

**Abstract:** This article analyzes Matei Vişniec's latest novel *Shoe-type loves. Umbrella-type loves...*, which I consider to be the most complex and fascinating of his entire prose writing. Suggesting that we can embrace life as a *shoe* (in a realistic, pragmatic way, obeying all the social, moral, and cultural rules) or as an *umbrella* (valorizing its fantastic and poetic qualities, and consequently assuming the associated risks), the novel presents every character and every story from a double perspective, allowing us to get an Ianus Bifrons like view on life. *The Theatre Festival* in Avignon becomes the metaphor of the *carnavalesque* way of enjoying one's life and, at the same time, a theatrical autobiography of the writer, and a tribute to his good friend, the director Christophe Kaplan.

**Keywords:** Matei Vişniec, novel, theatre, circus, Ianus Bifrons