

Memoir

Review

Gheorghe HOBINCU

Memorii (I: Frumoasele zile din Aranjuez, 2017; II: Omul sub vremuri, 2018), Editorial El Genio Maligno, Granada) Lavinia Seiciuc (ed.)

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Commenced in the last years of the Romanian communism, when the political regime would severely censor any attempt at freedom of speech, and finished four years after the fall of the communist dictatorship, Dr. Gheorghe Hobincu’s manuscript of memoirs accurately and truthfully illustrates the itinerary of a life so deeply affected by the historical events of his times. The author, a narrator whose talent can easily be compared to that of our greatest writers, leaves behind an emotional journey through the various stages of his accomplishment as a human being. Right from the very first lines, he personalizes his expressive style of humorous exposure that accompanies the manuscript, even when the tragic events do not leave the lecturer doubting the authenticity and the drama.

The first years of his life, the traditional and archaic environment of the Romanian village that was typical for the interwar period, the family construct that integrates the later axiological values, all are aspects he achieves in the first volume that are necessary in order to comprehend the subsequent evolution of a personality characterized by principialism and free thinking.

The objective and relevant narration of private life events, but masterly correlated with the general aspects of the Romanian totalitarian times, starting with the interwar period, continuing during World War II and finalizing in the early period of the communist regime, gives the reader the opportunity of a virtual personal experience.

From this perspective, we can appreciate the contribution of the author – along with other writers who have leaned towards the problem of oppressive systems in prison literature – to the exposure of certain events that mainly confirm

history, but which sometimes are meant to correct or to change the perceptual paradigm related to the interwar period, and more specifically to the period of the Romanian Legionary Movement. This aspect becomes relevant when, in a superficial manner, some authors attributed a fascistoid character to Romanian Legionary Movement without performing a proper analysis of the stages that led to the leaning of this organization towards the Nazi ideology during the totalitarian Antonescu regime.

Without consistent references to the aspects of the right-wing ideology, the author outlines involuntarily, during the story of the student period, the portrait of the young man attracted by its high axiological values. At this point, the reader can also discriminate between adherence and opposition within the same ideological beliefs, which strongly support the moral attitude of the author. Firmness in defending the high human values, sometimes at the expense of political inclinations, places Dr. Gheorghe Hobincu at the level of a higher stage of ethics. We will find this aspect later, in the second volume, in the narration of the events from the communist prisons, despite the physical and psychological deprivations to which he was subjected.

The manuscript, as we have already mentioned above, possesses a rich informational content that refers to historical moments, geographical indications (in particular, those referring to the East Front events), valuable personalities of the scientific or artistic domains, syntagms in foreign languages, the accuracy and precision of which is evidenced by the critical apparatus, later attached by philologist Lavinia Seiciuc. Right from the beginning of the reading, the reader will be tempted to follow the additional clarifications and explanations in the footnotes, as they contain information about less accessible geographical places or personalities of various fields who have made valuable contributions to science or arts, and, as authentic characters in the manuscript, are exposed to the public from a less known perspective.

Equally useful for a coherent reading of the manuscript is the study of the *Editorial Note*,¹ written by the same editor, in which scientific explanations are addressed in terms of phonetics and spelling, interventions on the text during drafting, morphology problems and lexical aspects, as well as issues concerning the syntactic and discursive level. In this study, the reader will find the interest in elements of a writing that, although sometimes *deviating from the orthographic norms* of the literary language, or rendering *lexemes spelled out according to*

¹ Lavinia Seiciuc, "Not asupra ediției," in *Frumoasele zile din Aranjuez, Memorii I*, Gheorghe Hobincu, ed. Lavinia Seiciuc (Granada: El Genio Maligno Press, 2017), 9.

*obsolete pronouncements*², evoke a period of the linguistic past, and thereby adds more authenticity the accounts of those times.

The *Biographical Note*³ of the second tome summarizes family data and provides explanations and complements to the information in the manuscript, with those of the later period, which was not included in the memoirs of Dr. Hobincu. These are remarkable for the reader who completed the lecture and would like, as it always happen with captivating works, to find out what happens after the end of the book.

We also need to mention the *Introductory Study*⁴ in the first volume, written by historian Radu Florian Bruja, which gives the reader the perspective of correlating the stories in the manuscript with the socio-political events of the time, thoroughly selected and analyzed. We cannot help noticing the researcher's interest in the content of the manuscript; since, at the first glance, we find in his study an analysis of each stage of the story. Paraphrasing, giving personal impressions, highlighting paragraphs or chapters that produced an empathic effect, numerous explanations not just about the historical or geopolitical realm, offer the readers the circumstances for a coherent reading.

For a more complex edification of the reader on Dr. Gheorghe Hobincu's existential picture, we find in the final pages of the volumes certain pictures of the members of the Hobincu family that are representative for the period, as well as scans of relevant documents concerning the author's professional evolution and his years of imprisonment. The chronological table of the family and the genealogy tree effectively summarize the information so extensively exposed in the pages of the manuscript.

Gheorghe Hobincu's book of *Memoirs* is the result of an impressive effort both on the part of the author and that of the editor. It is an exciting reading and a valuable testimony about the sinister realities of the Romanian communist era.

Bibliography:

1. Hobincu, Gheorghe. *Frumoasele zile din Aranjuez. Memorii. I*, edited by Lavinia Seiciuc. Granada: El Genio Maligno Press, 2017.
2. Hobincu, Gheorghe. *Omul sub vremuri. Memorii II*, edited by Lavinia Seiciuc. Granada: El Genio Maligno Press, 2018.

² *Ibidem*, 11.

³ Lavinia Seiciuc, "Not biografic," in *Omul sub vremuri, Memorii II*, Gheorghe Hobincu, ed. Lavinia Seiciuc (Granada: El Genio Maligno Press, 2018), 259.

⁴ Radu Florian Bruja, "Studiu introductiv," in *Frumoasele zile din Aranjuez*, 19.