

BEYOND THE HISTORY OF A LITERARY GENRE: THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ROMANIAN MEMORY WRITING

DORIS MIRONESCU¹

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ABSTRACT. *Beyond the History of a Literary Genre: The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing.* The paper presents the theoretical frame of the research project *The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing*, currently being developed at the "A. Philippide" Institute for Romanian Philology. This encyclopedia joins other recent projects, such as literary dictionaries, in an effort to construct an alternative approach to the (national) literary history by subverting the (legitimizing) causal narration. It will include canonical texts, memoirists, various categories of title-articles, but also a set of operative concepts that allow for a definition of memoir-writing starting from the psychological, philosophical and anthropological implications of memory. By indexing literary phenomena in an encyclopedic manner, the textual corpora of Romanian literature may be described and analyzed in a transnational, comparative and interdisciplinary manner.

Keywords: *memoir-writing, literary encyclopedia, literary memory, cultural memory, The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing (ERMW).*

REZUMAT. *Dincolo de istoria unui gen literar: Enciclopedia scrierilor memorialistice românești.* Această lucrare prezintă ramura teoretică a proiectului de cercetare *Enciclopedia Memoriilor Românești*, care în prezent este în desfășurare la Institutul de Filologie Română "A. Philippide". Această enciclopedie se alătură altor proiecte, precum dicționare literare, într-un efort de a construi o abordare alternativă la istoria literaturii (naționale) prin subminarea (legitimării) narațiunii cauzale. Va include texte canonice, memorialiști, o varietate de titluri de articole, dar de asemenea un set de concepte operative care permit o definiție a scrierilor memorialistice începând cu implicațiile memoriei la nivel psihologic, sociologic și antropologic. Prin indexarea fenomenelor literare într-o manieră enciclopedică, corpusurile textuale ale literaturii române pot fi descrise și analizate într-un mod transnațional, comparativ și interdisciplinar.

Cuvinte cheie: *scrieri memorialistice, enciclopedie literară, memorie literară, memorie culturală, Enciclopedia Scrierilor Memorialistice Românești (ESMR).*

¹ "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Romania; „A. Philippide” Institute for Romanian Philology, Romanian Academy, Iași Branch. E-mail: dorismironescu@yahoo.com

Literary history is a prestigious discipline and a classical method of studying literature, but at the same time it designates the materialization of this method in volumes that function as instruments of the discipline and, sometimes, as monuments to the majesty of literature. For a long time, literary history's double nature as an instrument and as a monument has helped to shield it from critiques on matter of principle, since individual victories of historians were seen as breakthroughs of the literary art as a whole. This history was therefore defined as a means of selecting and preserving the canon, and a means of introducing order, hierarchy and limitations to what could constitute the literary or cultural value of texts produced inside a given, usually national, culture. But, in time, this definition met with criticism, a criticism which occupies, today, the frontline of international debates. One of the critics' lines of inquiry regards the necessary quantitative delimitation of what a literary history can survey and include in its folds. A literary history, this argument goes in the version brought out by Franco Moretti,² cannot realistically hope to index all the material that claims to be identified as literature, therefore the selection it makes from this material, no matter how valid in reference to the criteria it adopts, does not succeed in replacing a much larger textual corpus which is left unread and under-evaluated. The solution identified by Moretti and subsequently applied by an ever increasing number of researchers is the quantitative study of literature, the literary mapping resulted from an analysis of quantifiable literary data. Another line of inquiry regards the spatial limitations of national literary history. The critics, among which are John Neubauer and Marcel Cornish-Pope,³ submit that any national literature is, in fact, part of much larger cultural units that govern its internal dynamics. Therefore, they maintain, the internal evolutions of a national literature may be better explained through an examination of macro-regional contexts than a limitation to the national perspective. The result would be a regional "history of literary cultures", a collective, transnational effort to define ample cultural spaces and to identify their particular dynamics.⁴

As the traditional conception of literary history is entering a crisis, I would like to draw attention to the offer represented by another instrument of literary studies, namely the literary encyclopedia, as it has been cultivated

² Franco Moretti, *Conjectures on World Literature*, in *New Left Review*, 1, January-February 2000, pp. 56-58.

³ Marcel Cornish-Pope and John Neubauer, *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, vol. I, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, John Benjamins, pp. 1-7.

⁴ It is interesting to notice that both Franco Moretti and the coordinator of the macroregional project of a history of east-central European literatures Mario J. Valdès are invoking the direction of historical contextualization represented in 20th century historiography by the French School around the journal "Annales".

especially in the last two decades.⁵ I consider that the literary encyclopedia integrates the critiques brought to traditional literary histories and attempts to find new solutions. It also assimilates the recent efforts to give literary studies an interdisciplinary dimension, making use of literature's proverbial "encyclopedic" openness to other fields of knowledge. In what follows, I will discuss the generic profile of the literary encyclopedia, stressing the spatial dimension that sets this instrument apart from the more traditional literary history. In the second part of the article, I will present an ongoing research project, *The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing*, implemented by a collective at the "A. Philippide" Institute for Romanian Philology in Iași, of which I am a part, describing its principles, opportunities and limitations.

In the space of our discipline, the encyclopedia positions itself as an attempt to bring together a large number of objects to be studied. Through its etymology, the encyclopedia sets out to study a field exhaustively. However, the literary encyclopedias published in the last few decades assume the idea of exhaustiveness only on a symbolic level, focusing instead on including a large diversity and a variety of types of objects. For instance, the *Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory* (2011) indexes concepts, currents of thought that shaped critical and cultural theory at different times, and important theorists and philosophers. A modern encyclopedia is characterized by the variety of its articles and the multitude of its categories and types of indexed objects, surpassing the restricted number of types of articles a dictionary usually includes.

If the finality of literary history is reflected in the shaping of a canon, a stable set of exemplary authors and books, the encyclopedia could be more accurately described with the help of the symmetrical metaphor of the archive. I am borrowing this dual metaphor from a renowned article by Aleida Assmann, *Canon and Archive* (2007). Following Assmann, the canon offers the image of a functional cultural memory, similar to the working memory of a computer, which efficiently ensures its own persistence through the intense circulation of the elements it is made of. As such, the literary canon proposes a set of classic authors that contribute to the perpetuation of tradition through phenomena of imitation, influence and intertextuality. On the other hand, the archive symbolizes the cultural computer's reference memory, used to store content not yet selected and indexed efficiently, (temporarily) excluded from the heavy rotation circuit of

⁵ I am referring to works such as *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, 1993; *Encyclopedia of the Essay*, 1997; *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, 1998; *Encyclopedia of Travel Literature*, 2001; *Encyclopedia of Life Writing*, 2001-2002; *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, 2003; *Encyclopedia of Holocaust Literature*, 2003; *Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature*, 2006; *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, 2017; *Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*, 2011; *Enciclopedia Literaturii Române Vechi*, 2018.

the canon.⁶ I maintain that the encyclopedia may be legitimately associated to the archive, because the structure of the encyclopedia is not hierarchical, like it is in canonical literary history – its particularity is given by the variety of indexed objects, usually hard to compare among themselves following only one necessary and sufficient criterion. At the same time, the encyclopedia tends to refrain from adopting a “national literature” frame of reference, either by restricting itself to a more narrow field (a genre or a textual mode), or by opening itself up to the supraregional or the planetary. Another distinction is also useful here, offered by the Literary Lab at Stanford University in a 2017 article, *Canon/Archive*. The authors make the distinction between “the published,” the archive and the corpus, that is, between everything that was “published” in a given period (including what was merely written down and never published), everything that was kept by the institutions dedicated to preservation (the archive), and the portion of an archive that is being selected for a given study (the corpus). From this point of view, the archive is already a result of a canonical selection, since that selection is operated by agents that participate in canonization: librarians, curators, literary historians. However, in practice one often designates as “archive” what the authors of *Canon/Archive* call “the published,” hoping that our (especially quantitative) research use as corpus the whole of literature or “the total history of literature.”⁷

The encyclopedia may be likened to an archive not only because it indexes objects “forgotten”, waiting for a lucky comeback to the stage of literary history, but mostly because it actively tries to identify new ways of framing and contextualizing the objects it deals with. If traditional literary history aims to reduce to a common denominator, to compare and rank the forms of literary expression it encounters, in order to configure an eloquent and comprehensive panorama, the encyclopedia, especially in its more recent embodiments, adopts a more hermeneutical perspective, seeking ways to elaborate typologies that might allow it to include an ever larger variety of articles.

Rather than concentrating on a specific national literature, recent literary encyclopedias focus on a genre and set out to recontextualize it (there are, however, exceptions: see *Encyclopedia of Modern Greek Literature*, 2004). The paradigm of genre belongs to modern literary history, where it functions as a criterion for discriminating between authors, but especially for studying the metamorphoses of literature. The logic of literary history is one of genre

⁶ Aleida Assmann, *Canon and Archive*, in Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 2008, pp. 97-104.

⁷ Mark Algee-Hewitt, Sarah Allison, Marissa Gemma, Ryan Heuser, Franco Moretti, Hannah Walser, *Canon/Archive. Large-Scale Dynamics in the Literary Field*, in *Canon/Archive. Studies in Quantitative Formalism from the Stanford Literary Lab*, New York, n+1 Books, 2017, pp. 256-257.

differentiation or genre “evolution” in light of a specific aesthetic criterion. While genres reach a greater degree of “purity”, aesthetic thought appears to make greater progress, and the theory and practice of literature seem to attain greater coherence.⁸ But this is only a matter of perspective. The logic of genre purification may easily be turned against this vision of literary history as a narration of multiseccular progress. In his book *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2016), Franco Moretti advances an interpretation of genre that, by embracing the notion of genre purity, contradicts historic continuity. Genre becomes purely idiosyncratic, unique, unmistakable, delimited by groups of texts sharing the same formal and ideological premises, leading to an excessive historicization and localization. For instance, the historic novel becomes less than a transcontinental literary form that goes beyond the confines of a single century; it is restricted to the British Isles and to a single generation in the first half of the 19th century.⁹

On the contrary, in the conceptual frame developed by the literary encyclopedias, the very definition of genre is modified. Since a literary genre is to be treated in an encyclopedic manner, it is bound to be rephrased and explored innovatively. For instance, in three of the encyclopedias under scrutiny, *Encyclopedia of the Essay* (1997),¹⁰ *Encyclopedia of Life Writing* (2001-2002),¹¹ and *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (2003),¹² the object of study is strikingly different from what one might find in a literary history. While the essay is a relatively well known literary object (although usually considered a “border” one), the concept of “life writing” comes from another paradigm than that of literary history or even that of literature. The domain of life writing is trans-aesthetic and narratologically hybrid, as it includes memoirs, biographies and autobiographies, documentary testimonies and literary diaries. Similarly, *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* deals not only with the literary diaries documenting transcultural encounters,

⁸ See, for instance, Andreea Mironescu’s article *Extinderea domeniului literaturii. Integrarea formelor hibride în istoria literară românească/ The Expansion of the Domain of Literature. The Integration of Hybrid Forms into Romanian Literary History*, „Philologica Jassyensia”, vol. XIV, no. 2 (28), 2018, pp. 71-82, where the author discusses the integration of “impure” genres such as the essay or memoir-writing into the patrimony of literary history following the consolidation of their “purity”, in accordance with the aesthetic canon.

⁹ Franco Moretti, *Grafice, hărți, arbori. Literatura văzută de departe/ Graphs, Maps, Trees. Literature Seen from a Distance*, translated by Cristian Cercel, preface by Andrei Terian, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2016, pp. 30-34.

¹⁰ Tracy Chevalier (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Essay*, London, Routledge, 1997.

¹¹ Margareta Jolly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Life Writing*, vols I-II, Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2002-2003.

¹² Jennifer Speake (ed.), *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, vol. I-III, New York/London, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003.

but also with other written forms of recording travels, such as tourist guides, war reportages, diaries of the deported, travel blogs, and so on. Such encyclopedias exit the literary paradigm of genre, preferring instead a position based on a specific type of communication, in a primarily cultural paradigm.

The recent, trans-aesthetic encyclopedias may be regarded as participating to the so-called “space turn” in today’s literary studies. Trying to leave behind the finalism of traditional literary history, literary studies have pivoted in the last decades toward a new rhetoric centered on space, branching out into several critical metalanguages: *world literature*, geocriticism, literary mapping, literary ecology, cultural geolocation, planetarism, etc.¹³ The rhetoric of spatiality describes a conceptual mutation with sociopolitical roots and methodological implications. Growing at the intersection of these critical metalanguages, literary encyclopedias acquired a spatial terminology and, as a result, situated themselves critically and polemically toward traditional literary history. There are at least three arguments for describing the new concept of the literary encyclopedia as rooted in the space turn and embracing spatiality. The first concerns the expanse of its arch to the limits of the discipline of literary studies; the second concerns the insertion of literature in the social space and the consequences drawn from it; and the third regards the spatial composition and rhetoric of the encyclopedia as an instrument for literary research.

1) The space of the map. The encyclopedia strives to indicate the extension of the literary domain and to reach its limits, even though it may not chart exhaustively all its sectors. The articles it includes may only signal their aspiration to include “everything”, even if the commitment to do that proves hard, even impossible to keep. For instance, while *Encyclopedia of the Essay* does not include all Russian essayists, the article dedicated to “the Russian essay” is thought to cover the absences. (There is no „Romanian essay”, although several articles are dedicated to Romanian essayists such as Titu Maiorescu, Alexandru Odobescu, N. Steinhardt.) The physical spatiality of the encyclopedia is also indicated by its reaching out, transnationally, thereby echoing the concerns of critics to describe a world literature that not only circulates on a planetary scale, but also addresses a world audience and integrates diverse reading practices.¹⁴ The majority of the encyclopedias I surveyed are produced in Britain or the United States and all attempt to acquire

¹³ A critical survey of the presence and perspectives of the space turn in literary studies may be found in Andrei Terian, *Critica de export. Teorii, contexte, ideologii/ Export Criticism. Theories, Contexts, Ideologies*, Bucharest, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, pp. 75-88.

¹⁴ See David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, Princeton/ Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 281-303.

a global dimension, even though they inevitably fall short of that nearly impossible performance. However, they all strive to overcome these shortcomings by insisting on articles that supply them with new perspectives on their object of study. On the other hand, in encyclopedias dedicated to a national culture, many articles research the zones and epochs of cultural interconnection and influence, focus on transnational literature written abroad or on the national territory, in languages belonging to neighboring countries. At the same time, they emphasize the temporal play with history through intertextual means, through reading and influence in the “deep time” conceptualized by Wai Chee Dimock.¹⁵ By assuming the transnational dimension proposed by world literature studies, the encyclopedia is an alternative to the more traditional way of framing literary objects in national histories.

2) The social space. Another sign indicating the spatial dimension of the literary encyclopedias is the perspective most of them assume of literature as a social phenomenon, through the integration of meta- and paraliterary forms of expression or through focusing on literature being made on various innovative media or platforms. For instance, in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*, travel literature exists in a plenary and legitimate fashion on travel blogs or in tourist guides. On the other hand, in the *Encyclopedia of Life Writing*, the object under scrutiny is no longer a literary genre, but a category of literary, journalistic, historical and personal writings having the same objective that they reach through various techniques. Literature is discussed in its interactions with other disciplines, arts or social practices. This recontextualization favors its analysis in conjunction with new sets of phenomena, thereby studying the survival of classical genres in contemporary times, often under a very different aspect. The encyclopedias I surveyed emphasize that new literary and non-literary forms are often born in zones of interference of discourses. For instance, fiction meets the document in postmodern autofictional discourses, while image and writing come together in comics, blogs or video blogs, some of which have already attained classical status – see Art Spiegelman’s celebrated comics book *Maus* (1991), integrating autofiction, satire and drawing into powerful metaphors, indexed in the *Encyclopedia of Life Writing*, in the chapter concerning “Holocaust Literature.”

3) The rhetoric of space. Thirdly, one must note that the compositional rhetoric of the encyclopedia is also space-centered. An encyclopedia borrows, through its very definition, the horizontal structure of a dictionary, a “random”

¹⁵ Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time*, Princeton/Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 1-6.

succession of alphabetically ordered subjects, which contributes to their levelling (partly checked by the variable length of the articles.) This succession suggests a “complete” embrace of the matter, but the aspiration is never to be fulfilled, since the matter can always proliferate, either as a result of the creativity of the future generations, or through the discovery of new interesting objects of study in the “archive” of the discipline. But the compositional rhetoric of the encyclopedia manifests itself on a different level. I am referring to the rhizome-like structure of the tome, to its network-like architecture and to the way it lends itself to reading. The title-words succeed each other alphabetically and randomly inasmuch as they are integrated from the start into multiple structures, alternative to one another, that cannot be represented simultaneously on the pages. The articles of an encyclopedia are interconnected through cross-referencing and links and, as such, are part of various families, constellations and groups of texts. There are diverse categories of articles, some describing authors and texts, others describing groups of works or categories of texts; as a result, the articles in an encyclopedia are hierarchically structured, but at the same time are presented as inscribed into multiple hierarchies. The existence of a disseminated structure, hidden in the textual material, is inferred by the compositional rhetoric of an encyclopedia, by its promise to offer a “horizontal” emancipation from a vertical canon. In fact, an encyclopedia cannot fully emancipate itself from the canon, which it maintains at least implicitly, through a hierarchy of articles reflected in their respective length.¹⁶ However, it may propose various ways to make use of and to value differently works, texts, authors or concepts, thereby suggesting multiple possibilities to open up the canon.

Case Study: *The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing (ERMW)*

The Encyclopedia of Romanian Memory Writing (ERMW) is a project initiated by Bogdan Crețu as head of the “A. Philipide” Institute for Romanian Philology in Iași and assumed by the members of the Department for Literary History starting from the year 2013. *ERMW* does not set out to determinedly exemplify the space imperative of contemporary literary studies. It, however, accepted the exigencies of a modern encyclopedia. It sets out to offer, beside a thick canvassing of Romanian memoirists and memoir-writings, a series of theoretical or synthetic articles that may complete the “archival” (A. Assmann) aspect of an encyclopedia. *ERMW* indexes great literary memoirs, but also memoirs that do not

¹⁶ A necessary precaution is signaled by Adrian Tudurachi in his article *Ce istorie literară pentru DGLR? / What Kind of Literary History for the DGLR?*, where he states that both the literary dictionary and the literary history are built on the presumption of the existence of a canon, which is differently “framed” by each of them.

primarily count as literature (for instance, those written by Teodor Vârnav, Gr. Lăcusteanu, Artemie Anderco, Nicolae Stoica from Hațeg, Radu Sbiera, Al. Chibici-Râvneanu, Nicolae Șucu). More importantly, it supplements the fatally incomplete list of memoirs with synthetic articles dedicated to groups of memory texts, brought together either by the event or historical period they account for (e.g. memoirs of the Romanian Independence War) or by the region where they were written (memoirs from Bessarabia, Banat, etc.)

ERMW does not totally reject the canonicity of genre; instead, it attempts to “appease” its somewhat excessive rigor, indebted to traditional literary history’s emphasis on aesthetic significance. This is a “national” encyclopedia, temporally limited to an interval that does not reach beyond the year 1950, therefore it is rather strictly bounded. However, the “national” does not mean that it excludes memoirs written by foreign travelers about their Romanian experiences (Paul from Alep, Wilhelm de Kotzebue, Paul Morand) nor that it forgets the memoirs of numerous exiles, expatriates or bilingual writers (Nicolae Șuțu, Martha Bibescu, Panait Istrati). The articles on the experience of exile will also answer to the question of accounting for transnationalism in a culture-bound synthesis. At the same time, since *ERMW* follows a stretch of time that spans from the beginning of writing to the year 1950, it will not be able to index the great majority of memoirs from communist or even postcommunist Romania. It will include texts composed up to 1950, even if they were published much later. In the case of great authors whose memoirs or a significant part of them were written before 1950 (Mircea Eliade, Mihail Sadoveanu, Lucian Blaga), they will be included with their entire work, as a concession to their literary importance. Unfortunately, *ERMW* will not include alternative forms of registering experience brought about by the technological progresses of the late 20th century: the written or video blog, the Facebook feed, the digital narration. It will, however, be able to discuss the creative forms of autobiographical/ autofictional writings in the modernist period, from C. Stere to M. Blecher.

The types of articles proposed in *ERMW* are caught in a series of networks. There are five principle types of articles, some of them divided further into other categories that I will present here.

1) Memoir writers and memory texts. Great memoir writers are indexed, but also smaller ones; authors of literature (Maiorescu, Lovinescu, Sadoveanu, Iorga, Eliade, Blaga), but also memoirists from other fields, when their writings reflect important events and personalities (C. Argetoianu, I. Gh. Duca, Adriana Georgescu etc.). Even memoir writings that are more famous than their author (e.g. *The Life and Adventures of a Romanian Shepherd in Bulgaria*, by Nicolae Șucu) or with an unknown author are here registered, even though the examples, in Romanian literature, are not as many as in other literatures.

2) Memory syntheses. These are articles bringing together memoir writings based on the similarity of their major topics, whether those topics are a major historical landmark, a cultural personality, a geographical region. Several categories may be identified here: (a) *generational memoirs* (the 1848 generation of writers); (b) *memoirs of a literary group* (memoirs at “Junimea” society, memoirs of the group around „Viața Românească” magazine, memoirs from the „Sburătorul” group), (c) *memoirs polarized by a specific cultural personality* (memoirs about M. Eminescu). Other categories include writing with a less pronounced literary character: (d) *regional memoirs* (Bessarabian memoirs from the interwar period), (e) *professional memoirs* (written by doctors, army officials, etc.), (f) *period memoirs* (memoirs and diaries from the Belle-Époque; interwar memoirs).

3) Concepts of memory culture. The articles in this category provide the conceptual background for the other articles. They are meant to justify the encyclopedic research not just of memory-writing as an object for literary study, but also of some memorial practices as cultural phenomena. Among them are terms such as *cultural memory, place of memory, patrimony, tradition, posterity, postmemory, etc.*

4) Species of memory writing. These articles are concerned with several different types of rhetoric involved in memory writing. On the one hand, the category accommodates (a) *the various forms of the autobiographical discourse*, which I consider to be different from the literary species that are sometimes invoked in relation to memory writing, even though they do sometimes overlap, partially. I am referring to the diary, memoir, reportage, travel diary, diary of an artistic creation, the necrologue, the personal essay, and the verse diary. Then, there are the (b) *literary forms that borrow from memoir writing*: the autofiction (most of Radu Cosașu’s work), the mock autobiography (C. Bălăcescu, *Narration of the Voyage I Took with Pop up the Hill*), the roman à clef (Maria Ghiolu’s *Useless Serenade*; Mihail Sebastian’s *For Two Thousand Years*), and the ethnological *memorata*. The same subsection would include (c) *modern forms of personal narration that use new technologies*, such as the blog, the video-blog, the Facebook “wall”, but they all are more recent than 1950, therefore cannot be included in the *ERMW*. Finally, the encyclopedia would also be concerned with (d) *discourse techniques and rhetorical techniques in memory writing*, such as: narration, evocation, analepsis, prosopopoeia, stream of consciousness, etc.

5) Topics of memory writing. A necessary section of *ERMW* concerns the recurrent topics of Romanian memory writing from the period under

scrutiny. These topics have a significance in literary history, thanks to the creative ways in which they were shaped stylistically, but they also have a cultural history importance, since they reflect changes in generational mood, intimacy, interpersonal relationships. They impose the terms in which a tradition unfolds and borrow their authority from their canonical circulation. I refer to concepts such as authenticity, identity, self, love, genre, sexuality, memory, penitence, atonement, revelation, time, travel, exile, suicide, trauma.

ERMW assumes the implications of the spatial conditioning of a 21st century encyclopedia. Its various categories of articles reflect the various types of spatial discourse it aims to address. The space of the physical map is illustrated by regional memory writing or by texts bounded to a specific period in history, or by the transnational trajectories of exiles or travelling memory writers. The social space is touched on by showing openness to memoir writing in popular culture, such as the memorata or the verse diary. The rhetoric of space is illustrated implicitly, by indexing canonical memory writers immediately next to other, more low-profile ones, and by describing the dynamics of canonical selection based on stylistic performance and creative interference of memory discourses with literary, scientific, social, media discourses in the corpus under scrutiny. This way, *ERMW* makes an invitation to rereading Romanian literature and its multiple interferences with neighboring cultures, discourses and disciplines.

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