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DANIEL CRISTEA-ENACHE
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SARA KUEHN
JONATHAN MURPHY
DOMINIC NEGRICI
MLADEN OSTOJIĆ
NAOMI VAN STEENBERGEN

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

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New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania
www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro

Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



DANIEL CRISTEA-ENACHE

Born in 1974, in Bucharest

Ph.D. in Philology, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest (2005)
Dissertation: *Ion D. Sîrbu – His Life and Work*

Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest
Scientific referee for Polirom Publishing House

Peer-reviewer of the scholarly publication *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări
Socio-Umane "Gheorghe Șincai"*
Coordinator of the collection "Opere" [Works], Polirom Publishing House

POSDRU postdoctoral research fellowship at the Romanian Academy, for the
project "The '60 Generation. Literary and Literary Criticism Discourse",
via the program "Valorificarea identităților culturale în procesele globale"
[Valuation of Cultural Identities in the Global Processes] (2011-2013)

Awards:

Award for Debut granted by the literary journal "România Literară" (2002)

Award for Debut granted by the Writers' Union of Romania (2002)
"Titu Maiorescu" Prize of the Romanian Academy (2003)
Award for Literary History and Criticism of the Romanian Writers' Association –
Bucharest Branch (2006)
Award for Literary Criticism granted by the journal "Convorbiri Literare" (2009)
Award for Literary Criticism granted by the The *Ministry of Culture* and
National Heritage, "Nichita Stănescu" International Festival (2009)
Award for Literary History of Criticism granted by the journal "Ateneu" (2013)

Nominated for the "Prometheus" Prizes, category "Opera Prima/ Literary
Section" (2002)
Nominated for the Awards of the Romanian Writers' Union (2004)
Nominated for the Prize "Book of the Year" granted by the literary journal
"România Literară" (2014)

Participation in international conferences and seminars in France, Sweden,
Hungary

Articles in the field of history of Romanian literature (XXth century), the history
of the Romanian literary criticism; the formation and the evolution of the canon
and of the literary paradigms (with extension to the post-communist period)

Among the authored books:

Concert de deschidere, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House,
Bucharest, 2001
București Far West. Secvențe de literatură română, Albatros Publishing House,
Bucharest, 2005
Un om din Est. Studiu monografic, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest,
2006
Timpuri noi. Secvențe de literatură română, Cartea Românească Publishing
House, Bucharest, 2009
Lyrice magna. Eseu despre poezia lui Nichita Stănescu, Curtea Veche
Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010

THE ROMANIAN WRITER: FROM SOCIO-CULTURAL NEED TO “DEMOCRATIC” DISINTEREST

Introduction

The specific aim of this article is to make as clear as possible the structural, socio-cultural differences between the Romanian literature before 1990 and after, integrating examples (Romanian writers) that are not only representing “artistic” exceptions, but also general cultural rules. That is why important and representative Romanian writers such as Marin Preda or Nichita Stănescu, Norman Manea or Mircea Cărtărescu, Radu Aldulescu or Dan Lungu have been selected.

The interest is in examining (and making visible) the contexts in which our writers manifested and constructed themselves. I am referring to social and ideological contexts, material determinations and implications, not “ideal” and idealistic ones.

The names of authors such as Marin Preda or Nichita Stănescu became parts of a cultural canon that all categories of our public shared. These names were influential, since their role grew exponentially. It is interesting to see why these authors were selected by the socio-cultural period before the Revolution as canonical Romanian writers; why they shaped the Romanian readers imaginary inside the Socialist period. Why this prose writer and why this poet – and not other ones, such as Nicolae Breban or Ștefan Agopian, Leonid Dimov or Ileana Mălăncioiu?

This article seeks to explain the mechanism of canonical selection and investment, seen as part of what I have called “socio-cultural need”. I have embarked on the re-reading and the examining of these authors’ books from a perspective which is not that of a “pure” literary critic, interested in terms of individuality and specific elements of artistic personality. This type of analysis is relevant for Stănescu and for Mălăncioiu also, for Preda

and for Agopian – for every significant Romanian writer. His or her fictional world, themes, discourse, literary strategies, and so on are specific. But this artistic specificity cannot be linked with the general conditions and the particularities of the political and historical period (Dimov, for example, is a pure onirical poet); and, on the other hand, the cultural system does not integrate such writers in the high-mainstream and does not invest them with canonical status.

We can assume that, generally speaking, there is a chance for every writer to be not only part, but the center of the literary scene of this time. Nevertheless, it is obvious that, in the Romanian literature before 1990, Preda and Stănescu had a sort of canonic supremacy, determined by their literary value; but also by some socio-cultural conditions and historical factors that are now... history.

It is worth investigating these socio-cultural conditions and these historical factors which are “responsible” for the canonical status of some Romanian authors in a closed society, dominated by an omnipotent State. Whether or not the Romanian writer understood the totalitarian regime of his birth, youth and maturity, some decades of his/her life were marked by the Socialist era that ended in 1989.

Living and writing in conditions of absolute control and censorship produced a type of writer that tried desperately to express a personal imaginary in a historical period that refused, blocked or marginalised it. Likewise, for the Romanian reader, living and reading in conditions of absolute control and censorship created a particular type of aspiration. Writers and their works are significantly much more important for the readers in a totalitarian period than in a democratic one, since their books make possible not only escapism, but also access to some truth impossible to find in the public discourse. Therefore, the socio-cultural need expresses the readers’ admiration for the novels of Marin Preda, and, also, their need for the truth (or parts of truth) from the novels of this canonic writer. This explains why a novel as *Delirul* (which is not a very good one) had a huge public impact, superior to that of Preda’s masterpieces, *Întîlnirea din Pămînturi* and *Moromeții* (I).

If we read Romanian contemporary literature only for itself, we don’t have access to the socio-cultural system that determined or influenced this “self”. On the other hand, if we read and understand Romanian literature only as a product of a socio-cultural system, we do not have access to that personal imaginary of the writers, with their distinct and specific elements. The first approach is too aesthetic; the second is too mechanical. The first

can be reduced to the immortal value of the masterpieces, surpassing the social contexts and the historical periods. The second can be reduced to the description of the system, but with the risk of not responding to the essential questions of my research. Why this author was a canonic writer? Why this author was selected by the system? Why Nichita Stănescu, and why not Leonid Dimov or Ileana Mălăncioiu? Why Marin Preda, and why not another Romanian prose writer?

Resistance and/ or “priviligentsia”

In her research of the Romanian literary institutions before 1989, Ioana Macrea-Toma assimilates Romanian writers with a “priviligentsia” of that time.¹ We find significant data in her research, but this well-documented book has, in my opinion, an error of perspective. The error is to neglect or to ignore the structural implications of the totalitarian configuration, by the State, of our society in the Socialist period. A totalitarian configuration means a very powerful State and a diminished, closed, controlled, surveilled, censored society.

There are many examples that are illustrative for what the real socialism meant for the Romanian society and for the Romanian writer before 1990. I shall further choose one.

In the book published by Clara Măreș² and comprising documents from *Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității* – the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) – we can find a list of the discussions and phone calls from Ion D. Sîrbu’s apartment. The *Securitate*, a key-institution for the functioning of the regime, before 1990, had no problem in focusing on Sîrbu, an intellectual of Left values, imprisoned in 1958. This surveillance took place *after* Sîrbu’s detention, which ended in 1963. This surveillance covers almost all the rest of Sîrbu’s life, from November 1968, up to December 1988. (The writer died in September 1989.)

We have to remember that, in 1968, Nicolae Ceaușescu was assimilated with a liberal figure and was acclaimed by the Western countries as a reformist in the Socialist block. Behind this “reform”, we can remark that the Sîrbu family’s apartment was surveilled by the *Securitate* in the “liberal” period of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s era, up to the end of his totalitarian regime. There is an obvious continuity in this surveillance of the Romanian writers and intellectuals. Left-thinkers as Ion D. Sîrbu and

Right-thinkers like Gabriel Liiceanu³ are put under surveillance by the same totalitarian institution, with the same specific double purpose: to control the Romanian intellectual, his area, and block the spreading of his ideas and writings that are not obedient and instrumental to the regime.

The official documents available at this moment, in Ion D. Sîrbu's files, are conclusive. But probably there are more to discover in the archives, when some files will be de-classified. The second example, with other archive documents from the CNSAS, found in the same book published by Clara Mareş, is related also to Sîrbu's experience. The Communist, idealist intellectual, favourite student of Lucian Blaga, is sentenced in 1958 for seven years of prison by a regime that speaks in the name of the People. But even more impressive for an objective reader is another document: the one regarding the funeral of the writer, in September 1989. Sîrbu, a Romanian leftist intellectual, is surveilled even after death, even at his funeral, by the totalitarian regime, through its key-institution, the *Securitate*.

We can assume or, if not, suggest that the Romanian writers are exponents of a socio-cultural need, in the Socialist period; and they are a potential threat for the regime, from 1958 up to 1989, in Sîrbu's case. But Sîrbu is not an isolated case, an exception. He illustrates a set of rules and mechanisms, as Blaga also illustrated them in the first years of the Romanian totalitarian period. Sîrbu, as a student of Blaga and Liiceanu, as a disciple of Noica is representative – individually and in relation – for the acts and institutional mechanism of the totalitarian regime, from the fifties to the eighties: surveillance, control, political detention (just also like Noica), isolation. This is the structure of the totalitarian regime, in the period before 1990. The *Securitate* is only one of its institutions.

The regime's politics is control and leveling. In this macro-social context, the effort of the Romanian writers to be themselves was a first and important step of cultural and intellectual resistance. We encounter the same situation for a "private" philosopher as Noica, refusing class- and mass-leveling and cultivating purposely a cultural elite. He is not part of the *privilligentsia* that Ioana Macrea-Toma is referring to; neither was Blaga a part of it. Ion D. Sîrbu, Norman Manea, Gabriel Liiceanu, Mircea Cărtărescu: such different Romanian writers and thinkers that were important for their writings and thinking were not a part of a Romanian *privilligentsia*. They are part of the first category and semantic area of the term: *resistance*.

What is very interesting in Ioana Macrea-Toma research is the data referring to the number of copies of Romanian authors' books and the Romanian authors' rights in the Socialist period. It seems paradoxical, but in a closed society, with very few rights, the Romanian authors have substantial financial rights as writers. They had no freedom to write their books, but they benefited from a lot of money from selling their books, in the State-controlled system.

Let us consider a few examples of these benefits, which are not inferred from legends, but real situations of publishing in the Romanian Socialist period. The following constitute data extracted from interviews with Romanian authors, after 1990, achieved or quoted by Ioana Macrea-Toma.⁴ Z. Ornea, literary critic and editor: 1 book of 500 pages = 60,000-70,000 lei = 1 *Dacia* car. Nicolae Manolescu, literary critic: 1 book of 300 pages = 30.000 lei. Petru Cimpoeșu, novelist: 1 novel of 350 pages = 1 house near Bacău. Georgeta Dimisianu, editor: 1 book = 1 year of the decent living of the Romanian author in the sixties. Aurel Rău, writer and translator: 1 book translation = 20.000 lei.

Prose writers, poets, literary critics, translators: all had very sweet memories of their books published before 1990... Still, there are some categorial differences. If the best paid Romanian authors (Marin Preda is among the champions of the benefits) got the equivalent of 25 monthly salaries for a book (in the State-controlled system of distributing and selling books), the worst paid authors got the equivalent of 5 monthly salaries for a book. The medium or "reasonably" paid Romanian authors received the equivalent of 10 to 15 salaries for a book.

The contrast with the Romanian authors published after 1990 is obvious. The new historical period is very different from the previous one. The freedom of speech, of opinion, and of writing had been gained; but the material satisfactions and subsistence safety of the Romanian writer was lost along with the shift from a State-controlled system to a Market specific one.

As we can see from the data available in the archive of the Romanian Writers' Union and collected by Ioana Macrea-Toma,⁵ Marin Preda, Ion Caraion, N. Carandino, Zaharia Stancu, Lucian Raicu, Adrian Păunescu, Pompiliu Marcea, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Fănuș Neagu, Constantin Abăluță, Sorin Titel, Ștefan Agopian are among the Romanian authors managing to live in the 1970 from their books. The chart indicates the levels, with two well-paid authors (Ion Caraion, 52,500 lei; N. Carandino, 50,490 lei) and two better, but worse-paid writers (Sorin Titel, 13,500 lei, Ștefan Agopian,

13,500 lei). Marin Preda, the canonical prose writer, is the champion of the benefits in 1979 (224,435 lei). At the same time, Preda was the Writer and the Editor. After 1970, he was the director of *Cartea Românească*, probably the most important Romanian publishing house.

If these differences mark the categories in which Romanian authors are included, before 1990, in a State-controlled system and a “stable” area of selection, the following difference will mark the gap between writing in Socialism and writing in the post-Socialist period. The comparison is illustrative for both the general conditions and particularities of the Socialist period in the Romanian literature; and for the general conditions and particularities of the democratic period, after 1990. The example is about earning a living from one book that one is writing and publishing. For Marin Preda, in 1979 (224,435 lei = 3 *Dacia* cars = 2 apartments), it is extremely easy. For Radu Aldulescu, in 2009 (1,500 lei = 1 monthly salary), it is impossible.

With this parallel, we are approaching the other segment of my research and the next part of this article: the segment of what I have called “democratic” disinterest.

Socio-cultural need vs. “democratic” disinterest

The complex of this opposition between different stages of personal experience is engaging the problem of the Romanian writer in the post-Socialist period, especially of the writer that had a great success and recognition before 1990. For everybody it is difficult to pass from a type of society to another, completely different, at a time when fundamental changes are not that appealing. But for a writer it is especially difficult to adapt to a new society and to a new reality completely different from those experienced by him up to the age of 50-60. It seems more difficult for Nicolae Breban (born in 1934) than for Mircea Cărtărescu, who was 33 years old in 1989.

The Romanian writer, as a category, tried to accommodate to the time of freedom of speech and writing, in a new world that the next generation was born in. But in the interior of this category, there are individual lines, evolutions and involutions. The situation is different from case to case. In the Socialist period, there was an uniformity even in the general lack of freedom. In the democratic period, the Romanian writer discovers that he

is not a generic Writer, part of a category with the same conditions, but an individual case that has to be personally managed.

If the status of the Romanian writer improved after December 1989 (as the status of all the Romanians citizens), the *role* of the Romanian writer changed dramatically. For the Romanian writers, the examples of personal great success in the new society are rare: Mircea Cărtărescu, Dan Lungu, Filip Florian. We can add Andrei Pleșu, probably the most admired Romanian intellectual, after Octavian Paler.

But how are these names selected by the new system? It is the same question, in a different period of time and a different socio-cultural system. The “old” question was: why Nichita Stănescu, and why not Leonid Dimov? The new question is: why Mircea Cărtărescu, and why not Ion Mureșan?

If the canonical negotiation of a status and a symbolic role is distinct not only from one writer to another, but also from a strictly determined historical period to another, we have to make visible the different “rules” of becoming an important writer after 1990. There are not the same “rules” as for Marin Preda in the fifties and for Marin Preda in the eighties. The rules are the same for Preda in the eighties and for young Cărtărescu in the eighties. Finally, there are not the same “rules” for Cărtărescu in the eighties, in the final decade of Ceaușescu’s era, and for the same writer in the nineties, in a democratic society.

The Romanian writers forced and obliged to adjust to censorship conditions had to adapt to the public lack of cultural interest after censorship has disappeared. This is why there are questions to the method of some Romanian authors of literary histories which are discussing the new literature in the same “pure aesthetic” terms – as if the socio-political and cultural system would not have changed significantly after December 1989. Eugen Negrici⁶ will be probably an exception, if he focus on the new period, the new socio-cultural context and the new literature. We can see the historical period through a writer. Nonetheless, we can see the writer through a historical period. Meanwhile, we can see both, one through another, with an analysis of the two socio-cultural systems, with reference to the important works – seen as important works – inside them.

For the Romanian generic writer, the problem of his own status in the post-Communist society was – and still is – an important one. The more recent globalization themes and elements have not scrubbed out the more profound anxiety of the Romanian middle-aged writers (and, generally speaking, of the Romanian artists of the same generations) who

passed from a type of society to another. The examination of this change was impregnated, very often, with subjectivity, since it was *she/he* who was affected by the change. It is easier for an examiner, who studies the process from a distance and as part of a scientific research, than for the people involved, with their (periods of) lives, in the process we are interested in.

And, definitely, this is not a “pure” literary discussion or analysis, but a socio-cultural investigation focused on the status of the writer in two different times; two historical periods separated by a Revolution; and two distinct models of understanding culture.

The contexts in which our writers manifested and constructed themselves differ from one decade to another. Almost each decade is associated with problems and troubles that a responsible intellectual has to confront with. There is a difference between how the Romanian writer understood the totalitarian regime of his birth and youth and how he activated his writings with a moral function, in the bleak eighties. The next decade is associated with the problems of the new, open society. The question is now if the Romanian middle-aged writer succeeds in accommodating to the time of freedom of speech and writing, in a new world that the next generation was born in.

The passing from a society dominated by an omnipotent State to a society liberated by this controlled and forced perspective was not so easy to be individually achieved. There is a gap between living and writing in conditions of absolute control and censorship – and living and writing in conditions of public, “democratic” disinterest for the literary and artistic sophisticated products. If the status of the Romanian writer improved after December 1989 (as the status of all the Romanians citizens), the *role* of the Romanian writer changed dramatically to an almost insignificant one. Dictatorship made out of our good writers public figures of social hope and cultural need. Names of authors as Marin Preda or Nichita Stănescu became parts of a cultural canon that all categories of our public shared. These names were influential; both writers were exponential.

Examining the books of these authors is part of the professional duty of a literary critic. But it is also very interesting to study the socio-cultural conditions of their preeminence: the factors and “objective” elements of their canonical supremacy. (The literary or ethic objections that some critics formulated, after December 1989, in re-discussing their works and general bio-bibliographical course are supposed to be criticised, too,

if they ignore the context and the *system* of high-culture models in the socialism of the Romanian State.)

On the other hand, if this system has changed and created a new socio-cultural reality in the last two decades, the aim of this article is to make visible the different “rules” and criteria of becoming an important writer. Three prose writers, from three different generations (Marin Preda, Radu Aldulescu, Dan Lungu), become important not only by their personal, authentic talent, but also by their efforts to adapt to the cultural and ideological patterns of their times.

Adaptation is *not* necessarily obedience, conformism, mono-ideological turn. Before 1989, homogenization and nivelation are at their peak, so that our writers’ effort to be themselves is a part of intellectual resistance, as we have concluded before. The process of adaptation may be seen as a process to recognize the patterns of the cultural system that you belong to and to choose the best individual strategies for supplying your writing with different functions and values that are important in the specified context. Large sectors of Romanian literature – if not the Romanian literature as a whole – adapt to the social and historical contexts that a totalitarian regime makes very clear.

And the same literature forced to adapt to censorship conditions had to adapt to the public lack of cultural interest after the censorship had disappeared. These very different and problematic elements that our middle-aged writers have to confront make them revelators for the society change and cultural remodeling. We “read” in their novels and their poems the experiences of the fictional characters and the modulations of their lyricism; but we understand better the change and the new socio-cultural model by studying their strategies of adaptation to all these: to the totalitarian conditions of thinking and writing, as well as to the democratic ones.

Dan Lungu himself studied the building of identity in a totalitarian society.⁷ Undeniably, Macrea-Toma and Lungu make a good documentation and an interesting analysis of the Romanian socio-cultural configuration before 1989. But we have to add the elements of change and of contrast that fix even better the totalitarian profile. The individual courage is measured after the exterior conditions that are given to it.

Therefore, my approach is not that of a “pure” literary critic. I started from the general conditions to get closer to the particularities. (While a literary critic’s strategy is the opposite.) Beyond the historical dimension, this research had to be carried at an intersection of social elements,

ideological determinations and various aspects of mentality. The research was, in its inner structure, multidisciplinary, since each discipline – sociology, politology, historiography, literary history and criticism – has its signs in the writer's reactions and literary adaptation to the system as *he is seeing it*.

The "pure" aesthetic autonomy functions for the totalitarian period as a very good strategy to reject ideological control, but it will be not a revelator anymore after 1990, in the new conditions of political pluralism and freedom of thought.

Two historical periods, two socio-cultural systems, two paradigms for writers

The most adopted and quoted formula for the historical period between 1948 and 1989 is that of *postbellum period* in the Romanian culture and literature. This is a neutral formula as to the political dimension and regime in the Eastern and, respectively, in the Western European block.

The postbellum period in the Romanian culture and literature is a *totalitarian* one, while the same period in most Western cultures and literatures (Spain of Franco, excepted) is a *democratic* one. For Romania, the postbellum totalitarian period starts with the forced abdication of King Michael I (December 1947) and ends with the execution of the Ceaușescu couple (December 1989). When Romania becomes part of the Socialist block, obedient to the Soviet Union, the shift is not only from interbellum to postbellum (historical operators that are too general and are not marking the differences between East and West), but also from the interbellum pluralism to the postbellum totalitarianism. If King Michael's forced abdication opens a totalitarian period that the Romanian culture will be forced to conform to, the execution of the Ceaușescu couple opens a different historical period, with a different type a society. Romanian literature and Romanian contemporay middle-aged writers have experienced this shift. For some of them, the shift was a gap impossible to overcome.

There is a significant symmetry between the Romanian generations that experienced the first gap (the shift from the democratic interbellum period to the totalitarian postbellum period) and the Romanian generations that experienced the second gap (the shift from the totalitarian postbellum

period to the democratic post-revolutionary period). Both have been forced to adapt to macro-social changes that are very difficult to confront with.

For the first category and the first gap, relevant examples are the Dinu Pillat's political detention and Monica Lovinescu's exile. Both experiences are traumatic for an individual. But the conditions associated with the totalitarian regime are traumatic for the majority of Romanian intellectuals and writers born and grown up in the previous conditions of an open society. The "escape" was, for Dinu Pillat, the family and the faith, while for Monica Lovinescu, it was the exile and the political opposition to the regime.

For the second category and the second gap, relevant examples are of those Romanian writers and intellectuals that experienced both the totalitarian period and the democratic, post-revolutionary one. Even if Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu are the most prominent figures of the Romanian cultural canon before 1990, their examples cannot be mentioned here, since they have died *before* December 1989 and, thus, they have not experienced the new society at all.

Norman Manea is not a relevant example for this category, since he was exiled from the totalitarian Romania during the eighties and he has experienced freedom not with the whole Romanian society, in December 1989, but individually, as Monica Lovinescu some decades before.

Neither Radu Aldulescu, nor Dan Lungu are relevant for this experience of the second gap, since they were too young in December 1989 for illustrating the Romanian cultural and literary options during a totalitarian regime.

Relevant examples are those of Nicolae Breban and Mircea Cărtărescu, two important authors from different generations, the first born in the thirties (and, thus, middle-aged in December 1989), the second born in the fifties (and, thus, still young in December 1989). The individual experiences differ and the age plays a role in this difference.

Nicolae Breban cannot adapt to the new structure of the new society, in which the Romanian writer has a reduced social importance and confirms the "democratic" disinterest for literature and its authors. Nicolae Breban, from the generation of Nichita Stănescu, was familiar with a completely different structural situation and personal status: those of cultural and literature-centered public expectancies, those of a socio-cultural need.

This is why, in his impossible adaptation to the new structure and the new cultural period, Nicolae Breban shows all the symptoms of nostalgia. The object of this nostalgia is not the totalitarianism, but the status of the

Romanian writer during the totalitarian regime. Nicolae Breban associated himself with the *high values* and the *true values* that Romanian literature had from the sixties to the nineties, *i.e.*, the period of literary manifestations for his generation.

For the nostalgic writer, the contrast with the present is obvious. The new generations do *not* have literary values comparable to the values of his generation. The evaluation could be correct, but a comparison has to be made between the terms of the same macro-social context. The fact is that the nostalgic Romanian writers compare literary works and results from two historical periods without internalizing the gap between them and the structural change from one to another. In a way, the new period is “doomed” for the Romanian nostalgic writers; the worse of the literature and the other arts become, the more rosy is the previous model and the previous system of the ex-canonical writer.

A different type of reaction to the challenge of the macro-social structural change is that of Mircea Cărtărescu. He became part of the Romanian cultural canon as a young writer and as a poet, supported by the literary critic Nicolae Manolescu, one of the two mentors of the new generation in the eighties. (The other mentor, supporting the prose writers of the same generation, was Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu.) Experiencing the historical shift at an age with less difficulties of adaptation (33 years), Mircea Cărtărescu did not have Nicolae Breban’s problems and perceptions.

Even if Breban is a vitalist and expansive type of author, while Cărtărescu is an interiorized and depressive one, the first maintained his “anchor” in the past, while the latter tried to adapt to the given present. He succeeded in adapting to the new historical period and the new cultural structure by reinventing himself constantly. The poetry has been left behind in favor of the prose writing. Then, the prose writer was emulated by the columnist. Then, the columnist became a political analyst. And – the last auctorial experience – the political analyst has left behind the political analysis, for writing (in the present) a new book of fiction. Mircea Cărtărescu’s nostalgia is a literary experience, an instrument used for creating a fictional world. Nicolae Breban’s nostalgia is an individual reaction, the expression of a personal difficulty to adapt to the new socio-cultural system.

This new socio-cultural system, with its terms, is characterized by both writers. Breban characterizes it by refusing and rejecting the new conditions, the new values, the new type of selecting and disseminating values. The opening of the society and the diminished role of the

Romanian writer and intellectual are associated with a dissolution. For Mircea Cărtărescu, on the contrary, the opening of the Romanian society is associated with the extension of his reading public, outside Romania, through translations.

Each writer sets a paradigm. There are many Romanian writers and intellectuals in the paradigm of Nicolae Breban's attitudinal reaction; and there are many Romanian writers and intellectuals connected with Mircea Cărtărescu's type of reaction.

The nostalgic writers mention and debate the disolution of the high values and the public dangerous disinterest for the masterpieces. They are referring to the audience of the Romanian writers before 1990 and to the huge number of copies each Romanian writer sold. This past-oriented evaluation is linked to the present-oriented one. The main topic for the present is the Romanian writer's impossibility to earn a living from selling his books.⁸ The responsibility for this situation is that of the Romanian State: substantial subventions have to be integrated in the public budget, in order to support Romanian writers.

Subventions, symbolic prizes, patrimonial support from the State, all are elements that have to sustain the *national culture*. The writers within this paradigm are perceiving and representing themselves not as parts of the national culture, but as the canonical center of it. The State has to support the writer from the national culture and from the Romanian patrimony. The continuity with the model working in the totalitarian period is obvious. But the period is now completely different; this makes the writers from this paradigm nostalgic.

The adaptative Romanian writers, from the paradigm set by Mircea Cărtărescu, are not past-oriented, even if, in their writings, they can explore the temporal substance of their memory (the childhood is explored by Mircea Cărtărescu, Dan Lungu, Filip Florian, the youth by Radu Aldulescu). They have individual lines of evolution, in the area of seeking literary residences and fellowships, good translators for their works, convenient editorial contracts. Their discourse is a reader-centred one, and the reader that they prefer is the one of the new historical period, especially the young. The patrimonial discourse of the nostalgic writers is structurally opposed to the Market discourse of the adaptative writers. The first is in terms of pure literary values, that has to be supported and promoted by the State. The latter is in terms of personal literary success, measured by the number of copies sold and the number of translations.

An interesting institutional configuration was that of the Romanian Cultural Institute (RCI) with Horia-Roman Patapievici as president. RCI has supported both paradigms, with an interest in the patrimonial dimension of the Romanian culture and literature, but with a focus on those Romanian young writers and artists illustrating the opening of the Romanian society and mentality. Dan Lungu and Filip Florian, two of the most well-known Romanian still young prose writers, have been supported by the Romanian Culture Institute, in a cultural and conceptual projection of the future, and not in a patrimonial frame.

Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu, the Novelist and the Poet

If the analysis of the Romanian writers status in the postbellum totalitarian period is coherent with the analysis of the Romanian writers status in the post-revolutionary democratic period (the same analyst studies two macro-social structures, with implications in the individual experiences of the writers), the socio-cultural need for a Romanian Writer placed in the symbolic center of the society, before 1990, can be investigated with the examples of Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu.

The first was considered the most important prose writer in the postbellum period, and this evaluation was made during this period and during his life. The latter was considered – in a parallelism that speaks for itself – the most important poet in the postbellum period, and this evaluation was made during this period and during his life. Who made the evaluation and why have these Romanian writers occupied the first places in the Romanian literary canon?

In the first years of the Romanian *real Socialism*, after 1947, the literature was forced to adopt a mono-ideological scheme of values, symbols, and even literary forms. Analyzed by Eugen Negrici in his important work *Literatura română sub comunism* (Romanian Literature under Communism),⁹ the ideological instrumentalization of the literary writings was made possible by the authors themselves; some of them enthusiastically adopting the official models, others with less conformism, at least in their daily behaviour, if not in their texts.

The Romanian literature of the late forties and of the fifties became mono-ideological, while important authors of the previous period, the interbellum democratic historical period, were pushed in a condition of marginality, isolation or, in the extreme cases, political detention. The

new literature is programatically opposed to the “old” one, forbidden to be reduplicated in the present and linked to a “guilty” past of the Romanian literature seen as a whole. The new literature is the expression of the social, political, moral and cultural progress that the decidents of the day mark as such. This Orwellian re-writing of the factual past, for a mono-ideological triumphant present, with *new* values, *new* authors and a *new* literature, explains why the totalitarian regime had the need for literary works (novels, poems) able to express and, at the same time, shape the new cultural canon.

These are the macro-social context and the ideological frame that the future canonical status of Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu is related to. The natural instinct of a writer for gaining critical and public recognition, literary prizes for his works, a place in the official curricula is encouraged by the political regime, with its concrete and abstract, financial and symbolic advantages. Preda, in the fifties, will be the first; Stănescu, at the beginning of the sixties, will be the second. Marin Preda became an official prose writer with the first volume of *Moromeții* (1955); Nichita Stănescu, with his individual debut, *Sensul iubirii* (1960). Both have been supported by the official literary critics of the sub-period, with the most notable example of Paul Georgescu. And both have been obliged to produce texts obedient to the official, mono-ideological line, as a price paid for their future success and as a guarantee for the regime that they were implicated in, not as escapist writers.

Their selection as official writers is not an exception, but the rule. Preda and Stănescu illustrate a rule of mono-ideological State institutional selection that is illustrated also by many other examples of Romanian prose writers and poets, from Petru Dumitriu to George Bălăiță and from Dan Deșliu to Ana Blandiana. The area of selection is very large because the main goal of the totalitarian regime, in its cultural strategies, is to present an image of literary multitude and consistency, for competing the cultural reality of the interbellum democratic period.

In the fifties, the interest of the political regime for the arts and their producers is at its peak. The activists have the inferiority complex of the ruler with no real cultural and intellectual legitimacy. And this legitimacy may be obtained only by editing many literary works of many *new* Romanian writers. For such reason, Marin Preda will get soon a canonical status superior even to that of Mihail Sadoveanu, an interbellum prose writer deeply involved in the mono-ideological shape of the Romanian society, culture and literature. Sadoveanu is still linked to the previous

historical period, while Preda can play the role that he is expected to play: the role of a product of the new era.

The symbolic official investment will be marked, again and again, with the significant obedient Romanian writers; and even with the non-significant obedient ones. There is a mass-production symbolical investment, opposed to the individualism of the previous historical period. And the area of selection is almost one with the area of Romanian obedient writers. The totalitarian regime wants them all, as a symbolical and a statistical proof that The Popular Republic of Romania produces a new literature.

The symbolical contract signed by the regime is doubled by an incalculable number of financial contracts guaranteed by the State, the supreme authority in the cultural domain. The totalitarian State has all the instruments and the regime uses them, illustrating a double condition: the one of a contractual partner and the other of the institutional authority decident in contracting. It is enough for a Romanian writer to show obedience and conformity to the regime's cultural demands: he will become a contractual partner, with material benefits and, very frequently, symbolical honors.

The *privilligentsia* that Ioana Macrea-Toma focuses on is a term and a category that are proper for this historical sub-period: 1948-1963. Almost all obedient Romanian writers are part of the *privilligentsia* of the time, while Right or even Left-intellectuals, as Lucian Blaga, Constantin Noica, Ion D. Sîrbu are in political detention or in a condition of social marginality (like Blaga). The biographical facts are different in the same social and historical context. This is the reason for which a term and a category like *privilligentsia* cannot be used as a valid operator for characterizing *all* Romanian writers and thinkers, in the fifties.

The crucial point for a Romanian writer to represent an upper level of the canonical hierarchy and to be selected as the most important Romanian author in his genre is an intersection point. The selection made by the political regime has a large area and cannot mark *the* Novelist or *the* Poet. Adrian Păunescu, the favourite poet of the regime Ceaușescu, in the seventies and the beginning of eighties, could not replace Nichita Stănescu as the recognized canonical figure of Romanian postbellum poetry – even if Păunescu had a type of lyricism much more Party-, and on the other hand, Reader-oriented.

The accessible poems of Păunescu could not replace the modernist poems of Stănescu in the Romanian collective imaginary about what is

and what should be a Poet. A similar impossibility to replace Marin Preda from the highest level of canonical status can be observed and detailed. Even if there were many realistic novelists, even if Preda's themes, epic conflicts, narrative forms were copied or emulated, the distance of *the* Novelist from his followers was the same.

The intersection and crucial point for this canonical supremacy is, in the case of Marin Preda, as well as of Nichita Stănescu, a convergence of elements and factors. I list them without subscribing to the theories of chance, luck, imponderables, and so on. First of all, obedience or conformism to the mono-ideological demand is needed. (Constantin Noica, Ion D. Sîrbu, Leonid Dimov, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Gabriel Liiceanu lacked this essential obedience to the totalitarian regime.)

Secondly, an authoritative support from the official literary critics is needed. Both Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu were supported and even acclaimed by the most important and official literary critics of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties.

Thirdly, success gained in the area of the Romanian public is needed. Preda has constantly adapted and accommodated himself with the expectancies of the Romanian readers, from *Moromeții* (1955) up to *Cel mai iubit dintre pămînteni* (1980), with the very important example of *Delirul* (1975). While Nichita Stănescu played with a sort of natural genius the role of the Poet, in the inner and outer levels of his poems. He was *the* Poet not only by his poems (Dimov, Mălăncioiu, M. Ivănescu have been great poets, too), but also by his personal charisma, uncomparable to any other Romanian poet's.

The fourth relevant factor is the recognition of the aesthetic value of the novels and the books of poetry written by Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu. The junction inside the canonical convergence of elements is the one that puts together the mono-ideological imperative of the officials and the aesthetical imperative of the literary critics tolerated in the Romanian literature. With their most important writings, both Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu have been placed in an aesthetic literary canon, forged by Nicolae Manolescu and other literary critics active in the sixties, the seventies, and the eighties.

The fifth relevant element is Preda's and Stănescu's continuity in the various contexts of the historical period. They have continued to write, to publish, and to adapt their personal strategies of success to the distinct moments of the official imperatives and demands, from 1948 (Preda) and 1960 (Stănescu) up to 1980 (Preda) and 1982 (Stănescu). Thirty or

twenty-five years of writing and publishing, in the literary mainstream of a historical and cultural period, are connected with a canonical status of a Romanian writer. The most important competitor of Marin Preda, Petru Dumitriu, had not this dimension of continuity. Neither did Nicolae Breban. The first has chosen the exile, in 1960, while the latter had conflicts with the Communist Party structures (in 1971), after representing them.

The last relevant factor in this canonical supremacy of *the* Novelist or of *the* Poet is the credit that the symbolical figures of the Romanian exile (Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca) have given, in the *Radio Free Europe* programmes, to the Romanian writers that illustrated a type of resistance or opposition to the totalitarian regime. In an interesting parallel, the selection process area of *Radio Free Europe* was comparable to the selection process area of the Romanian Communist Party. The Romanian officials needed obedience from *all* Romanian writers. *Radio Free Europe*, through Monica Lovinescu's and Virgil Ierunca's programmes, supported *all* resisting and opposing Romanian writers, with a reduced interest for the aesthetical value *per se* of a Romanian writer.

This is why Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu, after gaining the support of *Radio Free Europe*, have been evaluated and judged for their acts of mono-ideological conformism. But, in the eighties, it was too late for such a re-evaluation to have concrete results in the Romanian cultural system. Only after the Revolution of December 1989, the canonical preeminence of Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu will be problematized and negated. The sixties, the seventies, the eighties are the decades of *the* Poet and *the* Novelist who have succeeded in marking all these relevant factors and their essential convergence.

Canonical status in two systems

If Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu illustrate – at the first level of the Romanian postbellum literary canon – the socio-cultural need and the two writers are paradigmatic for the convergence of factors and elements that determined the selection of *one* name for each genre, they are not relevant any more for the new, post-totalitarian socio-cultural system. They remain, undoubtedly, at the highest level of the literary canon, but their places are disputed, after 1990, by re-evaluated Romanian writers. Leonid Dimov, M. Ivănescu, Ileana Mălăncioiu are compared more frequently with Nichita Stănescu; and their poetry is re-considered as equivalent or

superior to that of Stănescu. Ștefan Agopian, Mircea Cărtărescu, Radu Aldulescu are, similarly, compared with Marin Preda, and their novels present an equivalent originality and a superior modernity to those of Preda's novels.

This type of artistic competition is inadequate in itself, since literature is a domain permissive to all individual imaginary experience. Its interest derives from the fact that in the collective symbolic investment, in the totalitarian period, *the one* was preferred to the several "competitors". After December 1989, in the new type of society, of culture, and, finally, as a structural effect, of literature, the idea of *the one*, with its illustrations, is forgotten with almost no public regret. The Market rules influence not only the material status of the Romanian writers, collapsing their perspectives of earning a living from selling copies, but also the stability of the valorization framework. The new literary canon has perturbations, fluctuations, and consistent changes from a decade to another, while the previous canon had a much greater stability, from the sixties to the eighties.

It is impossible to estimate how Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu would have seen this shift, after 1990. But the examples of Marin Sorescu, Ana Blandiana, Augustin Buzura, Nicolae Breban, George Bălăiță, Dumitru Radu Popescu present a diagram of diminishing interest. The literary critics and the public do not share the "old" enthusiasm any more: a fact that complicates this stage of personal experience for each of these Romanian writers. Probably Preda and Stănescu would have shared this symbolical crisis, expectable for each writer with a consolidated status during the totalitarian period.¹⁰

What remains relevant, for this investigating and problematizing segment, is the placement of Preda and Stănescu in the literary canon shaped and fixed before 1990, in the macro-social context of a totalitarian State and a closed society. They have not experienced the new context, the new society, the re-shaping of the literary canon and the "democratic disinterest" that make their colleagues nostalgic. They illustrate paradigmatically the literary canon and the socio-cultural structure of a historical period that ended in December 1989.

On the other hand, Mircea Cărtărescu, Radu Aldulescu and Dan Lungu were too young for defining, through their careers, an insertion in the previous literary canon. Aldulescu and Lungu made their editorial debut after 1990, while Cărtărescu became important, before 1990, as a poet of the new generation, not as a prose writer. An important difference between the previous literary canon and the post-Socialist one

is that poetry diminished considerably its importance in the new cultural structure. This explains Mircea Cărtărescu's transition from poetry to novel. The professional writer offered himself a new chance, adapting his writing and its genre to the public expectations and interest, in a Market economy that literature and the other arts are playing into. Ion Mureșan, poet of the same generation, remained a poet. The Romanian readers and the translators have chosen Cărtărescu. And the surface readers had no alternative. For them, Ion Mureșan is almost unknown.

If Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu are paradigmatic for the previous Romanian literary canon and its shaping and stability during thirty years, and if Mircea Cărtărescu, Radu Aldulescu and Dan Lungu are relevant for the new, fluctuating, aesthetical and marketable literary canon, there is a writer who illustrates both structures of literary selection and valorization. This writer, with a canonical status in two historical periods and two different socio-cultural systems, is Norman Manea.

Manea has chosen exile in 1986, in the most terrible years of Nicolae Ceaușescu's totalitarian regime. At that time, he was already the author of a number of books that have gained the appreciation of the most important Romanian literary critics. Paul Georgescu, Lucian Raicu, Valeriu Cristea, Liviu Petrescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Mircea Iorgulescu, and others¹¹ placed him in the modernist category of prose, with an interest to the interiority of the characters, to the forms of narrating, problematizing and debating, and with an indirectly expressed, but persistent, post-traumatic memories.

In the following years, years of complete freedom for the citizen of the United States who continued to write in Romanian, Manea's memories tended to organize themselves as memoirs and as a memorial. The Jewish experience of the child in a Far-Right regime (that of Ion Antonescu) and the Communist experience of the young in a Socialist totalitarian regime (that of Gheorghiu-Dej) mixed deeply with the social experience of Romanians during the nationalist years of Ceaușescu regime. Three different historical periods of dictatorship impregnated the writer's memory with a substance that demanded to be explored, organized and expressed through literature. The final traumatic experience, that of the exile, may be seen as the epic catalyser of the memorial, written in Romanian, then translated in English: *The Hooligan's Return: A Memoir* (2003).

The impressive success of this book has an international dimension, while the previous literary reception of Norman Manea's writing was reduced to the Romanian cultural and literary scene. And in three decades of canonical preeminence of Marin Preda, the first level of the Romanian

literary canon could not have been reached by any other Romanian prose writer.

Even if the Romanian literary critics marked and valued the originality of several novelists, Manea included, the socio-cultural configuration of an East-European totalitarian State blocked any chances of real cultural exchange. Before 1990, the translations from Romanian writers were controlled also by the State or were made only by the permission of its officials. The Romanian writers in search of a personal career in other cultural spaces were obliged to choose the exile. This option was doubly traumatic: the writer had to change his language and to adapt to a foreign culture and society; and, with this option made, he was “deleted” from the Romanian literary scene, bookshops and libraries. Choosing freedom of thought and of speech had as effect the erasing of the Romanian writer from the Romanian literary map. The example of Petru Dumitriu, exiled in 1960 (even though he was one of the most important prose writers of the Socialist sub-period) and “invisible” in Romania until December 1989, is also paradigmatic.

The chance of Norman Manea, after a number of dictatorships, familial and personal traumas, is that he left Socialist Romania in 1986, after a sustained and consolidated presence in the Romanian literary modernist canon, with a few years before the collapse of the totalitarian regime. Deleting Norman Manea’s name and titles from 1986 to 1989 was a measure of the same type of censorship, but of other level of importance than deleting Petru Dumitriu’s name since the sixties, or Paul Goma, Dumitru Țepeneag and others since the seventies. The interval of Manea’s cut from the Romanian literary canon, in the postbellum totalitarian period, was reduced. The effects of this cutting and deleting punishing process are insignificant.

This leads to the conclusion that Norman Manea had the previously mentioned and analyzed continuity in the Romanian literary mainstream, together with Marin Preda (d. 1980), Nicolae Breban, Augustin Buzura, George Bălăiță and other prose writers from the same generation of middle-aged authors in December 1989. But he marks a specific difference, by the fact that he is part of a new literary and cultural canon, with an international background and dimension, after 1986.

Almost two decades in the Romanian literary canon (Manea made his editorial debut in 1969) are completed by almost three decades in an international and, from a point, Global cultural canon. The Romanian writers from his generation are, with some notable exceptions, nostalgic,

representing by idealising the previous socio-cultural structure, with them in its center, as an objective necessity. Norman Manea, on the contrary, shares his experience and the substance of his memories with an indefinite number of readers from different parts of the world, fixing the anchor and the center in his inner literary Self.

With this identity and Self-investigation put in the mobile vehicle of many languages (Manea's books are already translated in Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Latin America, Netherlands, Israel, England, Portugal, Turkey, United States, China...¹²) and with a literary reception made by literary critics from all these cultural spaces, the previously exiled Romanian author may be considered an international one. He continues to use Romanian as the language of literary exploration and substance; but the circle of reception and influence is incomparable to any other Romanian writer's. If Marin Preda is *the* Novelist from the Romanian literary canon before 1990, Norman Manea is undoubtedly *the* Novelist from Romanian literature in the International and Global literary canon. His name and Mircea Cărtărescu's one are often quoted as possible winners of the Nobel Literary Prize, after Nichita Stănescu's has been mentioned in his last years and Marin Sorescu's, in the nineties.

Romanian Writers in the years of “democratic” disinterest for literature. Two of them

Radu Aldulescu and Dan Lungu conclude the series of illustrative examples for each canonical configuration. Marin Preda and Nichita Stănescu set a paradigm for the selection and the consecration of the Novelist and the Poet in a totalitarian period, in a socio-cultural reality with visible and rigid rules. Norman Manea and Mircea Cărtărescu illustrate both the mainstream and the “pure” literary canon of the Romanian Socialist period; and the international, global, multi-centered cultural canon of the last two decades.

But there is still a Romanian writer' experience that has to be analyzed and detailed. This experience is that of the Romanian writer very young before 1990 and who has made his editorial debut in the new society and the new socio-cultural frame. The freedom of thought, of speech and of literary expression is now a characteristic socially and politically guaranteed; while before 1990, it was a sphere of individual risk for the writer.

There is a very important difference between a writer such as Ion D. Sîrbu and one such as Dan Lungu not only from a literary point of view; but also from a socio-cultural one. Sîrbu wrote his books in conditions of dictatorship and censorship, after several years of political detention, with the apartment surveilled, as we have seen, by *Securitate* from 1968 to 1988. His most important books, *Jurnalul unui jurnalist fără jurnal* and *Adio, Europa!*, will be published after December 1989. (He died in September 1989.) Lungu writes his prose in years with no mono-ideological control of the writers and artists, in an open society. He can choose any narrative form, any word (there are no more forbidden words) and he can represent a Left dictator as a character with no anxiety that an institution named *Securitate* will push him to political prison or exile. All these threats from a totalitarian State, with writers forced to become dissidents to express a truth or parts of a truth, have disappeared in December 1989. The socio-cultural need for the truths that some East-European writers have risked to express ends with the historical period marked by Nicolae Ceaușescu totalitarian regime.

Dan Lungu and, before him, Radu Aldulescu will write and publish prose in this new macro-social context, when the interest of the Romanian public is spreading to all the novelties and discoveries, in the frame of a democracy. In these years, in a Market economy and cultural system, with a real competition between writers for a Romanian public that diminished considerably, the major problem of the writer has a financial, not an ideological nature.

The totalitarian State was replaced by a Market with reduced interest for the “pure” literary value of the books. Poetry is the first victim of this shift. The books of prose are preferred by editors, since the public prefers them and almost ignores the volumes of poetry. And the public is now disputed between the translations in Romanian of the books from other cultural spaces (many of them, best-sellers worldwide) and the Romanian titles.

If the problem of the Romanian writer was, before 1990, to maintain his moral integrity, under the pressure of the mono-ideological State-controlled system, the problem of the Romanian writer is, in the new historical and socio-cultural period, to maintain his literary integrity, under the pressure (for immediate profit) of the Market economy and its actors.

Radu Aldulescu is the “victim” of this re-configuration, since he publishes one of his best novels, *Amantul Colivăresei*, during the nineties (1996). Dan Lungu has the chance to be in synchronicity with two important programs: one, editorial, implemented by Polirom Publishing

House for the *new* Romanian prose writers (*Ego-Proză* collection, started in 2004) and the other, with translations, sustained by the Romanian Cultural Institute with Horia-Roman Patapievici as President (2005-2012). His novel *Raiul găinilor* was published by Polirom in 2004; and its first translation was published in France in 2005.

A Romanian writer has to become a *brand* in order to be sure that he can earn a living from selling his books. This new stage is, for the moment, an ideal for the Romanian writers; and a goal to achieve. Living from writing and selling books will create the category of Romanian professional writers: *professional* in the solid meaning of the term, and not only in that of personal talent and pure literary value.

NOTES

- ¹ MACREA-TOMA, I., *Privileghiul. Instituții literare în comunismul românesc*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.
- ² MAREȘ, C., *Zidul de sticlă. Ion D. Sîrbu în arhivele Securității*, Curtea Veche, IICCMER, Bucharest, 2011.
- ³ LIICEANU, G., *Dragul meu turnător*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2013. Other important radiographies of the Romanian cultural system in the totalitarian period have been realized and published before the moment of opening CNSAS archives. Among them:
VERDERY, K., *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, translated by Mona and Sorin Antohi, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1994;
GABANYI, A.U., *Literatura și politica în România după 1945*, translated by Irina Cristescu, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 2001.
- ⁴ MACREA-TOMA, I, *vol. cit.*, pp. 151-152. Ioana Macrea-Toma uses the material of personal interviews (with writers and intellectuals such as Constantin Țoiu, Aurel Rău, Paul Cornea, Ion Vlad, Gelu Ionescu, Augustin Buzura, Nicolae Prelipceanu) and that of interviews from the research project *Remaining Relevant after Communism* (Andrew Wachtel, Irina Livezeanu, Marius Lazăr, Daniel Cristea-Enache), 2001: interviews with Eugen Uricaru, Z. Ornea, Georgeta Dimisianu, Nicolae Manolescu, Ioana Ieronim and others. The factual information offered by both sets of interviews is the same, testified by all the authors.
- ⁵ *Idem*, p. 149.
- ⁶ Eugen Negrici analyzed Romanian literature under Communism, with interest not only for the literary value of the prose and poetry works, but also for their reception in the areas of mono-ideological and, respectively, aesthetical valorization. If the analysis will be made for the following historical period and socio-cultural system (after December 1989), we'll probably have a convergence between his interpretations and conclusions and the interpretations and conclusions from this article.
- ⁷ LUNGU, D., *Construcția identității într-o societate totalitară*, Junimea, Iași, 2003. Before gaining public recognition and success as a novelist, Lungu specialised in the area of sociology. Later on, the literary critics put together the two approaches, the scientific and the fictional one, insisting on the fine sociological texture of his novels. See: CRISTEA-ENACHE, D, "Răpirea din Serai", in *România literară*, 10, 2007.
- ⁸ See Radu Aldulescu's financial problems, discussed above, in parallel with Marin Preda's benefits in one year: 1979.
- ⁹ NEGRICI, E., *Literatura română sub comunism. Proza*, Editura Fundației PRO, Bucharest, 2002.
- ¹⁰ In his recent autobiographical and memoirs book, Ștefan Agopian is at the same time one of the emergent Romanian writers in 1979 and a very precious

observer of the canonical figures: Nichita Stănescu especially, who accepted the younger writer as close friend, and Marin Preda. What seems to be a coincidence represents a confirmation of the convergence of elements and factors analyzed above. Paul Georgescu, one of the official literary critics very influent from the fifties up to the eighties, had an enthusiastic reception of Preda's, Stănescu's and Agopian's masterpieces. See:

AGOPIAN, Ș., *Scritor în comunism (niște amintiri)*, Polirom, Iași, 2013.

- ¹¹ The list, important in order to describe the writer's reception in the area of the Romanian literature in the seventies and the eighties, is to be found in the monograph of Claudiu Turcuș, the editorial debut of a literary critic from the new generation. See:

TURCUȘ, C., *Estetica lui Norman Manea*, Editura Cartea Românească, Bucharest, 2012.

See also:

CRISTEA-ENACHE, D., "Fără epic" (I-II), in *Observator Cultural*, 624-625, 2012.

- ¹² All the translations from Norman Manea's writings until 2011 are listed in the volume, in bilingual edition, dedicated to the writer. See:

* * *, *Obsesia incertitudinii/ The Obsession of Uncertainty. In honorem Norman Manea*, volume edited by Cella Manea and George Onofrei, Polirom, 2011.