



On Your Own in a One-and-Unequal World: Forms and Worldviews in Contemporary Romanian Narratives of Emigration

Adriana STAN

Babeş Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Corresponding author emails: adriana.stan@ubbcluj.ro

On Your Own in a One-and-Unequal World: Forms and Worldviews in Contemporary Romanian Narratives of Emigration

Abstract: Abstract: This article examines the political and world-literary location and outlook developed in the contemporary Romanian literature that details labor emigration. To that end, I bring under joint scrutiny the fields of postcolonialism, postcommunist and migration studies, to argue that fiction about postcommunist economic emigration cannot be adequately addressed within the cosmopolitan, postnational paradigm that was celebrated by postcolonialism. I also discuss how this Romanian literary archive that translates an experience of economic subalternity could engage with Wallerstein-inspired world-systems theories and comparative frameworks that posit global capitalism as the matrix of world-literature. In approaching my choice set of novels (written by Radu Aldulescu, Liliana Corobca, Liliana Nechita, Dan Lungu, Ioana Baetica Morpurgo), I explore questions of form and genre, to inquire what modes of storytelling account for the subjectivities born out of capitalist precarity and whether testimonial forms of writing are better suited to expose the “situational consciousness” of the peripheral subject. My main argument is that, while the narrative features displayed through these novels indicate the difficulty to provide a critical account of world-systemic unevenness, they manage to expose the fragmentation enforced by capital on social communities.

Keywords: emigration, neoliberalism, postcolonialism, economic neocolonialism, testimonial writing

Citation suggestion: Stan, Adriana. “On Your Own in a One-and-Unequal World: Forms and Worldviews in Contemporary Romanian Narratives of Emigration.” *Transilvania*, no. 4 (2024): 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.51391/trva.2024.04.01>.



In contemporary Romanian-language literature, the number of narratives depicting westward labor migration fails to match the huge sociological extent of this process, which has intensified against the backdrop of European Union integration. Labor emigration across the integrated, yet uneven market of enlarged Europe has been increasing from newest members of the Union, like Romania and Bulgaria, more than from states with a better established European position, like Hungary and Poland. Unlike the latter, whose twentieth century history had already witnessed large emigration flows, the former became substantial providers of migrant, mostly low-skilled labor especially as they were officially integrated in the European market, which occurred in 2007.¹ A historically unprecedented wave of

1. The numbers of emigration from Romania increased massively after 2000: in 1990 – only 3,5% of the country’s population had emigrated, whereas in 2020 – over 20%, which is about 4 million emigrants born in Romania. Antonio Ricci, “Dincolo de ‘Cortina de Fier’: 30 de ani de migrații din România” [Beyond the “Iron Curtain”: 30 Years of Migrations from Romania], in *Rădăcini la jumătate. Treizeci de ani de imigrație românească în Italia* [Half Roots. Thirty Years of Romanian Immigration in Italy], ed. Miruna Căjvăneanu et al. (Istituto di Studi Politici „S. PIO V”: Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, 2022), 13.

mass economic migration saw Romania lose one fifth of its population by 2020 and provide half of the entire European immigration originating from Eastern Europe.²

Most Romanian labor migrants headed toward countries with informal labor markets (like Italy and Germany) and countries with poorly subsidized social services (like Spain, Austria, and UK), to work especially in service, home care, construction, and agriculture jobs, alongside better-skilled fields like the medical sector.³ Although unskilled laborers from rural and small-town areas made for the largest amount of emigration, Romanian media has often emphasized the picture of a successful brain-drain diaspora.⁴ Additionally, the intense lobby for neoliberalism made by the political mainstream ever since the mid-1990s helped cast westward emigration within the frame of transnational upward mobility. Sociological surveys, however, point to a darker picture, in which Romanian emigration emerged in response to economic precariousness at home and the collapse of the welfare state.⁵ After 2000, it was emigration that helped shrink the unemployment rate in Romania, while remittances sent by those working abroad barely enabled their relatives at home to survive. Adding to the picture of a disintegrating society, whose chief trend has been the export of low-skilled labor, is the rather libertarian approach undertaken by recent Romanian governments, which became increasingly withdrawn from social welfare responsibilities and open instead to the demands of multinational corporations that are now dominating the local economy.

It is within this context that my article inquires whether Romanian fiction about postcommunist labor emigration can cast a light on Romania's dependent position within the present-day geography of neocolonial capitalism, as it unfolds in the EU's trade and labor market. Such fiction remains scarce in recent Romanian literature, although novels with autobiographical content (Liliana Nechita, *Bitter Cherries*, 2014), with a sociologically accurate (Dan Lungu, *The Girl Who Played at Being God*, 2014) or an indirect treatment of economic migration (Liliana Corobca, *Kinderland*, 2013) did enjoy popular and critical success in Romania and The Republic of Moldova. It also remains less visible to a world-literary audience, despite a recent and well-received English translation of Corobca's novel.⁶ Adding to this lack of international exposure is, I believe, an apparent mismatch between the worldview projected by these Romanian literary narratives - which tends to be conservative and nation/family-oriented - and the post-national, cosmopolitan worldview that has been normally expected from postcolonial and post-Cold War literatures within the purview of globalisation. Nonetheless, it is precisely its geopolitical context and thematic concern that should render postcommunist Romanian literature on economic emigration with an appropriate vantage point to reflect on world-systemic processes of capitalist integration, which are uneven and have peripheralizing effects on a transnational scale.

Indeed, most – though not all – contemporary Romanian literature on labor emigration unfolds against the backdrop of Romania's integration to the European Union, which officialized the country's absorption within the neoliberal regime of capitalism, after the first postcommunist governments delayed undertaking structural adjustment programs. Unlike "shock doctrines" that played a pivotal role in establishing economic dependencies in Latin America during the 1980s and facilitating post-communist transition in states like Poland,⁷ Romania's journey toward neoliberalism was not solely driven by such policies, but was also influenced by anti-communist civil society elites, for whom economic liberalism was synonymous with freedom and democracy.⁸ However, the end result was that

2. Romanian emigrants alone accounted for almost half of the 7.8 million emigrants from this region in 2015–2016 (OECD 2019).

3. For more, see Dumitru Sandu, *Lumi sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate* (Iași: Polirom, 2010).

4. Raluca Iacob (Bâra), "Brain Drain Phenomenon in Romania: What Comes in Line after Corruption? A Quantitative Analysis of the Determinant Causes of Romanian Skilled Migration," *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations* 20, no. 2 (2018): 53–78.

5. See an overview in Daniela Andrén, Monica Roman, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Romanian Migrants during Transition and Enlargements," The Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, Discussion Paper No. 8690, December 2014.

6. Liliana Corobca, *Kinderland*, translated by Monica Cure (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2023).

7. As argued in the famous contribution of Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

8. For a very similar Mexican intellectual climate and campaign that predated the implementation of economic neoliberalism, see Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado, "Mont Neoliberal Periodization: The Mexican 'Democratic Transition' from Austrian Libertarianism to the 'War on Drugs' in *World Literature, Neoliberalism, and the Culture of Discontent*, ed. Sharae Deckard and Stephen Shapiro (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 93–111.



postcommunist Romania's capitalist integration effectively reversed the semi-autarchic economic patterns pursued under Ceaușescu's nationalist communism in the 1970s and 1980s, when the regime had sought withdrawal from foreign capital by attempting to repay all external debts. Around the year 2000, Romania shifted towards a "disembedded capitalism" that aligned with the Baltic model, yet diverged from the Slovenian social democratic and the Hungarian-Czech neocorporatist forms of capitalism, which featured stronger state involvement in social protection.⁹ Several sources observed that while these latter Central European states moved closer to core status,¹⁰ South Eastern Europe's Romania and Bulgaria, which became main providers of cheap migrant labor, experienced peripheralization as they formally integrated into the European market.¹¹ If one applies the common North-South framework for global inequalities, one could say that, with its mass emigration flows, in supply of labor for Western Europe's tertiary and reproductive sectors, Romania reiterates some of the neocolonial patterns observed across the Global South.¹²

Even in the face of such impending realities evidenced by economic and social sciences, cultural and literary analyses of Eastern Europe failed to move beyond the postcolonial conversation that unfolded around 2000 around the presumed colonial status of Soviet-type communism,¹³ to address instead how the more recent neocolonial regime of transnational labor plays out within Eastern European artistic production. Although some important scholarly work has been made, in that respect, within film studies¹⁴, literary analyses pertaining to the region have chosen to focus on the more culturally cosmopolitan aspects of migratory flows thematized by postcommunist fiction, rather than on the neocolonial economic regime in which these processes and their literary renditions unfold. This reluctance might be related to a general aversion displayed by humanities scholars across continental Europe (yet, not shared by post-cultural materialism scholars from UK) toward discussing Europe's colonial history, old and new, both within and outside the continent.

On the other hand, Eastern Europe has remained a blind spot as well for materialist world-literature accounts that made a strong argument once with the publication of the Warwick Collective's 2013 volume.¹⁵ Although such accounts prioritize (semi)peripheral sites of global capitalism, where the system's violence and unevenness come across in more brutal forms and more vivid artistic expressions, they mostly concern Anglophone literatures, or literary cultures with a colonial history in the traditional sense of the former European empires (like those from Latin America or Africa). Also noteworthy is the predilection shown by these studies, with a certain modernist bent, for more sophisticated artistic registers, which are considered better suited to register capitalism's alienating effects.¹⁶ Therefore, while world-literature, with a hyphen, has aptly alerted us to literature's intimate relation to capital, which becomes more palpable as one gets further from cores, it also ended up over-exposing certain sites of the global literary archive, to the detriment of others.

9. Cornel Ban, *Dependență și dezvoltare. Economia politică a capitalismului românesc* [Dependency and Development. The Political Economy of Romanian Capitalism], translated by Ciprian Șiușea (Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2014), 12, 205.

10. Paul Knox, John Agnew, and Linda McCarthy, eds., *The Geography of the World Economy* (London: Routledge, 2014), 43.

11. This outcome is anticipated, soon after the second wave of Eastern enlargement, by British sociologist Adrian Favell, "The New Face of East-West Migration in Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34, no. 5 (2008): 701-716.

12. I expanded this idea in a forthcoming article. See Adriana Stan and Cosmin Borza, "Labors of Love. Migration and Women's Work in Contemporary Literature from Romania and The Republic of Moldova" (forthcoming).

13. A few landmarks references from this debate: David Chioni Moore, "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?" in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, edited by Violeta Kelertas (New York: Rodopi, 2006): 11-43; Neil Lazarus, "What postcolonial theory doesn't say," *Race & Class* 53, no. 1 (2011): 3-27; Andrei Terian, "Is There an East-Central European Postcolonialism? Towards a Unified Theory of (Inter)Literary Dependency," *World Literature Studies*, no. 3 (2012): 21-36; Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Cristina Șandru, eds. *Postcolonial Perspectives on Postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016).

14. See Anca Parvulescu, *The Traffic in Women's Work: East European Migration and the Making of Europe* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Kris von Hueckelom, *Polish Migrants in European Film 1918-2017* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2019).

15. Warwick Research Collective (WReC), *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

16. The so-called "irrealist registers" or "aesthetics of anamorphosis", see WReC, 72-76.

To inquire whether Eastern European literary renditions of labor migration do encode, and are aware of, global processes of capitalist dependency, one should also consider the many doubts expressed in the past two decades, not without connection to Mark Fisher's popularity, in respect to the foreshortened horizons of contemporary cultures. These cultures are said to maintain very limited abilities to breed comprehensive, totalizing and possibly critical artistic accounts of capitalism and, hence, imagine alternatives to it.¹⁷ Yet, it seems to me that such doubts stem from a rather romanticized Marxist take, which Fredric Jameson himself also upheld,¹⁸ whereby art that is aware of capitalist relations should eventually be able to fully articulate counter-hegemonic imaginaries and avenues for political dissent. Instead, I argue, based on the particular case discussed in this article, that literature can retain an anti-systemic potency, even if it fails to criticize directly the system's power relations at play, by simply exposing the impact of the violent processes of social fragmentation enforced by capitalism.¹⁹

Social fragmentation is, in fact, strikingly encoded within the narrative codes deployed by many Romanian-language narratives of postcommunist westward labor emigration. They show clear predilection toward individualized, testimonial-like narrative voices, which eschew objective storytelling in favor of either personal, first-person accounts, or free indirect speech. In a recent article on the Romanian literature of migration, Stefan Baghiu and Ovio Olaru pointed out the inability of such narrators to provide documentary coverage in respect to the experience of migration and their lack of political consciousness associated with the actual class to which these characters belong as migrant workers.²⁰ I agree that many of the emigrant characters depicted in contemporary Romanian literature do project a middle-class ethos, which is apparent, for instance, in their artistic inclinations (like reading high-brow fiction or having versatile musical tastes) and which contradicts their working-class experiences. Nonetheless, despite the false class consciousness of such novels, I regard their *voiced* narrative formats as a significant index of a global order that has eroded forms of social community and solidarity. As far as they relegate their centers of orientation to main characters, instead of omniscient or more objective narrators, these novels showcase the atomising impact that power structures operating on European and global scale have on precarious lives.²¹

Besides subjective forms of narration that make the (collective) drama very personal, these novels tend to favor: plots encompassed within heteronormative family units that overlap with the "imagined community" of the nation; geographically enclosed, home-bound settings; and female/child-female characters who ask the readers for emotional participation, through melodrama tropes (such as that of the painful family separation). Some good examples for the features above are: the lament-filled autobiographical letters, punctured with statements of ethnic essentialism, which detail the claustrophobic job of a *badanta* in Liliana Nechita's *Bitter Cherries* (2014); the domestic life-world and geographical isolation in Liliana Corobca's *Kinderland* (2013), whose semi-abandoned village children long for their absent emigrant parents; the magnified family bonds in Dan Lungu's *The Girl Who Played at Being God* (2014), a melodrama novel whose mother-daughter duet of narrative voices emphasizes the emotionally catastrophic impact of maternal absence; the sensationalist, overly dramatized story in Radu Aldulescu's *Ana Maria and the Angels* (2010), where the heavy imprint of the authorial voice's Orthodox spirituality presents the immigrant protagonist as a victim of divine fate and a martyr parent who makes all sacrifice for her ill daughter; the life-narratives of Romanian immigrants in UK, told by a highly sympathetic indirect voice in Ioana Baetica-Morpurgo's *The Immigrants* (2011), with their common tone of longing for their Romanian roots and their more or less visible dissonance with British lifestyles and London's empty consumerist paradise.

Narrative monoglossia, family themes, sentimentality, and a certain conservative mindset that doesn't sit well with globalized multiculturalism, make these Romanian novels about westward

17. More on this, in Adriana Stan, "Genres of Realism across the Former Cold War Divide. Neoliberal Novels and Self-Fiction," *Dacoromania litteraria*, no. 7 (2020): 116–125. The debate is also surveyed by Treasa DeLoughry, *The Global Novel and Capitalism in Crisis: Contemporary Literary Narratives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 11–23.

18. Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2013), 17.

19. Capitalism's destructive effects on social communities are analyzed at large in Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2007).

20. Stefan Baghiu and Ovio Olaru, "Capitalist Heterotopia & Lost Social Utopia: Documenting Class, Work, and Migration in Postcommunist East-Central European Fiction," *Central Europe* 22, no. 1 (2024): 2–17.

21. On the double form of peripherality of women migrants see Larisa Prodan, "Women Migrants in Italy: A Double Peripherality," *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 9, no. 1 (2023): 185–197.



emigration a curious political and world-literary case. On the one hand, turning the collective drama of economic precarity and labor emigration, into personal dramas, fails to serve politically progressive ends, as long as it encourages readers to assess individual situations, rather than look at systemic conditions. On the flipside of the famous feminist slogan, making the political personal has, in this case, the effect of obscuring the bigger drama of the Romanian society that lurks behind. Such deficit in critical thinking is perhaps consonant with the Romanian postcommunist cultural milieu that has dominantly fostered rightist-liberal and conservative ideologies, while eschewing artistic or academic critiques of capitalism. The typically liberal emphasis on emotion and individual suffering also risks playing into the commodifying game of the literary market, which has usually assigned stories of exile and displacement with the expectation to provide character development and some sort of cathartic gratification. On the other hand, these Romanian narratives of labor emigration deny the postnational, cosmopolitan ethos that has been hailed as typical of canonical postcolonial migrant fiction. They develop instead an ethnocentric imagination and an awareness of cultural dissonance which never sees Romanian immigrants blending into Western lifestyles and never confirms optimistic myths of cultural hybridity.²² Not coincidentally, English reviewers of Corobca's *Kinderland* felt compelled to perceive the cultural homogeneity and the sense of foreignness displayed through this novel that remains crucial in the Romanian-language literary corpus on contemporary emigration. Although otherwise appreciative, both reviewers noticed the "potential barrier"²³ encountered by foreign audiences when reading about the customs of the self-enclosed Moldovan village portrayed in the novel, which lies in a "forgotten corner" from "Europe's edgelands"²⁴.

Indeed, none of the novels I discussed in this article alligns to those world-expansive imaginaries and forms of transculturation that used to define migrant fiction in earlier and more utopian eras of globalization.²⁵ At the heyday of postcolonial studies and in comparative literature's "age of multiculturalism", Western academia's migrant turn celebrated the experience of postcolonial intellectuals who chose to move to Euro-American metropolises (to the detriment of intellectuals who remained at home to pursue their anti-colonial politics²⁶) and who were thence able to deconstruct monologic identity narratives. But those social, cultural and political experiences of cosmopolitanism and hybridity are no longer as active and potent as they used to be decades ago, when the migrant writer/intellectual was hailed as a global hero-figure of transnational diasporas and his forms of enunciation were described in the vein of Bakhtinian heteroglossia.²⁷ In the past two decades, our world has been departing from the globe-trotting, cosmopolitan model of migration that academic readings of literature have "romanticized"²⁸ and encouraged, while trying to preserve a (post)modernist ethos of detachment and intellectual freedom.²⁹ Today's world witnesses mass displacements of population (which roughly tripled in number from the 1990s, to 2021), especially from the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia, forced by political and economic violence, and their ecosocial outcomes, which add to the increasing flows of labor migrants required by an uneven global capitalism, ever in need of less costly workforce. Today, nationalist populism and the extreme right, with their adverse stance on immigration, raise their electoral stakes in many political cultures throughout all parts of Europe and America.

22. I will provide in-depth analysis and arguments in Adriana Stan, "Motherlands in Europe: Economic Subalternity and Fantasies of Family in Contemporary Romanian Literature of Migration" (forthcoming).

23. Tazio Koelb, "Playing House. The Children Left Behind in Moldova," *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 April 2024, <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/regular-features/in-brief/kinderland-liliana-corobca-book-review-tazio-koelb/>, accessed on 09.07.2024.

24. Alex Preston, "Kinderland by Liliana Corobca Review – a bleak but beautiful tale of survival," *The Guardian*, 19 November 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/nov/19/kinderland-by-liliana-corobca-review-a-bleak-but-beautiful-tale-of-survival>, accessed on 09.07.2024.

25. See Rebecca Walkowitz ed., *Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

26. Roger Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 41.

27. Snezana Ung, "Should I Stay or Should I Move Back? Literary Representations of Emigration to the US in Postcommunist Romanian Literature," *Transilvania*, no. 9 (2023): 1–10.

28. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and other essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

29. For this filiation, see Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, *Mapping World Literature, International Canonization and Transnational Literatures* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008).

Some of these Romanian novels of postcommunist emigration (especially those written by Nechita, Aldulescu and Lungu) may inadvertently resonate with the surge of nationalist populism, by their conservative outlooks on ethnic values and on social and family life. Equally, they might not always align with high aesthetic standards of sophistication, in terms of character development, social observation and forms of narration. Nonetheless, I believe they provide a more authentic and plausible – though not necessarily desirable – snapshot of our contemporary world and political climate, in which the former cosmopolitan paradigm seems to have become irrelevant outside academia. The personal and sentimental forms of storytelling deployed in these novels never reach the totalising and critical scope of social realism understood in the vein of the great Lukácsian tradition. Yet, their confinement within individual dramas may also serve as a critical commentary on a global system entrenched in inequality, which undermines social security and insitutional forms of communal support.

This implicit critique becomes particularly poignant against the backdrop of a highly deregulated European labor market, where Romanians have come to fill especially the low-wage, reproductive work sectors. The impact of this global order was strongly felt in Romania during the late 2000s and early 2010s, a period of intense neoliberalization and of mass emigration, when the novels I discussed were written. At that time, the Romanian state significantly withdrew from public services, undertook austerity measures to maintain foreign investment appeal, and adopted the flat tax system, all of which eschewed redistributive policies. These circumstances, which indicate the erosion of social solidarity and the deepening of inequalities facilitated by neoliberal practices, might explain why literature responds by developing intimist imaginaries and finds it easier to explore personal and familial dynamics. To that extent, these Romanian narratives touching on labor emigration encapsulate some of the alienating and desocializing effects of global capitalism in which the comunist (semi)peripheries were irreversibly absorbed.

Acknowledgement: This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS - UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2021-1207, within PNCDI III.

Bibliography

- Aldulescu, Radu. *Ana Maria și îngerii* [Ana Maria and the Angels]. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2010.
- Andrén, Daniela and Monica Roman, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Romanian Migrants during Transition and Enlargements." Bonn: The Institute for the Study of Labor, 2014.
- Baghiu, Stefan, and Ovio Olaru. "Capitalist Heterotopia & Lost Social Utopia: Documenting Class, Work, and Migration in Postcommunist East-Central European Fiction." *Central Europe* 22, no. 1 (2024): 2–17.
- Baetica-Morpurgo, Ioana. *Imigranții* [The Immigrants]. Iași: Polirom, 2011.
- Ban, Cornel. *Dependență și dezvoltare. Economia politică a capitalismului românesc* [Dependency and Development: The Political Economy of Romanian Capitalism]. Translated by Ciprian Șiulea. Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2014.
- Boltanski, Luc, and Eve Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2007.
- Bromley, Roger. *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- Chioni Moore, David. "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?." In *Baltic Postcolonialism*, edited by Violeta Kelertas (New York: Rodopi, 2006): 11–43.
- Corobca, Liliana. *Kinderland*. București: Cartea Românească, 2013.
- DeLoughry, Treasa. *The Global Novel and Capitalism in Crisis: Contemporary Literary Narratives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
- Favell, Adrian. "The New Face of East–West Migration in Europe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34, no. 5 (2008): 701–716.
- Hueckelom, Kris von. *Polish Migrants in European Film 1918–2017*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2019.
- Iacob (Bâra), Raluca. "Brain Drain Phenomenon in Romania: What Comes in Line after Corruption? A Quantitative Analysis of the Determinant Causes of Romanian Skilled Migration." *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations* 20, no. 2 (2018): 53–78.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Antinomies of Realism*. London: Verso, 2013.
- Koelb, Tazio. "Playing House. The Children Left Behind in Moldova." *Times Literary Supplement*. April



- 12, 2024. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/regular-features/in-brief/kinderland-liliana-corobca-book-review-tadzio-koelb/>.
- Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.
- Kołodziejczyk, Dorota and Cristina Șandru. *Postcolonial Perspectives on Postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Knox, Paul, John Agnew and Linda McCarthy. *The Geography of the World Economy*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Lazarus, Neil. "What postcolonial theory doesn't say." *Race & Class* 53, no. 1 (2011): 3–27.
- Lungu, Dan. *Fetița care se juca de-a Dumnezeu* [The Girl Who Played at Being God]. Iași: Polirom, 2014.
- Nechita, Liliana. *Cireșe amare* [Bitter Cherries]. Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014.
- OECD. *Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants*. OECD Publishing, 2019.
- Parvulescu, Anca. *The Traffic in Women's Work: East European Migration and the Making of Europe*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Preston, Alex. "Kinderland by Liliana Corobca Review – a bleak but beautiful tale of survival." *The Guardian*. November 19, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/nov/19/kinderland-by-liliana-corobca-review-a-bleak-but-beautiful-tale-of-survival>.
- Prodan, Larisa. "Women Migrants in Italy: A Double Peripherality." *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 9, no. 1 (2023): 185–197.
- Ricci, Antonio. "Dincolo de 'Cortina de Fier' : 30 de ani de migrații din România" [Beyond the "Iron Curtain": 30 years of Migrations from Romania]. *Rădăcini la jumătate. Treizeci de ani de imigrație românească în Italia* [Half Roots. Thirty Years of Romanian Immigration in Italy], edited by Miruna Căjvăneanu et al. Istituto di Studi Politici "S. PIO V": Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, 2022.
- Rosendahl Thomsen, Mads. *Mapping World Literature, International Canonization and Transnational Literatures*. London and New York: Continuum, 2008.
- Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Sánchez Prado, Ignacio M. "Mont Neoliberal Periodization: The Mexican 'Democratic Transition' from Austrian Libertarianism to the 'War on Drugs'." *World Literature, Neoliberalism, and the Culture of Discontent*. Edited by Sharae Deckard and Stephen Shapiro (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): 93-111
- Sandu, Dumitru. *Lumi sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate*. Iași: Polirom, 2010.
- Stan, Adriana. "Genres of Realism across the Former Cold War Divide. Neoliberal Novels and Self-Fiction." *Dacoromania litteraria*, no. 7 (2020): 116-125.
- Terian, Andrei. "Is There an East-Central European Postcolonialism? Towards a Unified Theory of (Inter) Literary Dependency." *World Literature Studies*, no. 3 (2012): 21-36.
- Ung, Snejana. "Should I Stay or Should I Move Back? Literary Representations of Emigration to the US in Postcommunist Romanian Literature." *Transilvania*, no. 9 (2023): 1-10.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca, ed. *Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007.
- Warwick Research Collective (WReC). *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015.