Artifices of Construction: The Unlimited *Space of Literature* in Adrian Oţoiu's *Coaja lucrurilor sau Dansând cu Jupuita*

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Abstract

The article explores Adrian Oţoiu's attempt to push further the limits of expression and representation in his novel *The Skin of the Matter or Dancing with the Flayed*, as well as his renegotiation of what Maurice Blanchot called 'the space of literature', which opens up towards architecture and choreography, to name the main two other arts engaging with literature, old and new, in a constructive dialogue. Following the Heideggerian finitude of the infinite spiral that the protagonist flattens out, the article analyses the Blanchovian Orphic space at the end of the novel, in which the main character, Ştefan is 'dead without being dead' or 'infinitely dead'.

Keywords: *literary space, khôra, choreographic architecture, finitude, death, Adrian Oţoiu, Maurice Blanchot, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, deconstruction*

Let us cross a boundary line or let us stay on a threshold looking towards a space that would not let itself be reached, a space where there are no fixed demarcations. We will therefore start from a book that archives science, music, the visual arts, the mind, translation, mathematics, self-reference, a book entitled *Gödel, Escher, Bach: A Golden Braid. A Metaphorical Fugue of Minds and Machines in the Spirit of Lewis Carroll.* Hofstadter[1]'s book abolishes any limits between concepts and categories and is shaped in the form of dialogues with arts, each intended to be patterned on a different piece by Bach. All this infinite fugue is constructed in the shadow of Carroll's playfulness. Hofstadter brought these creators together on account of their "Strange Loops", in which paradox combined the finite and the infinite, on the limit between musical and architectural scales in an almost mathematical manner (see 25).

Hofstadter limited his search to weave an Eternal Golden Braid only to three strands: Gödel, Escher, Bach. The point where he began was Gödel's theorem, but his ideas "expanded like a sphere", soon touching Bach and Escher, since the three of them "were only shadows cast in different directions by some central solid essence" (36).

At this point of our paradoxical journey, on the same threshold we were at the beginning, we would start wondering why a trained mathematician and doctor in physics focused on consciousness, analogy-making, artistic creation and mathematics

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[1] Hofstadter's interests vary from music to visual art, creativity, consciousness, mathematics and translation. Apart from *Gödel, Escher, Bach: A Golden Braid. A Metaphorical Fugue of Minds and Machines in the Spirit of Lewis Carroll*, Douglas Hofstadter is best known for his *Le Ton beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language,* which contains in its very title, a pun, and which is a detailed examination of a short translation of a minor French poem.

through the hospitable territory of literature. Could one consider literature the most hospitable territory that welcomes crossing boundaries, horizons, demarcation lines, and paradoxes?

My essay will endeavour to answer this question in the affirmative, using as an illustrative touchstone *Coaja lucrurilor sau Dansând cu jupuita* (*The Skin of the Matter or Dancing with the Flayed*), a novel by contemporary writer, translator and essayist Adrian Oțoiu. Oțoiu's book provides a prime example of the way literature forces its limits and paradoxically binds together forms of representation from alien fields, incorporating them in what Blanchot called the *space of literature* (*l'espace littéraire*, or *l'espace de l'oeuvre*): the "distance" of the work from "every other object which exists", but also from itself, as a work is permanently in progress, never finished (Blanchot, 1989, 27). Blanchot's book *The Literary Space*, "the most detailed theory of literary inspiration to be found in Western literature, vindicating the fruitfulness of this ancient concept"(Clark, 1996, 46), engaged with the question of writing as breaking the bond that unites the word with the writer as well as the way literary, philosophical, social and political history intertwined. Within the literary space, a work becomes unique, complete only if it lacks something, "where this lack is its infinite relation to itself, a plenitude in the mode of deficiency" (see Blanchot, 1993, 391).

With *Coaja lucrurilor*, Oțoiu placed the literary intertext in the vicinity of philosophy, architecture and science[2]: the novel may be read as an illustration of Heidegger's concept of finitude and Blanchot's notion of a future death that is already past; it also retains elements from Joyce's Odyssean style, and it shapes the protagonist Ştefan not only as a Stephen Dedalus of sorts but also as an Aitmatovian *mankurt*[3]. It is reminiscent of John Barth's funhouse and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*; as sepulchral book which is a sort of grave of whatever could fit in it, as one of the characters, Gil, claims, or that might ever be written, and every possible permutation or slightly erroneous version of every one of those books it archives, it makes its own loops through Escher's creation, it glosses lists of fruit, vegetables, foods, beverages, technical terms, dictionaries past and future. *Coaja Lucrurilor* is an archive of dead texts that Oțoiu brings back to life, being aware that he cannot circumscribe the archive. Hardly anything escapes Oțoiu's peeling, skinning or flaying. The novel was conceived not as his first book, but as his only Book, aspiring to totality (see Alexandrescu). Soon after its publication, the novel was awarded the Writers Union's prize for beginners and it was highly praised by critics. Reviewers saw the writer's touching the skin of all things as "lust" (language games, intertextuality, parody, de-mythfication, the (auto)biographical, Joyce action on 450 pages, the delirium of dictionaries) (see Din).

The book's cover displays Oțoiu's own drawing inspired by Escher's spirals and the 1956 lithograph *Bond of Union* - the spiral represents a flayed figure, like a perfectly peeled potato. By the middle of the novel, we find out that this is the only perfect creation of the architect Ştefan Gliga: "[…] we notice that the architect has achieved neither more nor less than … The Ideal Geometric Unfolding of the Potato! The resulting scalp is an infinite strip twisted in a perfect spiral that shivers over the muds in

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[2] The book displays a full array of technical details concerning high speed cars, aerodynamics, and computer science, among others.

[3] Chyngyz Aitmatov was a Soviet and Kyrgyz author, whose book *The Day Lasts More Than A Hundred Years* has as its main protagonist a young captive turned into a mankurt (a person whose brain is washed to such an extent that he cannot remember anything, but basic activities, thus becoming an ideal slave). This reference was brought to my attention through Sanda Cordoş's essay. (see Cordoş, 169).

the sink. A masterly spiral twined as… what should he compare it to? - to a spiral staircase"[4] (262). Ştefan's perfect geometrical figure, the narrator thinks, would make not only Figaro envious but also Pythagoras. Neither the Necker cube nor the Penrose triangle, the three-dimensional spiral skin of Ştefan's potato (the peel of things) which seems infinite can be flattened out into a two-dimensional finite strip. I would call it the dialectical spiral of Oţoiu's creation within the two-dimensional space of the book, which plays with architectural spaces, the staircase that Ştefan projects, but never builds.

Before actually entering Oţoiu's book, on the first page, the reader's gaze is ensnared by Escher's *Ascending and Descending* (1960) into contemplation of an optical illusion. The drawing shows a rectangular inner courtyard bounded by a building whose roof is populated by two lines of identically dressed men on an endless staircase, one line ascending whilst the other is descending. While most two-dimensional artists use relative proportions to create an illusion of depth and perspective, Escher resorts to proportions that contradict each other to create his visual paradox. The inhabitants of these living quarters seem to be some order of monks, involved in what seems like a ritual duty to climb those stairs for a few hours each day. Two figures, possibly recalcitrant individuals refusing to conform to the rules, sit apart from the lines of people on the endless staircase; they turn their backs to the world and exclude themselves from it: one in a secluded courtyard, the other on a lower set of stairs.

This is the signature of another art that Oţoiu chose to enter his literary space. Nevertheless, establishing what (literary) space is for Oţoiu can likewise be a tricky task. Taking into account Plato's definition of space as *khôra* in *Timaeus*, and Derrida's extended notion of *chora* which exceeds the polarity of the *mythos* and the *logos* (see Derrida, Eisenman, 1997, 15), *chora* can designate "a place of absolute exteriority" non-space or ante-primal space (see Derrida, 2002, 57). Derrida's elaboration on Plato's notion demarcates the clearing of the limit between 'place', as something defined and identifiable, a definition going more towards the originary non-place. As Laurent Milesi has shown, Derrida's more archaic *khôra* also resonates with the choreography of a more originary writing, Mallarmé's 'pure place of choreographic space' as in the much admired line 'rien n'aura eu lieu que le lieu' (Milesi, 175).

With this transgression of *khôra* (in)to the choreographic, we can work out Oţoiu's khôric space as a literary space invaded by a choreographic architecture. Oţoiu's literary *folies*[5] are equivalent to the famous *Dancing House* (Tančící dům) in Prague. Its builders, Croatian-Czech Vlado Milunc and Canadian-American Frank O Gehry, conceived the building as a legendary dance duo and originally named it *Fred and Ginger,* alluding to the famous dancers Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The Romanian writer defines his own art in relation to choreography from the novel's very title, since his character is dancing with the flayed. One of the recurrent symbols of the novel is Xipé, the anatomic cast that Ştefan's former wife left in the house as a reminder of their broken marriage, "flayed" of a future together. It is the profane everyday incarnation of the Aztec Xipé Totec ("our lord, the flayed one"), the deity of life-death-rebirth, giving food to humanity. Xipé, a golden god, is symbolic of the way

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[4] All translations from the novel are mine; I am grateful to the author and to Laurent Milesi for checking the translation of the most difficult passages.
[5] The term *Folies* designates Bernard Tschumi's modern architectural space in Paris (La Villette) to which Derrida dedicated a study on the event of architecture: 'Point de folie - Maintenant l'architecture'.

maize seeds lose their outer layer before germination and of snakes shedding their skin. During the long Joycean day that the novel is patterned on, Ştefan has Xipé's eye to accompany him, in a gesture equivalent to Bloom's carrying a potato in his pocket all day long. But in order to break with the past, he throws it into the fire only to find it back in his pocket later on. Xipé is just like Ştefan: a *revenant*. The narration breaks up its normal flow. The final dance with Xipé (transformed into a woman) is the *Dance with the Maiden*, a variation of the *Danse Macabre*, the late-medieval allegory of Death. Xipé asks for the sacrifice of the novel's protagonist but the novel also flays an epoch that left deep imprints in a culture; reading Oţoiu, we glide along with Xipé in measured dance steps and rhythmical movements that attempt to put communism to rest, by making fun of its institutions, its language, and its stereotypes. The whole display of the book is choreographic, a collage in permanent motion. Once we believe that we have become familiar with the coherence and the specificity of the motion, its hylectics breaks; at each of its steps the dance is a discor*dance*: it is dis-placed, dis-located, our horizon of expectation destabilized. The space of Gil's own diary and of Pol's notes on his death bed (written as postcards on Monopoly cards - the bank money) invade Oţoiu's novel. Circular sequences of text (side notes, drawings) surround the main text; insets akin to those which carve out an opening into some pages of Derrida's *Glas* enter the page, proposing not a dialogue between Hegel and Genet, but a dialogue between Ştefan/his lover and the washing machine as the source of water and life (possibly reminiscent of the washerwomen or 'Anna Livia Plurabelle' chapter in *Finnegans Wake*). Dashes appear in lieu of omitted fragments, and all in all the text continuously invites the reader to interact with the book similarly to the way in which a partner is invited to a tango.

The horizon where the literary, the choreographic and the architectural intersect in Oţoiu's novel is death. Whenever it crosses the border between spaces, Oţoiu's writing becomes a thanatography[6]. Ştefan is caught in a liminal space between life and death, on the border of death, and the novel may be read as an aporia of death. In *Aporias* Derrida tries to approach what death is in relation to the limit and the border as follows:

> Let us consider, for example, this negative sentence: "death *has no* border". Or else, let us consider one of these affirmations, which all imply something completely different: "death *is* a border", "according to an almost universal figure, death is represented as the crossing of a border, a voyage between the here and the beyond, with or without a ferryman, with or without a barge, with or without elevation, toward this or that place beyond the grave." Here, now, is an interrogation: "Can death be reduced to some line crossing, to a departure, to a separation, to a step, and therefore to a *decease?"* And, finally, here is a proposition that could be called interro-denegative: "Is not death, like decease, the crossing of a border, that is, a trespassing on death [*un trepas*], an overstepping or a transgression (*transire, "sic transit",* etc.)? (6)

Mapping Derrida's de-marcations onto the fictional space inhabited by Oţoiu's protagonist, we can construe Ştefan's hospitable dance with Xipé as passionately and truly embracing death. Sanda Cordoş also regarded Oţoiu's novel as a book of death and listed the signs of death in the novel: from the suit of "Lady Death" that Ştefan looks at in the morning to the premonition of Mrs Olga (who sees in the coffee cup "a long way over the waters"), to the pinwheel that stops, to the sign 'x' (or possibly a cross) that

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[6] A description of someone's symptoms and thoughts on death while dying. A treatise on death.

Cârnu draws on the car Ştefan gets in, to the chapter entitled "Welcome to SMRT"[7] (see Cordoş, 2007, 169). Many other such signs can be added to Cordoş's list, among which the insistence on the finitude of time. In fact, Oţoiu puts forward a very Heideggerian view of life throughout the novel, which reads like a continuous rehearsal of the protagonist's last descending and an interpretation of the phenomenon of death as *de-limitation*, as Derrida proposed to read it in *Being and Time*: "The Delimitation [*die Abgrenzung*] of the Existential Analysis of Death with Respect to Possible Other Interpretations of the Phenomenon" (see *Aporias*, 41).

On the one hand, Ştefan rehearses his own "mode of having-been", its modified present and its modified future in their temporalizing (see Heidegger, 1966, 314) both through the events he participates in, and symbolically (his watch has stopped) he anticipates death and expects it. On the other hand, Oţoiu bids farewell to Romanian communism, whose demise he celebrates.

It has been said that there is no precise "frontier" between Oţoiu's prose and his theoretical work (see especially Cernat, 2001). His study on the Romanian generation of the 1980's (*optzecismul*) *Trafic de frontieră. Proza generaţiei '80. Strategii transgresive* (Border Traffic. The Prose of the Generation of the '80s. Transgressive Strategies) established 1995 as the limit, which rightly caused Paul Cernat to wonder whether Oţoiu's novel published in 1996 was not but the very novel of the frontier, an apocalypse of scriptic literature" (see especially Cernat, 2001). Following Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory on describing "the in-between spaces", Oţoiu's critical study on the fiction of the so-called "Generation of the Eighties," an informal literary group making their debut in the mid-1980s, yet whose "experiment in prose and poetry was to alter Romania's literary landscape in the decade to come", featured "liminality and its plethora of associations: ambiguity, hybridity, transgression" (Oţoiu, 2003, 87-88).

In Gil's unfinished novel, spliced into his creator's novel as computer files ready to be printed, we glimpse the end of the novel through a loop on page 28:

> How is it? Simple. You click MEMORY, click PRINT and look what you get:
>
> <FILE END 666 TXT>
>
> What are you saying there? No way! A new day starts. Well, yes, this is only the beginning.
>
> STOP! Hell! What the hell is this text doing here? Aargh! Let's try in the dead memory (28).

The protagonist is therefore caught somewhere in between the end of file 666, the symbolic number of the Beast in the Apocalypse, the most common symbol for the Antichrist or, alternatively, the Devil, and what he calls "the dead memory" in an impossibility to die. In fact, Gil writes from the very beginning an *autothanatography*, a report of "an experience that can be rendered possible only through an unthinkable *sur-*

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[7] Using Diana Adamek's analysis on the novel, Cordoş reveals that 'smrt' in Czech means 'death'. (see Cordoş, 169).

vivre which would make it possible to configure a writing *d'outre tombe*", a "tale of death's beyond" (Callus, 2005, 427).

We know that Oţoiu's choice was to transform his *word* processor into a *world* processor. Thus the dead memory or *Read Only Memory*, abbreviated as ROM, can be interpreted as a critique of ROMania or, more specifically, of communist Romania which Oţoiu, like many intellectuals of his generation, hopes to bury but whose death, as he discovers to his horror, has not taken place yet.

Ştefan's outlook on time is reduced to Heideggerian temporality, and is *finite*.

At the beginning of the novel, having forgotten he had taken his Omega watch to Leopold's repair shop, Ştefan sighs near the window pane, making it steamy. He scribbles a "shivering Ω" (14) on it. Once the watch has been repaired, Ştefan could claim, similarly to Jesus writing on the ground (John 8:6), and like Leopold Bloom in 'Nausicaa': I AM A[LPHA] AND O[MEGA], the first and the last. Without his watch, the protagonist is what Blanchot called "dead without being dead", since his time stopped. In one of Oţoiu's chapters, entitled '*Die zeitlose Uhr*', time even stops. Leopold Krebs, the old watchmaker, repeatedly postpones repairing Ştefan's Omega watch. Even if Ştefan tries to look for what he tentatively defines as "pure time" (159), old Leopold reveals to Oliver that he disassembled the watch in order to understand it (167). Time no longer exists for him since the dial seems to be invisible:

> "But where is the dial? Where is the mechanism?"
> "It is here." Master Krebs whispers, picking up the watch from her hand and putting it in front of the lamp. "It is here, inside." He orients the lamp shade so that the light crosses the empty orbit of the dial. The figures on the transparent dial cast esoteric shadows on the walls.
> "Yet it is invisible, young lady…" he adds, his voice quavering with emotion (168).

Yet Leopold Krebs makes sure that he stops Ştefan's time in a limbic space, between *no longer* and *not yet*, a life has already been exhausted. While in the forest, before the car accident, Ştefan realizes his watch (a cheap substitute for his valuable Omega) is lost. He dies and from above he looks at his own corpse. At this point, Ştefan's interior monologue, combined with third and second person narration, becomes both an autothanatography and an ironic self-mourning.

With or without time, Oţoiu plays with the dialectical method which makes the reader look for this lost time without being precisely sure where he is. The reader can't be sure whether the facts he examines are magnified, reduced or distorted and the same sensation of being lost in time is pertained on the notion of space. Vera, Ştefan's lover, sees the space they are, the whole edifice as a labyrinth. The narrator agrees: "And the paths still remain entangled, dialogues and times still mixed, and the two of them still astray [...]" (213).

Oţoiu subliminally tells us that in spite of opening and closing structures and transgressing fiction, we will not take hold of the "heart of the matter". While in his girlfriend's apartment, Ştefan finds Graham Greene's eponymous book and wonders about "that Greene" who could claim to go into the heart of the matter in only 300 pages: "Has anybody ever reached there? This Greene? No way! Till he could battle his way through, he would have to grapple with the skin, in many perfidious strata (258). Oţoiu's protagonist refuses to go into the heart of things; he is perfectly satisfied "to touch only the shining skin of things" (see 259).

The Joycean architext shapes the protagonist of Oțoiu's novel as the Romanian version of Stephen Dedalus, recalling the architect in Greek mythology who was entrusted by King Minos with the task of building the Labyrinth in which he would keep his wife's son, the Minotaur, prisoner. But he is also an Escher trying to build a staircase during his entire career. The staircase is "Casa Scărilor Motel Făget", the staircase of a communist motel. And the architect is also a Balkan artist who becomes Manel in his own manuscript. Peeling off the first layer of Manel's name, we get to Master Manole[8]. In his diary, Gil admits a Freudian slip of the pen that Manel, his character is in fact Ștefan: "We take the pen, good, we cut Ștefan, we write Manel over it. Alright… Manel, what a stupid name! Who the hell will guess that it comes from Manole, which comes from Manoli Manoli the wall squeezes me badly! The wall of literary convention, obviously. That our Ștefan is a Manoli topsy-turvy, what he builds at night (his drawers are groaning with projects), others destroy by day. Pah, the world's topsy-turvy, really!" (356).

Escher's model appears one more time at the end of the novel when Ștefan returns home after having a narrow escape from a car accident. He was a witness to his own lack of being, contemplating his own body, but within the space of his own mourning, he became a *revenant*. And he stares one more time at Escher's *Ascending and Descending* and imagines himself parachuted there, joining the procession of the ones who "descend, descend, descend, indifferent to this world's temptations […] They descend, always descend passing through the same places where they have been before, yet convinced that they have reached much deeper than it is given man to reach (436).

At this point Ștefan would identify himself with one of the monks who stepped out of line. He would become "the black sheep", the one who "chose freedom", who "broke away from the group", because his eye can no longer fall prey to the "perfidious *trompe l'oeil*" (437). The more the protagonist is lost outside, in the strangeness of this Escherian descent, the more he realizes that what he sees does not correspond to real vision. He covers with tracing paper the details which create the optical illusion, but he is still caught in the loop because his mind starts wondering:

> Do they not somehow, somewhere on this route, overstep some unseen limit, ending up by reaching another space, Möbius' infinite curved space, Asimov's 4D, or maybe Mors osculi of which Pico della Mirandola speaks with utmost reluctance? (437)

Ștefan approaches the space of his own death and yet he cannot 'achieve' it. (Blanchot had mentioned that "[d]eath, in the human perspective, is not a given, it must be achieved. – see 1989, 96) Death is for the protagonist a Möbius strip in a Euclidean space, a surface with only one side and no boundary: the point of departure beyond always returns, and in spite of his movements towards death, he remains foreign to the eternal outside. The final space we are transported to is an Orphic underworld, a hole that reminds Ștefan of the famous Security files during Ceaușescu's time. This underworld which does not push hell back, but makes its way in(side) it, carefully

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[8] According to a well-known Romanian legend, Master Manole and his nine builders were employed by Negru Vodă to build the most beautiful monastery in the country. However, what Manole built at daytime would collapse during the night. In a subsequent dream, it was revealed to Manole that the only solution to fortify the walls of his monastery was to sacrifice a human being, and in collusion with his masons, the master architect decided that they would immure the first female (wife or sister) to be spotted on the site the following morning. The first one to appear was Ana, Manole's wife with their child in her womb, who was thus built into the wall and the monastery was kept safe.

inscribes and labels Ştefan's whole life (4.X.1970, 13.1.1963, 22.VII.1975, etc.) and brings back all the things that he thought were lost. Yet the very last word of the novel is "beginning".

The event called death cannot happen to the protagonist, as after the night Ştefan experiences his end, there is still a tomorrow. In his intimacy with his own death, from the other side, in a labyrinth which by definition is a metaphor that denies 'place' (see Derrida, Eisenman, 46), Ştefan finds an encampment on the wall of that chamber, outside his own apartment, being both 'infinitely dead', and still not freed from life:

> Soon, Ştefan Gliga whispers to himself, the sunrise will flood the skylight in the ceiling. His waiting has ended. The restlessness is over. His agony is finished. Oh, he was glad, this is indeed the end.
> What are you saying there? No way! A new day starts. Well, yes, this is only the beginning (445).

What kind of sunrise will this be in an already Orphic space? The scene is at night and the sunrise will in fact never come within the space of the novel. A disastrous one, we might say, having in mind the outside, the disaster and the return from Blanchot's book of disaster: the dis-aster caused by the falling of the star (aster, *astre*):

> Light breaks forth: the burst of light, the dispersion that resonates or vibrates dazzlingly – and in clarity clamors but does not clarify. The breaking forth of light, the shattering reverberation of a language to which no hearing can be given. (Blanchot, 1995, 39)

There is light to come in Ştefan's limited space of the encampment he manages to build, yet "a sun would attest not to the day, but to the night delivered of stars, multiple night." (Blanchot, 1995, 5)

Oţoiu augments the space of literature in which the life of his character is dissipated rhythmically. His readers would normally expect only to see death, to see the character dead, but they forget that he is what Gil, his friend called him "Esteban, the most beautiful drowned man in the world" (214), he is 'dead without being dead'. Blanchot remarked that once the character feels free, once he no longer feels the willed estrangement from the world and the monstrous fear that took hold of him (*Angst*), he is infinitely dead:

> Death, "to see only death", is thus the error of a limited life and of a poorly converted consciousness. Death is that very concern to delimit which we introduce into being; it is the result and perhaps the means of the bad transmutation by which we make of all thing objects - tightly closed, well-finished realities imbued with our preoccupation with the finish. Freedom must be liberation from death, the approach toward the point where death becomes transparent. (145)

Somehow, Oţoiu managed to achieve in Romanian literature what Escher did in his graphic art, an impossible structure that plays with perspectives in the literary space in which, to borrow once more a definition from Blanchot, "death enters its own invisibility, passes from its opacity to its transparency, from its terrifying reality to its ravishing unreality". (Blanchot, 1982, 146)

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Artificii de construcţie. Spaţiul nelimitat al literaturii în romanul lui Adrian Oţoiu, *Coaja lucrurilor sau Dansând cu Jupuita*

Articolul explorează încercarea lui Adrian Oţoiu de a depăşi limitele de expresivitate şi reprezentare în romanul său *Coaja lucrurilor sau Dansând cu jupuita*, insistând asupra renegocierii ideii de *spaţiu literar* (în accepţia lui Maurice Blanchot), care se se deschide în romanul lui Oţoiu către arhitectură şi coreografie. Urmărind conceptul de finitudine al lui Heidegger, pe spirala infinită pe care protagonistul o redă bidimensional, pentru a nu cădea pradă perfidului *trompe l'oeil*, articolul analizează din perspectivă blachotiană spaţiul orfic de la finalul romanului, în care Ştefan devine *mort fără a fi mort* sau *mort de-a pururi*.