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should be transcended in a proper cultivation of the cultural tradition which should be respected as such, and not diverted to instrumental usages, detrimental not only to the education of younger generations, but also to the very preservation of human memory. Subjective individualism on one hand and over-socialization of man on the other, fragmentation of human ideals have paved the way to a highly relativistic status of man which are dealt by Jean-Francois Mattei in a grave and even alarming tone as for instance in the respective chapters on barbarity and education, culture and politics. The whole book conveys the tone of a passionate urge to keep modern man within the world of humanity.

A word for the quality of translation belonging to Valentina Bumbaş-Vorobiov.

Marius Jucan

Matei Călinescu
Cinci fețe ale modernității. Modernism, avangardă, decadență, kitsch, postmodernism.
Five Faces of Modernity. Modernism, Avant-Guard, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism

Collegium, Polirom, Iasi, 2005

When visiting the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj, in the spring semester of 2001, professor Matei Călinescu was perhaps ready to undergo a twofold experience: that of rekindling reminiscences of past times when revisiting the town where he had defended his doctoral thesis, and of continuing his work to mould in a more comprehensively way his encompassing study of modernity and its representations. For students and academics, the professor's stay in Cluj yielded in two memorable courses offered at the Faculty of European Studies and the Faculty of Letters. Those interested in mapping and remapping modernity and at the same time willing to witness the practice of hermeneutic experience in reading

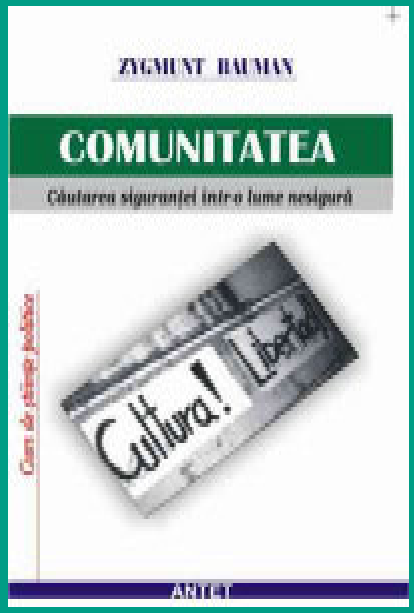
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and rereading as a modern intellectual vocation could follow Matei Călinescu at work. The spring semester of 2001 meant for Matei Călinescu the publishing of a talk about the meanings of the modern and modernity, which later on, in 2005 constituted the core of an important addenda, the ending chapter of the second edition of his study modernity and its faces, first published in 1977 in the United States*.

Within this brief overview of the *Five Face of Modernity*, I do not intend to focus on the interrelations between the modern and representations, perhaps the organizational pattern of the ample research on modernity. Instead, I would rather focus on the issue of *aesthetic experience* which remains fundamental to the critic's judgment of modernity, especially when the author claims that his volume should be read as a contribution to the history of ideas, seen in a genealogical key. Indeed, the cultural tissue, so to say, of modernity, and of its changing faces, originates in a temporal, scientific, religious, political as well as in aesthetic "construct" which should be properly recognized under its altering masks, whenever this would be the case, as for instance when discussing about the *kitsch* or *the aesthetic vanguard*. The aesthetic approach to modernity and to its ensuing stages (modernism, postmodernism) brings in a closer view, within the author's conceptual map, a crucial element of modernity seen in a genealogical key, the role of art. According to Kantian considerations about art and its distinction from nature, genius and the mediation of art, the relationship between game and rational constraints, one cannot debate modernity without underscoring the notion of art. Then, one might follow how "art" acquires in the same genealogical key other conceptual meanings in Nietzsche's view of the "gay" science ("La Gaya Scienza", fragment 356), where living becomes "artistic", or, further on, in the Heideggerian terms of the hermeneutics of art, where the creation of the work of art "ex-poses" a world, and consequently it brings about the "advent of truth". Matei Călinescu did not confine himself however to a genealogical recapitulation of the aesthetic experience, no matter profitable or inviting this would appear, especially nowadays when aesthetics has been marginalized in the curricular academic projections. Revisiting the issue of modernity underlies actually the aestheticization and partly the ideologization of modernity. Heightening the aesthetic might sound rather esoteric within the righteous, politically correct voices of today, which regard aesthetics as a secret hierarchy of power, either of "the dead white males", cultural colonialism or under other possible recriminations of the "cult of beauty".

It is interesting therefore to learn what the concepts of the modern and modernity meant for our author for a long span of time. In the first part of the essay entitled " Subjective reflections on modernity and reading" written in 2001, Matei Călinescu wonders about the reasons which determined him to choose to study the modern at the end of the "dark years of the 50's", a topic which has eventually turned an overarching theme for him to contemplate. The question is far from being a rhetorical one, since the answer should be easily found in the complex analysis of modernity and modernism, vanguard, decadence, kitsch, postmodernism. However, beyond the conceptual demonstrations there remains a free room to query the unseen or rather, discrete groundswhich determined the critic to go on with his quest for modernity. When asking himself what made him dwell so long in studying the modern and modernity, Matei Călinescu barely insisted on an important component of his career in literary hermeneutics, namely that he was also, so to say, a practitioner of literature. Poet, prose-writer, and naturally, a literary critic and historian, Matei Călinescu shared as a poet or fiction writer the direct experience of reviewing and finding novelty in the "catalogue" of modernity, so much the more in a period when the modern and modernity were completely obliterated by the obscenities of communist propaganda. One should perhaps go back to the symbols of the "captive mind" described by Czeslaw Milosz to grasp the significance of the struggle to guard freedom of thinking, especially when freedom of speech was put into the chains of censorhip. It is not only a vivid illustration of how imagination and fiction can save, or at least preserve, individual life in times repression, but also a timely recalling of the Kantian adagio that art cannot exist but within the frame of freedom.



Matei Călinescu accomplished his career in a renowned North-American university, and undoubtedly American experience was crucial to the accurate gauging of the *aesthetic dimensions* of modernity. Nevertheless the importance of being modern, hence the experience of modernity, either secretly fostered or after a long period taught freely in Romania remained deeply connected to Romanian culture.

Do not hermeneutic experiences mirror actually to life, whereas they deal with texts?

**Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Guard, Decadence, Kitsch* , Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1977

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Zygmunt Bauman Comunitatea. Căutarea siguranței într-o lume nesigură The Comunity

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Cartea lui Zygmunt Bauman se construieşte, după cum sugerează şi titlul, în jurul conceptului de comunitate, care desemnează, spune autorul, un lucru ce nu poate să fie decât bun. Background-ul lucrării este constituit de conflictul, inerent ideii de comunitate, dintre securitate şi libertate, termeni care se află într-un raport invers proporțional evident.

Bauman începe prin prezentarea obiectului unei eterne nostalgii, comunitatea autentică, în care acționează aşa-numitul "cerc cald" sau "înțelegerea de tip comunitar", care precede toate înțelegerile şi neînțelegerile. Comunitatea este "un cuvânt cu sentiment" şi întruchipează paradisul pierdut. În starea ei pură, trebuie să îndeplinească trei condiții esențiale: să se distingă clar de alte comunități, să fie mică, astfel încât fiecare să poată vedea pe fiecare, şi să fie suficientă sieşi. Comunitatea autentică nu are propria conştiință de sine, momentul în care comunitatea vorbeşte despre comunitate fiind momentul propriei disoluții.