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**Philosophy and education: The predicament of Ion Petrovici  
(1882–1972) work at Romania's centennial (1918–2018)**

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**Abstract**

As one of the disciples of Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917) together with Constantin Radulescu–Motru (1868–1957) and Petre Paul Negulescu (1872–1951), they are regarded as the most prolific thinkers in Romanian modern thought and founders of the Romanian modern culture. History changes which they could not foresee have left the marks upon the perception, reception and interpretation of their work and Ion Petrovici is no exception to that. In order to understand and interpret his work reflected in his writings on philosophy, logic, philosophical monographs, travel diaries, speeches and notes, biographical method, along with text analysis, hermeneutical approach and criticism have been adopted. Bridging his prolific philosophical endowment with his epoch realities remains a wish and an ideal to which this paper aims with the respect that it would offer us a much clear image of the past and would increase our wisdom as how to act upon the future.

**Keywords:** Education, philosophy, Romanian culture.

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## 1. The context and the approach to its diversity

The merging of Romanian modern culture is due not only to historical, geo-political and strategic factor but also to a complex of circumstances that involved a certain type of personality pertaining the personalities involved in the long-time process. In this panorama of founders, the figure of Titu Maiorescu raises above both as an individual personality that left his mark upon a variety of fundamental aspects of the Romanian culture with all the components it implies and on the other hand, through the rhetoric that he produced in his disciples of one kind or another. Table 1 presents the sequences of the most important events since 18th and during the 19th century, while Table 2

**Table 1. Historical events during 18th and 19th century in Romanian history**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Time line &	1711–1716 and 1821	1821	1848/9	191859	1877/1881
Historical/Cultural events	Fanariote period	The revolt of Tudor Vladimirescu	The revolution of 1848/9	The Union Of Moldavia and Walachia	The Independence War

presents the sequence of events during the 20th century that represent the background in which the personalities referred to in the paper have lived and acted.

**Table 2. Historical events during the 20th century and up to 2018 in Romanian history**

7	8	9	10	11	12
1914–1918	1918	1939–1945	1947–1989	1989	2018
First World War	The Great Union From 1st December 1918	Second World War	The Communist period	The fall of Communism	The Centenary of Great Union of Romania

Meanwhile, Table 3 presents the lifespan on these personalities commencing with Gheorghe Lazar considered as the founder of education in Romanian language as a reference point in the history of Romanian education along with Ioan Maiorescu (father of Titu Maiorescu) and also relevant Spiru Haret as the representative of one of the most consistent educational reforms in Romania before First World War. Titu Maiorescu is followed than by his disciples Constantin Radulescu–Motru (1868–1957), Petre Paul Negulescu (1872–1951) and Ion Petrovici (1882–1972) as the most representative.

**Table 3. Life span of the founders of Romanian modern culture**

Personality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Ion Petrovici								1882	*	*	*	*	*	*	1972
2. Simion Mehedinti						1868	*	*	*	*	*	*			1962
3. Constantin Radulescu -Motru						1868	*	*	*	*	*		1957		
4. Petre Paul Negulescu							1872	*	*	*		1951			
5. Spiru Haret					1851	*	*	*		1912					

6. Titu Maiorescu	1840	*	*	*	*	1917
7. Ioan Maiorescu	1811	*	*	*	1866	
8. Gheorghe Lazar	1779	*	1823			

Not only that they been active in the field of teaching and authorship in philosophy, psychology and culture but they also held ministerial chairs in various governments and occupied the position of what is called today Ministry of Education. Their work and example radiated in many directions and are responsible for setting a firm ground not only for the educational system but also for various schools and forms of thought in philosophy, psychology, literature and various other directions of culture. Their work and the impact of it is compatible to any representatives of founders in other European and worldwide cultures. These paradigms have not been yet sufficiently emphasised and it is time after the efforts of editing and publishing their works for the Romanian people to be made also available worldwide. To these personalities, the existential dimension of the epoch sometime exceeded the relation between their work and human personality. In many situations, they were under the tribulations of the epoch trying to stay above it to control and to direct it. This was a complex predicament. One wonders whether there is any school that could prepare one for the challenges an epoch may set before man. The situation of Ion Petrovici matches very well this type of circumstances. Endowed with excellent qualities and talents fitted for the field of philosophy, he engaged in a large diversity of activities and functions, a situation which has also attracted the astonishment of many and may be at the cost of the less writing in the philosophical filed, which many would have expected and an issue that many reproached to him. His enrolment in the educational, social and political areas has left a dramatic mark upon his destiny. These details are only now emerging as archives have been opened and it still a long work of research before the implications of the intricacies of destiny may lead to a reconciliation between ideas, ideals and real life that marked his destiny and the history of Romania.

## 2. The emergence of a thinker and his work

Despite the criticism which surrounds the classical and typical biographical method, there are a few reasons why for the economy of this paper, we need to approach the biographical aspects of this thinker. One of the main reasons is of course to trace the paths of his professional development necessary to understand his professional work and the relations of the work to the universe of philosophy, and the second reason is to make it known outside the Romanian language and the culture of Romania in order to integrate it in the universal flow of thought and culture. As Ion Petrovici recounts: *‘I was born in Tecuci—the smallest of the smallest of the constellation of four county capitals(the others being Galati, Birlad and Focsani) (at present the town of Tecuci in the county of Galati, Romania), which together with the territory administered by each of them constituted the lower Moldavia region’* (Petrovici, 1966a, p. 7) into what could be called a middle class family of the 19th century, his mother Ortansa, a fellow of Notre-Dame of Jassy (Iasi), a nuns pensionate and a speaker of French, while Dimitrie, his father, a magistrate turning late on to advocacy, *‘fulfilling his duties conscientious, otherwise an absentminded, temperamental jolly’* (Petrovici, 1966a, p. 15). *‘My mother being my first teacher, a shorter time in the field of instruction but a longer one in that of education’* recalls Petrovici (1966a, p. 14). His formal education takes him to Colegiul Sf. Sava (Saint Sava College) from Bucharest and then to the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters and Philosophy where among his teachers are Titu Maiorescu and Nicolae Iorga to name only a few. It is here where he comes under the spell of Titu Maiorescu an encounter that would mark not only his career but his existent we may say. His literary talents as a playwright are demonstrated by having his play performed on the stage of the National Theatre in Bucharest (*A Kiss*, March 21, 1900) with kindly

encouragements form the classical writer of Romanian Literature Ion Luca Caragiale. He graduates from Philosophy with a dissertation entitled ‘*A philosophical question*’ (*O problema de filosofie*, 1904) and soon to be followed by the PhD dissertation ‘*The Psycho-physical parallelism*’ (1905). Based on such background between 1905 + 1905, he attends lectures in Philosophy at the University of Leipzig where he comes across personalities, such as Wilhelm Wundt, Hans Volkelt, and while in Berlin he attended lectures held by Friedrich Paulsen, Wilhelm Dilthey and Alois Riehl. Upon the return to Romania, he takes teaching positions first at the University of Iasi (1906) than dean of Philosophy and Letters Faculty (1923–1926). His professional career leads him to be elected member of the Romanian Academy in 1935. His teaching and writing career is complemented by his activity in social and political areas where between 1935 and 1938, he occupies the position of Minister of Education under the auspices of Prime Minister Octavian Goga. Petrovici also held the position as Minister of National Culture during the Ion Antonescu regime, and it is due to these circumstances and those following the end of the Second World War that gave different turn to his existential dimension. He survived these tribulations and following his released in 1964 after a long period of confinement, he has few moments of serenity in the company of his two sisters which cared for him. Attending classical music concerts at the Romanian Atheneum, un-expected trips abroad and philosophical encounters in which the figure of his magister Titu Maiorescu was a recurrent subject. He passed the Styx at February 17, 1972 and is watched at his resting place in Bellu Graveyard Bucharest by a memorial bust carved by the talented sculptor Milita Petrascu (1892–1976) and raised through the effort and dedication by his disciples and sympathisers.

### **2.1. Metaphysics and logic or the continuation of German classical philosophy (Kant, Schopenhauer)**

Most of the points of view regarding his philosophical writings converge on the topics of metaphysics, logic and Kantianism. A review of Petrovici early work *Introducere in metafizica* (*An Introduction to metaphysics*) explores also one of the most sensitive relationships of this, namely, that with religion ‘*as the most ignited characteristic of metaphysics*’ (Florian, 2005, p. 196) and according to Florian, Petrovici assertion that religion is an applied metaphysics and a technic of it is only an opinion not a verdict (Florian, 2005, p. 198). What Florian appreciated is the plausible result to which Petrovici arrives that: ‘*metaphysics has to take more than to give to science, whereas the theory of knowledge—on the contrary—gives more than to take from them. It’s a great formula. We believe, however, that today’s philosophy has every interest, to begin a new life, to abandon without regret traditional metaphysics and newer metaphysics, which is the theory of knowledge. With all the great promises and expectations, both have so far had no positive results; instead, they were a good lesson. At least with the title of the test, a new orientation sucks us with many hopes of prosperity. [...] Mr. Petrovici’s work is a living picture and a profound exposure, with all its conception, of all the essential points regarding the situation of metaphysics in the heart of European culture. Thus, an objective appreciation of genuine philosophy and a prudent appreciation of future hopes is facilitated*’ (Florian, 2005, p. 198). Logic has been a corner stone in the writings of Philosophy and it is no exception to this in the works of Maiorescu, Radulescu-Motru, P. P. Negulescu and Petrovici. Maiorescu’s example is the guiding lighthouse in this sense too. Titu Maiorescu has elaborated several editions of his work on Logic on which Alexandru Surdu in his various studies (Surdu in Academia Romana, 2011, vol. VII, p. 107–119) and in the volume dedicated to Maiorescu centenary since his death, concludes: ‘*From the very beginning, he proposes nothing more than a systematisation of lectures, which he wanted to make as simple and understandable as possible for a student. Parallel to this, starting with the first year of teaching at university, he develops for the students the systematised material without entering the technical details of logic. [...] With time, he will gradually give up all modernist ideas. The last form of his logic is ultra-classical. In spite of the fact that academic lectures accumulate more and more teaching material, his manual becomes simpler, and Maiorescu’s aims are obviously purely pedagogical. It is no wonder, moreover, that the model of such a manual will remain for him ‘The Logic of Port—Royal ... the best French book on Logic’. From this perspective, however, it is obvious that the youth variants of Maiorescu’s Logic are more interesting. These [the early editions of Logic] contain*

*more personal input [...] Generally, the serious transformations Maiorescu’s elemental logic, it’s odd metamorphosis, is interesting for those who did not understand the purpose of Maiorescu well, because it tends, in the opposite direction, that, disregarding all modernist and apparently original aspects, to get as close as possible to the impersonal ideal of school logic’* (Surdu in Urs (coord./editor) 2017, p. 34–35). In the thoroughly and comprehensive analysis of Petrovici metaphysics Stefan Munteanu of the many points of view brings to the forefront Stirbat’s assertion according to which: *‘As a logician, Ion Petrovici made the peril of the logical knowledge of his time, adding contributions that appear to be disparate, but who carefully review all the chapters of formal logic ... The summation of the researched problems proves that Ion Petrovici has rebuilt the entire Logic, concepts and methods and contributing fully to the advancement of science that Kant considered to be deified’* (T. Stirbat, in Munteanu, 2007, p. 93). Petrovici intentions was to write a comprehensive opus on Logic as it is expressed both at the publication of his *Teoria notiunilor (Theory of notions)* (1910) and *Probleme de logica (Problems of logic)* (1911) (Vizureanu in (Surdu, Popescu(coord./editors), 2006, p. 143). As the traditional approach to metaphysics and logic is reconised by most authors and recent editors of his works (Salavastru, 1996; 1998) with emphasis on the role in this direction of a truly follower and continuator of Maiorescu, there are also assertions that reveal Petrovici contribution beyond the general approach to his work specific to most commenators. Of course his contribution does not need to be overestimated (Vizureanu, 2006, p. 172), but as he underlines with Petrovici for the first time in the Romanian field of Logic: *‘we are witnessing a critical confrontation with specialists in the field: with Drobitch in the issue of polysilogism, with Mill in the analysis and construction of inductive methods, with Comte in the question of the status of logic in the hierarchy of positive sciences, with Goblot regarding the law of the reverse relation between the sphere and the content of the notions’* (Vizureanu, 2006, p. 172). In this respect, Logic has become a central axis in the design of education and pedagogy a place it occupied until the middle of the 20th century when psychology and psychological theoris of learning started to take over the design of instruction and education. On the other hand, less analysis has been effectuated Logic based on the relationship of the Logics of Wolff—Kant—Herbart and how herbartian ideas where applied in instruction in education not forgetting that the thought of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) was at the core interest of Maiorescu and Petrovici too although these relations have been insufficiently explored so far. This line of thought based on Herbart philosophy and psychology has been prolifically valued in education through the works such as those of Ioan Popescu (1832–1892), *Pedagogia lucrata pe bazele psihologie ale realismului herbartian (Pedagogy elaborated on the psychological bases of herbartian realism)* (several editions 1862, 1892, 1902) and Stefan Velovan (1852–1932) such as the *Aperceptia in serviciul notiunilor (Apperception in the service of notions)* (1895) and the theory of psychological stages (steps) which were used in instruction until the middle of the 20th century. The teaching of Logic and these instructional methods, such as the one derived from Herbart, were the core of teachers training and student education which laid the foundation for modern education on which actual education system rests. The discussion around the problem of influences on one culture upon another, of cultural and philosophical borrowings, has a long history in the development of various cultures and civilisations. Romanian culture is not exception to this subject. Are there more thought influences from the French culture, German culture, Bzyantine, Orient versus Occident, which are prevailing over which. These are perennial topics that even today seem inviting to the researchers, and the results are top interests for the general readers and scientists. However, a firm point of view is that regarding the relevance of Kantianism as best received and integrated compared to various other philosophical flows of thought. In this respect, most of the researchers recognise Petrovici merit as being the truly continuator of Maiorescu on the line of Kant and the field of logic. In addition to, these are illuminating the writings on Schopenhauer, and the special attention dedicated to Romanian philosophy. Maiorescu’s attention was challenging from Herbart to Kant and later on to Schopenhauer. The writings of Petrovici approach the work of both Kant and Schopenhauer. As in the case of Logic, Maiorescu has translated the Aphorisms of Schopenhauer into Romanian and the writing of aphorism influenza has not avoided Petrovici at all. As in the case of Logic, Maiorescu translations of Schopenhauer’s Aphorisms has aimed the facilitations of their meaning understanding and integration into the philosophical thought



rendered in Romanian language. This is best documented by the intensive research of Cecilia-Iuliana Virlean upon the versions of these translations: *‘Titu Maiorescu’s intentional intent as a translator was the permanent relevance of the text to the target audience since the time of translation, which confirms its validity as a cultural approach of major importance. This does not mean, however, that it cannot be adapted to the needs of the current public’* (Virlean, 2017, p. 286). Before the Romanian Academy, Petrovici delivers a lecture on one of the most popular aphorism of Schopenhauer in the interpretation of Maiorescu. *‘The mean(way, method) is superior to purpose and regulates its value. Therefore the phrase of the Jesuits must turn, saying the means justify the purpose’* (Petrovici, 1940, p. 3). The text analysis brings into discussion a whole hermeneutic that includes points of view of Robespierre, Berdiaev, Bergson, Hume, Mill, Wundt and Sigwart, Bernard, Marcus Aurelius, Francis d’Assisi, Clausius, Corneille concluding that: *‘Qualitative relationship between cause and effect yes, but inversibility not, but this is another problem than the one we dealt with’*(Petrovici, 1940, p. 15). The bringing together as Ianosi (Ianosi, 1996) points is evident in the lectures on Kant: *‘Enduring Kant’s doctrines—in her general terms—would rather make it fit to make the dialectic scaffolding of a religion, replacing that of Aristotle. But with all the affinity between Kantianism and one of the Christian confessions—the Protestant—if we examine things well, Kantianism cannot be for the cardinal truths of a religion but a temporal ally, only to a certain point’* (Petrovici, 1998, p. 238). But, the total fusion is not possible: *‘The structure of Kantian philosophy does not fulfill all the conditions to make the bone of a complete religion or, in other words, to turn into a religion’* (Petrovici, 1998, p. 239). It is difficult to explain the attraction and fascination the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard or Heidegger, or the writings of such authors as Dostoevsky and more recently Tolkien or Harry Potter represent and captivate general readers to remain only to this level of reference. Constantin Radulescu—Motru a contemporary and part of the same founders of modern culture group if we can affirm so dedicated a small monograph to Nietzsche. Other Romanian authors were caught up by Schopenhauer pregnant ideas the poet Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889) is one of them, and the current of pessimism and fatalism has been at the core of the philosophical system of Vasile Conta (1845–1882). So is Petrovici any more helpful in elucidating and unveil the mystery that surrounds the thought of Schopenhauer. One of the causes of the popularizt of Schopenhauer philosophy lays in its *‘practical content’* (Petrovici, 1997, p. 17). Religion is recurrent in the approach to Schopenhauer: *‘The passage of’ The world as will and representation’ shows us quite clearly that for Schopenhauer ‘Nirvana’ was not just a negative one, but rather a different kind of existence. For, he says, if for those who are passionate about life, ‘the total suppression of the will leaves nothing but’ in exchange ‘for those of whom the Will has been defeated and converted, our world, with all the sons and the militant ways, is nothing’. This proves that, on the one hand, Schopenhauer’s nihilist dream was not so much an absolute lack of enthusiasm, but a profound thirst for the beatitude of another life-and on the other hand that his philosophy, obviously grim, from a certain point of view, opens up a comforter horizon, a bright hope in a life of a different nature, completely different from the other, but which somehow makes us present the ecstasy of contemplation, sporadically acquired in exceptional moments in the present life. The horizon that he proposes us, ending, Schopenhauer’s philosophy did not differ much from the paradise of optimistic religions, from the beyond, from the future life’* (Petrovici, 1997, p. 139–140). The final reference to religion makes one wonder whether or not philosophy has to be understood or it turns to be a religion as a set of notions, concepts, creeds, whatever which gain a status similar to the *‘ultimat concern’* as defined in the thought of Paul Tillich (1886–1965). *‘And the fact that this paradise will only enjoy those who have actually managed to break out of the frenzy of earthly passions is a common point in Schopenhauer and any religion with high ethics’* (Petrovici, 1997, p. 140).

## **2.2. Literary writings philosophically blended**

Many analysts have praised Ion Petrovici’s literary talents. In fact, all these Pleiades of thinkers we refer to have had a keen interest in poetry, literary productions and then moved on into philosophy, social sphere and public activities. We encounter this typology among the writings of Ion Petrovici

various sets of memoirs and articles dedicated to all the kind of thinkers and personalities, travel recollections from the country and abroad, discourses held on various cultural and scientific events, radio broadcasted lectures and discourses. The prodigious literary critic, writer and former President of Romanian Academy, Eugen Simion (1933) in his magnificent set of volumes dedicated to Romanian writers from the 20th century remarks on the literary propensity of Ion Petrovici (Simion, 1989, vol. 4, p. 5–10) in the category of memorialists. *'It is certain that the memoirs, the impressions of travel, the portraits and speeches of Ion Petrovici deserve to be read more carefully and with greater silence of the spirit'* (Simion, 1989, vol. 4, p. 5). Although it does not make any reference to the tribulations of Petrovici life regarding his involvement in the government of Ion Antonescu for which Eugen Simion concludes on a quite sad tone referring to Petrovici old age and exhaustion in front of existential predicament. The analogy with the world of shades is stupendous: *'Ostentatious to longevity, the memorialist looks back and sees a vast cemetery. He's sad, but not desperate. He understands the condition and, like Lazar from a philosophic fable of Schopenhauer, he feels good only among the shadows ...'* (Simion, 1989, vol. 4, p. 9–10). It is better among the spirits of the past age than in the old age. In other words, Petrovici looks back to the past, which he is powerless to restore it to a better way, with realism, condescendence, serenity and possibly reconciliation. When Ion Ianosci wrote his *O Istorie a Filosofiei Romanesti (A History of Romanian Philosophy (1996))* he blended his aesthetic, literary and philosophic point of view on the entry referring to Ion Petrovici. Recognising the contribution of Maiorescu to Petrovici career development Ianosci also emphasised Petrovici talent for blending literature, philosophy and the effect of these two associated on religion (Ianosci, 1996, p. 129). Ion Petrovici, synthesises Ion Ianosci: *'It pervades research and confessions. He naturally softens concepts, passes his rationalism into a spiritualist key. It preserves the values in their autonomy and fuses them in the name of the absolute and of the soul individually embedded in absolute'* (Ianosci, 1996, p. 128). A special reference should be made here to his two volumes of travel sketches into Italy. These travel impressions can very well stand by the 19th century literature specific to the Grand Tour part of the Italian journey. In Italy, we shall remember has been a great fascination to 18th and 19th century travellers, writers, artists and so on and even in the annals of Romanian literature, it is chapter that can be looked again into as it has many things to reveal. Previously to Petrovici, we have to remember the poet, writer and statesman Vasile Alecsandri (1821–1890) as amongst those to whom Italy has left a mark upon his personality. But, amongst those portraits and personalities that Petrovici depicted literary so well but in a philosophical fashion stands the figure of his master Titu Maiorescu. There are several writings within this category. Several articles and studies have preceded the edition of 1931 which does not have the character of a chronological biography (Petrovici, 1931a; 1931b). Petrovici refers to Maiorescu professional and personality characteristics offering us an intimate view of his master. The correspondence and the topics of discussions and exchange of ideas are not omitted offering a laminated direction as to how to understand several aspects from Maiorescu's works, writings and activity. Kant and Schopenhauer are not omitted, Maiorescu's oratory and pedagogical traits as well as diplomatic tact in society, politics and personal encounters. Petrovici emphasises Maiorescu's *'superior tendency of unification, which he not only possessed it in his inner organic structure, but he also followed it'* (Petrovici, 1931b, p. 76). When mentioning the term unification, we have to think at various aspects with respect to the cultural, social and political situation of Romania in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In other situations Petrovici, and he is not the only one to underline this, refers to Maiorescu as being the right personality for Romania within that particular situation and epoch and the duty Maiorescu has accomplished in a truly Kantian manner (Petrovici, 1940).

### **2.3. Public functions**

One of the most sensitive aspects of Petrovici activity is related to public functions he occupied along his career. Beside his position as dean, member in the Romanian Radio Society administration, member of Romanian Academy, he occupied various ministerial chairs under various governments. The last position he occupied during the regime of Ion Antonescu was to determined consequences

accentuated by the changes and decisions that determined the end of the Second World War. The research carried by Ionel Nicula, a long time preoccupied with the work and personality of Petrovici, brings to light the circumstances and tribulations that destiny cast over Petrovici. Nicula’s work is quite daring and an act of courage in the same time (Nicula, 2005; 2006). Using first hand sources opened for the first time to researchers, such as those of The National Council for Studying the Archives of the Former Security (C.N.S.A.S.), Nicula provides a systematic and clear sequence of the situation and the period in which Petrovici was caught by destiny. Gheorghe Vladutescu offers a wise synthesis of the whole situation: *“Petrovici’s life was tragic, not necessarily through the latest incidents. Minister under Ion Antonescu was sentenced to years of prison, included as he was among those ‘guilty of the disaster of the country’. What is to be discussed, but the problem lies with historians”* (Vladutescu, 2002, p. 68). To extent the portrait of Petrovici, Gheorghe Vladutescu with reference to various situations that involved also the field of literature and the reputed critic George Calinescu underlines: *‘Willing to be anywhere else, Ion Petrovici missed (more or less) everything At least in philosophy, for which he had science, and availability. He was, whatever it would be, a man of conception, even though, as the poet said, his glass was small. But he preferred to drink from it’* (Vladutescu, 2002, p. 69–70).

### 3. Towards a hermeneutic of his work and his entries in the history of Romanian philosophy

Recent interpretation of his work proves the interest for his work did not go down but on the contrary in moderately emerging. In his majestic set of works dedicated to Romanian, Philosophy professor Al. Ghe. Cazan establishes his approach on Petrovici metaphysics as a theoretical and practical necessity where he unveils Petrovici’s method for supporting his arguments regarding metaphysics postulated as *‘a synthesis between empirism and rationalism, empiric-rationalist method, where reason has the important constructive-deductive role’* (Cazan, 2004, p. 326). Although it recognises the somehow *‘exceedingly summary character’* (Cazan, 2004, p. 335) of his writings, professor Cazan underlines two leading ideas which Petrovici has insisted specially in his writings, special in the monographic study on Kant, these two ideas are: *‘(1) there is an ethnic character in philosophy and (2) philosophy is close correlated to the personality of the author which conceives I, specially the first one, have a particular special significance in the cultural + spiritual context of the time’* (Cazan, 2004, p. 336). If most analysts within the area of philosophy prefer to concentrate their analysis around the metaphysics (Botez, 2005, p. 188) and Kantian (Boboc, 2011, pp. 65–74) writings in a way themes more agreeable but not at all easy Viorel Cernica adopts a phenomenological perspective and the object and the subject of his analysis is Petrovici’s study *Valoarea omului (The value of man)*. The text is a public lecture delivered at the University of Iasi at October 28, 1923 for the benefit of the Society for the prevention of tuberculosis (Petrovici, 1952, pp. 251–270; Cernica, 2006, p. 237). The conclusions of this analysis are full of sense if we couple the original study with the destiny of the author, destiny which could have not been foreseen at the time the study was written (1925). *‘In a logic of ontological reconstruction, formal conformation is not restrictive but coercive. A unit unfolds in its parts to try its powers to re-make it. The new state of unity, the ‘split unit’, is different from the one from the beginning. But anyway, this later state is the natural consequence of the first one, which records the unity of the parties. ‘The One Real’ (One) is the unity. Ion Petrovici, however, tells us, through this (yet frail) phenomenology of the existential situation, contained in his discourse about ‘human value’, that the unique reality is competition, open, univocal, to the loss of self by its throwing, under historical impulse, beyond the world’* (Cernica, 2006, p. 252).

### 4. The opening of times

History of Romanian philosophy retains his work despite circumstances and new authors or new studies do not avoid his work, such as C. Bradatan *O Introducere la Istoria Filosofiei Romanesti in secolul XX (An introduction to the History of Romanian Philosophy in the 20th Century)*, who recognises Petre P. Negulescu and Petrovici’s role in continuing Maiorescu’s message *‘that only a thorough*



*philosophical culture prepares the ground where a true philosophical culture can develop'*(Bradatan, 2000, p. 36). To this spirit but less mentioned should be circumscribed, the set of *Istoria Filosofiei Moderne (The History of Modern Philosophy)* in five volumes edited by the Societatea Romana de Filosofie (Romanian Society of Philosophy) and dedicated as a Hommage to Professor Ion Petrovici. This magnificent work represents an instrument (Petreu, 2018) such as those to which Marta Petreu refers in her article that are constituent and consistent with the ideal Maiorescu urged, an instrument that remains a references point not only for Romanian culture but rests as an examples for cultures worldwide. Such was the destiny and its predicament worthy at aiming to the Kantian imperative, falling aside on the way to accomplished it may be having a faustic scent, while watching for the good, unforgivable for history or who knows?

## 5. Observations

For the economy of the paper, some titles, names of persons, places and institutions have been translated into English and provided in brackets.

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