, 2007.

Volovici, Leon. "Moses Gaster and Ronetti-Roman. Two Romanian Jewish Intellectuals Facing Modernization". *Studia Judaica*. XV (2007): 127-137.

Volovici, Leon. "O privire profetică din Ierusalim". *Dilema Veche*. no. 180, July 23, 2007.

Volovici, Leon. "Romanian Writers – Jewish Writers: The Dilemmas of Cultural Identity". *Studia Judaica*. XIII (2005): 151-161.

Volovici, Leon. *Apariția scriitorului în cultura română*. 2nd edition revised. București: Ed. Curtea Veche, 2004.

Volovici, Leon. *De la Iași la Ierusalim și înapoi. Pornind de la un dialog cu Sandu Frunză*. București: Ideea Europeană, 2007.

Volovici, Leon. *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism. The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*. trans. from Romanian by Charles Kormos. New York, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1991.

Volovici, Leon. Preface to *Amintirile unui intelectual evreu din România*. by Arnold Schwefelberg. București: Hasefer, 2000.

Volovici, Leon. Preface to *Eseuri despre iudaism. Mărturii de ieri și de azi*. by Eugen Relgis. București: Hasefer, 2011.

Volovici, Leon. "Numele, pseudonimul și problema evreiască". *Dilema Veche*. no. 375, April 21-27, 2011.

Volovici, Leon. "Orientul Mijlociu – Actul II". *Revista 22*. year XX, no. 985, January 20-26, 2009.

Volovici, Leon. "Paradoxurile unui război neprevăzut". *Revista 22*. year XV, no. 855, July 28 – August 3, 2006.

Volovici, Leon. "Terorismul și valorificarea traumei". *Dilema veche*. no. 92, Octombrie 20, 2005.

Volovici, Leon. "Israel and Eastern Europe – A Difficult Spiritual Relationship". *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*. vol. 7, issue 21 (2008): 140-149.