“The Third Woman” in Romanian Inter-War Literature. Instances; Dynamics of Representations

The phrase “the third woman” proposed by Gilles Lipovetsky became the expression of a new age in the evolution of the social and historical status of women, typical to the modern period. In the Romanian inter-war prose, novels like The Spider Web / Pânza de păianjen, by Cella Serghi, The Slaves’ Star / Steaua roibilor, by Henriette Yvonne Stahl or Halippa’s Cycle, by Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu promote, probably under the feminist ideology pressure, a change of the inner femininity norms, symbolically configuring the feminine writing area. Characters like Diana Slavu, Maria Măneanu or Nory Baldovin comply with “the third woman” pattern, rejecting the rigidity of some symbolic representations of patriarchal culture, by assuming competitiveness, claiming a personal image, exploring the public zone, refusing the silence imposed by the phallocentric conventions, and having the freedom to dispose of their own body.

As a consequence, one can witness an emancipation of the feminine literary representation, possibly leading to the recognition of difference, as an aesthetic criterion of appreciating the feminine literary discourse.