

# The Symbol, a Benchmark in the Literary Hermeneutics

## Review

**Călin-Horia BÂRLEANU**, *Simboluri în literatură*, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2016

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This year, in addition to the two other previous significant works,<sup>1</sup> Călin-Horia Bârleanu proposes a value book among the many references existing within the Suceava University and not only. From his perspective, the communication, hermeneutics and psychoanalysis field gains another useful guide that tends to be both of initiation and of approach on fictional discourse.

Entitled, *Simboluri în literatură* (Symbols in literature), the book was published by Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House in Cluj-Napoca. From the beginning we must say that it represents a real and useful study for any student, master student, PhD candidate enrolled in Philology, but also for those passionate about the symbolic approach of a literary text.

The volume is structured in four chapters, chapter two and three representing the essence of this study. The topics that the author approaches and develops at the same time are the most exciting. In the pre-discussion of a literary text he claims that some reference points such as *Catharsis and therapy through symbol*, *symbols of Eros*, *symbols of Thanatos* etc., are required:

If in the first part of the book we find a theoretical and clarifying presentation of the symbol and symbolism concepts, in the second part, the author, a knowing expert of psychoanalytic literature, invites us on an almost initiatiating journey. Along the way the reader will meet the epic literary works of writers such as Mario Vargas Llosa, D.H.Lawrence, Luigi Pirandello, Sadoveanu, etc., to not

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<sup>1</sup> *Mircea Cărtărescu. Universul motivelor obsedante* (Iași: Universitas XXI, 2011) and *Antropologie și comunicare interculturală* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2015).

mention the multitude of references to various leading experts in the field of symbol and its significance in the literature in question.

I wonder how the reading could be saved today, if not under the stimulus of such books?! Sometime, the reader might have the misfortune to read a book full of symbols and meanings very tight connected with each other. Only those initiated and talented will be aware of their presence, but what about the reader who, in his attempt to seek such symbols, walks over them and does not know what he/she is doing, if he/she is not guided by anything.

This book cannot be considered as a simple guiding tool in discovering meanings unknown by us, but an interesting approach of the existing symbols in literature. Once one goes through this study, a novel way of looking the fairly intricate issues of the books will be revealed. The reader would gain a different understanding on the same literary objects. The gestures of the characters, their names, the topography, the scenery, their actions and more can really be revived. Obviously, a very important role in this hermeneutic process is represented by the subtext, the inner aspect of the text, namely the artistic object in this case.

The City, the Dream, Death, Love, Playfulness and many others symbolic objects are discussed by the author based on certain creations of writers in the literary universe. It is equally important how the author presents and discusses his speech. We are dealing with a type of well-articulated, coherent and well thought out discourse. The consistent elaboration of this book makes us be equally attentive to any literary creation we are getting in touch with. Few ideas could escape from the author scrutiny and information are consistent and full of essence. The book itself contains several puzzling aspects, which if not passed through an objective and professional filter one cannot go beyond *dell'oggetto artistico*.

It is a book that indirectly leads us to a different type of reading, the one in a symbolic key by means of the hermeneutic approach, without which even the initial lecture would not exist. Besides the aspects of structure and content, this book reassures the symbolic dimension to any consistent and comprehensive interpretation and analysis process of a literary text.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Bârleanu, Călin-Horia, *Simboluri în literatură* (Symbols in literature). Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2016. 344 p. ISBN 978-606-17-0906-9.