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WRITERS WITH DOUBLE IDENTITY
SUMMARY

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WRITERS WITH DOUBLE IDENTITY

The transcendence of borders through literature becomes a place where national identity merges with the identity of the other. A reflection on the literary networks is required when incorporating the World Literature theories, the transnational dialogues in writing and literature. This paper analyzes the diasporic experiences of Romanian writers that were established in the United States of America, a phenomenon analyzed from the perspective of World Literary studies, using distant reading techniques and graphs that map the dynamics of the geographical dispersion of Romanian writers in the USA between 1910-2020. Two separate concepts, *identity* and *diaspora*, are brought to discussion in order to examine the concept of double identity as manifested in writing by these authors that emigrated either forced by political contexts or due to academic opportunities. In the age of globalization, the writers' nature changes as they are subject to various intercultural experiences, especially those that have been exposed to political pressures during the communist years.

Based on the conclusions reached by sociologist Siniša Malešević and Zygmunt Bauman, the concept of identity is rather a new one in the sociology discourses as it represents a product of the Western world and modernity, where each person is strongly individualized, and their values do not always coincide with the values of the society they belong to. Therefore, the first chapter focuses on the conceptual delimitation of this term from a sociological, anthropological, psychological, and literary perspective. Shifting from the general definitions to more particular aspects, the national identity represents a phenomenon of constant transformation due to the socio-political changes that occur over time. For example, Fukuyama describes four means of building national identities: the transfer of populations across the political borders of a country (colonization or forced evacuations of citizens), moving borders to correspond to a linguistic or cultural community, naturalization of immigrants (assimilation of minor cultures within a major one) and reshaping the national identity to suit the characteristics of a specific community. Regarding how the national identity is depicted in Romanian literary histories, we notice a change of perspective as literary histories gradually integrate the extraterritorial dimensions of literature. For example, the recent *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature* written by Mihai Iovănel opens new paths towards the transnational identity of Romanian literature and argues the importance of

writers in exile (such as Norman Manea and Andrei Codrescu) in the process of adhering to the international canon. However, even if there are a few attempts to integrate the writers in diaspora within literary history, a separate chapter entirely dedicated to the matter is still missing. Nonetheless, such a process would raise difficulties as the diaspora's identity shows an incomplete profile due to the impossibility of analysing all the collections of texts, journals, and testimonies lost in the process of exile.

Under the guidelines of recent disciplines like World Literature Studies, this paper represents a quantitative study on the topic of Romanian writers that emigrated to the USA. As the international literary space becomes a competition for universal acknowledgment, such writers who have a double identity play a major role in promoting peripheral literature across the borders through their writings. Therefore, the second chapter focuses on the works of several researchers that had a great impact on the appearance of World Literature studies such as David Damrosch (*What is World Literature*), Immanuel Wallerstein (*World-System History*), Pascale Casanova (*The World Republic of Letters*), Franco Moretti (*Conjunctures on World Literature*) or Matthew L Jockers (*Macroanalysis. Digital Methods & Literary History*). They all propose a paradigm shift, a different way of reading that is “distant reading” and involves a general perspective over the literary networks, which does not imply giving up the national aspects. At the same time, apart from setting a general theoretical context, this chapter also describes the case of Romanian scholars that approached these quantitative methods and computational practices of reading literature. Working in the World Literature field is encouraged by literary institutions like the Digital Museum of the Romanian novel, an important source of access to many digitalized volumes. This initiative is auspicious because it provides data sets represented by scanned novels or scanned newspapers. At the moment, our literary field lacks such data even though it has a great amount of metadata provided by various dictionaries on writers, novels, and translations that offer a range of names, places, and years. This thesis works with metadata and employs the experimental methodology of quantitative studies such as distant reading and macroanalysis to highlight the dynamics of diasporic literature.

Consequently, the third chapter reconstructs the dynamics of Romanian writers' exodus to the USA. This process involves establishing a database containing all the writers that have left Romania between 1910 and 2020. Data was gathered consulting Aurel Sasu's volume *The*

dictionary of Romanian writers from the United States and Canada, Florin Manolescu's *Encyclopedia of Romanian Literary Exile, 1945-1989*, and *Romanian writers in Exile, 1945-1989* written by Eva Behring. Moreover, a request was addressed to the Romanian Cultural Institute to provide a list of the writers that emigrated until 2020. With the help of spreadsheets, a series of graphs were generated to indicate the exact places where these writers settled and the years of their departure. In addition to this, the paper follows the cultural manifestations that take place between 1910-1989. A flourishing period of Romanian cultural initiatives happens between 1900-1914 when the largest number of newspapers launched by Romanians in the United States is recorded (e.g. *The Romanian-American Courier*, *Tribuna*, *The Echo of America*, *the Romanian*, *America – the organ of the Romanians in the USA*). Later on, the obtained data showed a clear destabilization in terms of cultural activities once the two World Wars occurred. However, in the context of Communist Romania, new initiatives start from scratch in the USA, which explore the immigrant resilience towards the political atrocities, on the one hand, and the experience of establishing a literary network in exile, on the other hand. The graphs analyzed in this chapter highlighted, among many others, two major aspects; the first one concerns the situation of emigrant Romanian writers, whose number increased considerably during the communist period. And the second refers to the resurrection of Romanian cultural initiatives in the United States after the Second World War. The totalitarian political regime enhanced the mobility of Romanian intellectuals, who reunited in several groups in exile, having therefore a significant contribution of the latter one to the literary phenomenon.

After 1989, the number of Romanian American women writers who leave Romania is higher than that of men. Based on this trend, along with an investigation started by Daciana Branea regarding female literary voices from the Romanian American diaspora, the paper dedicates two sub-chapters to analyze the directions approached by these writers. They were grouped according to the time of their establishment in the United States to prove whether the political factor generated changes in their aesthetic formula or the cultural activities in which they were involved. Moreover, this part of the research combines the quantitative practices with the hermeneutical approach in order to highlight the double identity of these writers who explore their belonging and their hyphenated cultural identity through autobiographical writings or texts inspired by the trauma of uprooting.

The fourth chapter uses quantitative methods derived from Franco Moretti's distant reading to examine the impact of translations in Norman Manea and Andrei Codrescu's volumes *The hooligan's return* and *Wakefield*. The functions of translations within the circularity of a literary text illustrate the two methods that Lawrence Venuti discusses in his *The translator's invisibility*: foreignization and domestication that become here ways of investigating the aspect of double identity and national cultures. Literary prestige remains subordinate to some principles related to the laws of economics and marketing; therefore, translation must fit the needs of the target culture in order to succeed.

By mapping the dynamics of diasporic geographical mobilities along with the practice of distant reading through translations, the present paper argues the transnationality of Romanian Literature through writers with a double identity. Furthermore, the field of cultural migrancy raises evidence of the need of incorporating the literature of Romanian diaspora into literary histories.