MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI
UNIVERSITATEA „1 DECEMBRIE 1918" DIN ALBA IULIA
FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE , LITERE ȘI ȘTIINȚE ALE EDUCAȚIEI
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE FILOLOGIE

Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation:

Poetics and Politics in Romanian Fiction at the End of the Millennium: The Prelude to and the Unfolding of a Revolution

Ph.D. Supervisor:
Prof. dr. habil. Maria-Ana Tupan

PhD Candidate:
Cristian Petru Vieru

ALBA IULIA

2025

Keywords: poetics and politics, the 1989 revolution, historiographic metafiction, New Historicism, minimalism, tropes of anti-totalitarian discourse

Topic: The theme of the intersection between the poetics of ficiton written around the revolution and the totalitarian politics of the period has aroused interest among the Romanian literary world. We have followed the way in which independent literature resisted in the context of a crude propaganda and an institutionalized censorship at the highest level of culture (the Council of Socialist Culture and Education), which, most of the time, acted discretionarily, in the absence of a value criterion. The resistance of the writers took various forms, from direct attack to Aesopian language, but what was especially important was the manifestation of an autonomy that meant preserving the links with the local tradition, the synchronization with the aesthetic mutations in the great centers of culture, the positioning in the canonical landscape of world literature. Our selection targeted the works in which the political-poetic interface offered the key to reading.

Methodology:

The poetic-political connection has become a methodological tool—an indispensable analytical instrument for discussing contemporary texts. Our interest lay in the ways in which politics infiltrates multiple layers of literary discourse. The theoretical framework of our research engages with key concepts employed by contemporary literary criticism. The doctrine of New Historicism provided a pathway for approaching the selected texts. We focused our analysis on elements such as allegory, the intrusion of the fantastic, and the role of irony in critiquing the injustices of the totalitarian regime.

Structure:

The study is organized into eight chapters, as follows:

Chapter I: *Literature–History–Politics: Mediations of the Eighth Decade*

This section outlines the theoretical delimitations, highlighting the main directions in contemporary literary research, particularly in relation to the emergence of historiographic metafiction as a form of resistance under totalitarianism.

The subsequent chapters comprise a close analysis of both Romanian and international authors whose works are relevant to our scholarly inquiry:

Chapter II: *The 1980s: Between Historiographic Metafiction and Semiotic Aesthetics* This chapter examines the prose of six Romanian authors.

Chapter III: *The Literature of the "Desantul Optzecist" Generation*

Chapter IV: *The Poetics of 1980s Minimalism and Its Origins*

Chapter V: *Figures of Anti-Totalitarian Discourse*

Chapter VI: *Literature and Trauma: Herta Müller*

Chapter VII: *"Drawer Literature": I.D. Sîrbu*

Chapter VIII: *Anti-Totalitarianism Across Discursive Forms (Diary, Fiction, and Historical Study)*

Fredric Jameson rejects the periodization of literary history, arguing that there is no longer a telos, no finality to historical processes. We can no longer identify a unified *spirit of the age*, but only cultural dominants, texts in dialogue with one another, or, as Stephen Greenblatt puts it, negotiations of semantic energies intersecting within a culture that transcends disciplinary or generic boundaries. We focus on the intersection of literature and politics, adopting the conventions of poetic-political analysis, for two main reasons.

On the one hand, as noted by Robert L. McLaughlin among others, the exit from postmodernism has marked a return to the political and social referentiality of literature, as well as to a renewed sense of ethical responsibility. This shift is also reflected in the types of theoretical schools that have emerged in the new millennium: trauma studies, affect theory, ecocriticism, and the political/ poetic interface—developments that followed several decades of narcissistic textual self-reflexivity and the predominance of textual aesthetics.

On the other hand, we reiterate a revisionist gesture that was applied to modernism at the end of the last century: beyond their preoccupation with formal aspects, modernist writers demonstrated a subtle awareness of the historical realities they seemed programmatically to distance themselves from—such as the dehumanizing effects of war, the decline of empires, colonial exploitation, sexism, and racism. Despite historical hardships, Romanian literature during the communist era remained in dialogue with the major trends of global cultural centers, with scholars identifying in it elements of postwar surrealism, magical realism, metafiction, and minimalism. The parallels that can be drawn here concern aesthetic modes, genres, narrative strategies, and poetics. Beyond the distinctions based on these criteria, there is another layer

shaped by the geopolitical context—one that exhibits a similar configuration not only across the various literary movements mentioned, but also in comparison with literatures from other former Eastern Bloc countries. Even the level of meaning derived from gender identity (such as the allo-historical dimension of magical realism or the reductive, derisive imaginary in minimalist poetry and prose) was employed as a means of critiquing the totalitarian regime.

The phrase *"poetics and politics"* refers both to literature's engagement with social relations and to the aesthetic dimensions of politics itself. This involves not only the obvious aspect—the institutionalization of literary life through various forms of censorship that imposed rules of representation and thematic boundaries (books were rejected not because they were subversive, but for being deemed worthless, imitative of the "decadent" West, lacking realism and ideological purpose)—but also the rhetoric of political discourse, which relied heavily on the dissemination of symbols, metaphors, and hyperboles (such as *the golden age*, *Cântarea Romțniei*, *the obsessive decade*, *the avenger of justice*), as well as visual allegories: the beloved leader as the crowning figure in a long line of voivodes; Elena Ceaușescu painted with a lamb's head and a rose over her heart; or the miniaturized people gathered around the ruling couple, haloed by the national tricolor and the dove of peace. There is a deeper layer—at times surfacing in the subconscious of the text—of political oppression, which can be traced in works that are generically diverse but share the charged atmosphere preceding the fall of the Iron Curtain, an atmosphere to which literature almost certainly contributed.

In contrast to earlier critical positions, this study aims to demonstrate—through a selection of texts—that in the decade leading up to the Revolution, there emerged literary figures who not only aligned with the global canon of the time, but who, despite not being united by generational affiliation, shared common poetics. At the same time, their work served as a resonant chamber for the politically charged atmosphere and the pervasive sense of unreality produced by the schizophrenic practices of the regime.

Our approach, therefore, is situated within the analytical framework of *poetics and politics*, a perspective that gained increasing relevance in both anthropology and critical theory during the historical turning point that concerns us—the Romanian anti-communist Revolution. Frozen within the two opposing political blocs on either side of the Iron Curtain, global politics had long relied on stereotypes—products of isolationism, and of the absence of direct confrontation and mutual experience. In the wake of these events, however, politics once again

became dynamic, negotiable, and open to the possibility of building bridges and fostering rapprochement rather than perpetuating antagonism. It became an invasive politics—a discourse with real consequences for shaping a new world.

Unlike typological literary histories, structured around the succession of literary movements, theoretical schools, or aesthetic trends in Western literature, the exegesis of postwar Romanian literature generally operates with a biological criterion: the '60s generation, the '70s generation, the '80s generation, and so on—each associated with guiding figures (the Sixties writers under the tutelage of Simion and Manolescu, the Seventies under Ulici, the Eighties comprising members of Cenaclul de Luni și Junimea)

The role of this study is to analyze how the literary phenomenon of the final decades of the totalitarian regime—a period marked by social uncertainty and political upheaval—can, in itself, represent the result of a writer's attitude of resistance against the constraints imposed on the intellectual class by the dictatorship. This shared experience should, however, account for a possible unified poetics detectable in the narrative fabric of Romanian fiction from the 1980s and 1990s.

The biological generation, a preferred ”unit of measurement” used by literary historians in the postwar era to analyze mentalities, should therefore not be perceived as a leveling element, but rather as a more or less homogeneous conglomerate of literary techniques and attitudes shaped by the spirit specific to a distinct historically-defined period. Affiliating with a particular group essentially means embracing the spirit of a magazine or a literary circle.

As the revolution approaches, the prose writer's preference for the short story and novella becomes increasingly pronounced. The '80s generation is linked to both Cenaclul de luni and Junimea, which were viewed by the communist authorities as springboards for writers whose works carried a subversive undertone in that era. In '80s prose, one of the key alternatives to ideologically compliant writing is historiographic metafiction—a genre with strong suggestive power, which, by constructing fictional worlds, subtly references contemporary realities. The repressive effect of communist censorship is clear, and the writers it targets are those steadfast voices who refuse to join the ranks of authors aligned with the regime, advocates of a politically engaged art devoted to glorifying the accomplishments of the communist order.

The symbolic imaginary of metafiction points to constructed, textualized realities that are fundamentally different from those depicted in works of socialist realism. While traditional realism aspired to an objective, truthful representation of reality— explicitly rejecting its idealization—socialist realism concealed the dogmas of a totalitarian world, offering a distorted portrayal of society. In this sense, it functioned as an instrument of mass indoctrination. In contrast, the fictionalization of reality, as seen in metafiction, emerges from the lucidity of writers who remained independent from state power—authors who, often with detachment and irony, challenged and critiqued the laws of the totalitarian regime.

The path toward the doctrine of New Historicism was opened precisely as a result of the communist regime's policy, which sought only the emergence of ideologically committed artistic expressions. The literature of the 1980s generation is characterized by subterfuge, producing messages that, at times conveyed through ironic tones, reflected situations encountered in the totalitarian reality.

As a consequence of the communist regime's constraints targeting the intellectual sphere, the underground movement of the 1980s generation emerged promptly. Thus, the impulse to write within the underground sphere can be understood in relation to the condition of the intellectual under oppressive circumstances. The frustration caused by the brutal methods employed by the censorship apparatus led to the adoption of a rebellious stance, commonly reflected in the nonconformist character of the writings. This is exemplified in the works of Gheorghe Crăciun, Mircea Nedelciu, and Alexandru Mușina—authors who demonstrate a keen ability to critique the policies of a regime responsible for the bleak universe in which their characters are often forced to lead monotonous and unfulfilling lives.

The role of the reader is essential in the subversive literature of the moment. Historiographic metafictions are scriptural texts (as termed by Roland Barthes), in which the reader decodes a message, thereby becoming a second author, actively engaged in constructing the meaning of the work. The reader interprets the text in relation to their own cultural background and past experiences. The reader is in a position of control, playing an active role in the construction of meaning. In metanarratives, the nature of the discourse is shaped by the author's self-awareness. Moreover, the subversive text can be fully decoded only by a reader who shares the same cultural space as the writer—one who is familiar with the constraints of the regime and thus capable of understanding the underlying allusions.

Historiographic metafiction and the politics of New Historicism do not aim to present historical events in a triumphalist manner. Social and political realities, as well as various forms of constraint, are understood by the reader through an excess of meaning. Another aspect that must be addressed is the status of certain representatives of the generation who also serve as literary theorists (Gheorghe Crăciun, Viorel Marineasa, Mircea Cărtărescu). This dual role proves to be a fruitful one, as these authors are inclined to explore narrative strategies through which the language of prose can facilitate the emergence of an excess of meaning—one of the defining preoccupations of the decade. In the prose of the 80s, we encounter simple characters, often uninterested in the course of history or in major events that might alter the trajectory of the world. They appear merely as victims—frequently unaware and indifferent—of historical processes. Their fate becomes significant for understanding the condition of the ordinary person, concerned primarily with survival under harsh circumstances. The depiction of their mundane, everyday existence carries an excess of meaning, as it reflects the shared drama of the silenced and humiliated individual.

In cultures dominated by totalitarian regimes—both in European countries and in South America—parables emerge as a means of survival, serving as a kind of safety valve. This represents an escape into a fictional world, where truths are subtly conveyed under the guise of magical realism and a fairy-tale atmosphere. A comparative reading of the works of Ioan Groșan, A. E. Baconsky, Miguel Ángel Asturias, and Ismail Kadare can reveal shared strategies and subterfuges.

Interestingly, in the anthology *Desant '83*, George Cușnarencu portrays a dictator with a convoluted, Latin American–sounding name: Marcel Daniela Magelan Cervantes Aristot Parmigianini Bach Ortega Franco de Galambos. The inhumane behavior of this character clearly serves as a symbolic allusion to the political situation in Romania during the eighth decade of the twentieth century. Thus, a Romanian prose writer employs the subterfuge of depicting the abuses of a dictator from another continent, a strategy that enables the text to pass censorship.

In the Latin American novel *Men of Maize*, Miguel Ángel Asturias foregrounds the idea of manhunting as the only possible means of moral reparation within the broader struggle to preserve cultural identity. A community of Indigenous people is invaded, and their lands are burned to make way for maize cultivation. The defense of ancestral territories is presented as equally vital as the resistance against a grotesque act of sacrilege, since maize holds sacred

significance for the native population. Its commodification is deemed unacceptable, leading to a war grounded in the defense of fundamental principles. The struggle is arduous, but liberation is portrayed as the sole path to preserving identity.

Olga Tokarczuk's consistently critical stance toward totalitarian regimes is evident in her novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, particularly through the construction of the narrative voice. Mrs. Duszejko, a representative figure of the lucid intellectual, lacks the disposition to passively accept the injustices of history—an attitude often necessary for survival in such a world. Confronted with cruelty, she responds in kind, turning to hunting as a means of enacting moral reparation. Her actions, though extreme, are driven by a noble purpose: the eradication of evil, the protection of nature, and the defense of a healthy moral order. By targeting humans, the teacher seeks to prevent the killing of innocent animals. Her revolt is thus portrayed as entirely justified.

D.R. Popescu also employs the trope of hunting to construct a parable reflecting the simple man's desire for justice in the face of historical oppression. Discomfort and terror extend beyond the boundaries of life itself, evoking a sense of total captivity. Within such a world, the Prosecutor feels compelled to 'hunt' independently when institutional authorities prove indifferent. Thus, he resorts to hunting—an inherently human act that exposes both cruelty and primal instinct—because he perceives it as the only accessible form of justice. From this perspective, the *royal hunt* becomes a real hunt, unfolding in a social jungle where inconvenient individuals are systematically eliminated.

The relationship between politics and poetics in a recent period of Romanian history is exemplified by the correspondence between the various manifestations of totalitarianism—both at the brink of collapse and in its immediate aftermath—and the authors' adoption of the generic conventions of historiographic metafiction. Through the superimposition of the real, the fantastic, and the symbolic, this narrative mode enables the construction of a composite portrait of an absurd and degraded world, in which randomness coexists with strict surveillance and inflexible laws. Realist writing, with its linear structure and convention of omniscience, proves inadequate for representing a schizoid universe, one that is axiomatically annihilated and that leaves the individual with the sense of being a 'suspended animal,' detached from both history and morality. The proposed parallel between a Romanian novel, a Polish one, and a Latin American text serves as further evidence of the legitimacy of choosing a literary genre that, in

other totalitarian societies as well, has emerged as the most suitable medium for inserting into literary history a truthful depiction of the period.

The major endeavor of the writers of the 1980s generation lies in reflecting truths that respond to the public's need to find, in contemporary literature, ideas that cannot be freely expressed. Romanian minimalism aspires to suggest truth through a drastic reduction of descriptive elements and through the sketching of characters captured in the banality of everyday existence — a banality that, paradoxically, is full of meaning. While American short stories associated with minimalism often depict ordinary humanity characterized by despair and extreme actions, characters in Romanian minimalist fiction are portrayed in a state of latency, marked by a necessary resignation that enables survival in a totalitarian society.

If in minimalist sculpture the artist's preference for simple geometric forms and a limited color palette becomes evident, in literature it is the time of schematic notations, simple syntactic constructions, and sparse vocabulary. The characters portrayed are equally simple. The intellectual or artist, when present, appears as a faded figure, experiencing life alongside a humanity that functions primarily at the level of instinct rather than consciousness, concerned solely with survival.

The language in this type of fiction therefore tends to be simple and direct. Narrators often avoid ornate adjectives and rarely provide effusive descriptions of the landscape or extensive background details about the characters. Allusions and implication through omission are frequently employed as strategies to compensate for the limited exposition, adding depth to stories that may otherwise appear superficial or incomplete on the surface.

Minimalism was initially defined as encompassing all those snapshots of everyday life, clearly marked by fragmentation, which, through a reduction to the essential, succeeded in offering a radiographic view of a drifting American society—hurried, lacking principles, populated by ordinary characters, and often experiencing the extremes of fear and despair.

The difference between the realist writer and the minimalist one lies in the former's tendency to provide detailed context—a family history or a romantic background—while the minimalist author presents a life situation ***ex abrupto***, omitting the traditional narrative logic of sequential events that characterized earlier literature. The depiction of these everyday events is often carried out in a way that provokes laughter, a strategy that enables the artist to convey certain truths, thereby circumventing the constraints of a rather vigilant censorship.

Returning to the minimalist writer's ironic attitude, it entails a certain detachment from the situations being described—contexts in which the characters often find themselves complacent. What is depicted are societies governed by unwritten laws that generate automatisms; characters act under the compulsion of habit. In other words, the figures that animate the literary text are victims of a system of thought and of customs imposed by the totalitarian regime, to which they conform. Not only are the situations described commonplace, but the entire existence of the characters is marked by dullness and banality.

In the 1980s, the alienation of the individual under the pressure of the totalitarian regime took shape both through magical realism—represented by authors such as D. R. Popescu and Ana Blandiana—characterized by an excess of meaning in the form of parables and slippages into the fantastic, pointing toward multiple interpretative layers, and through minimalist poetry and prose that was non-conceptual, empirical, and built on simple syntactic structures. A deliberate impoverishment of both vision and language was promoted, with the minimalist author relying on the semantic force of the carefully chosen word. Under the pretext of portraying the banal, the radical reduction of stylistic devices and the sparse vocabulary betray the creator's intention to suggest a world emptied of meaning and values—a world no longer concerned with grand purposes, but rather with the imposition of subjective hierarchies dictated by the authoritarian regime. What these two poetics—though seemingly at opposite ends of the spectrum—have in common is a shared aversion to dogmatism and totalitarian rule.

The literature of the 1980s generation thus possesses the capacity to reflect the social and economic tensions emerging in response to the pressures of totalitarian doctrine. Through reification, it evokes a stifling existence and the sordid nature of everyday life. Work no longer represents an opportunity for creative fulfillment, but rather becomes an act of mechanical repetition, marked by uncomfortable commuting. As a result, literature turns into a journal chronicling the suffocating banality of existence. This reflects a pervasive sense of a formally regulated life, devoid of horizons, in which the individual is disoriented by the absence of values.

Ana Blandiana, a leading poet of the postwar period, describes in a personal confession her turn to prose during the years of increasing totalitarian repression. She sought to safeguard her poetic voice by escaping into the epic mode, which allowed for the incorporation of the many facets of a hostile reality. Clearly, a prose work that directly mirrored the oppressive realities Blandiana wished to expose would not have passed through the sieve of censorship. Hence, in

her first prose volume, *The Four Seasons* (1977), one can observe a marked stylistic narcissism—an intentional excess of metaphorical language, especially in ekphrastic passages, which lends the text a density characteristic of postmodern writings, imbued with an arabesque and baroque aesthetic.

The publication of a second collection of short stories, bearing the paradoxical title ***Projects of the Past*** (1982), marks a significant departure from the style of the previous volume. Suddenly, between the two books, one observes an ***écart***—a distance and a substantial difference that does not stem from fluctuations in the author's mood, but rather from the trajectory followed by postwar literature: from the dissolution of the concept of an objective, material, and stable reality, through the emergence of 'reality effects' produced by language or the text as an ontogenetic construct, to the fusion of two orders—world and book—into a hybrid order: textual/phenomenal, present and past, as seen in the historiographic metafiction of historical and realist deconstruction, as well as in magical realism.

Despite the relatively short interval between the two publications, the shift in register and content is unmistakable. Blandiana reinvents herself from one volume to the next, and the increasing complexity of her writing is a testament both to her profound artistic resources and to her ability to foreground a surplus of meaning-laden elements with the aim of delivering a subversive message within the socio-political context of the 1980s.

The vision of ultimate destruction signals an imminent transition into a new and disorienting dimension for the author, who can no longer find rational explanations. The underlying message is that the retreat into the fantastic is provoked by the degradation of reality—progressively emptied of values, with the Church representing the supreme one, that of the sacred. One can intuit allusions here to the tightening of policies under the communist totalitarian regime. The escape from reality thus unfolds under the pressure of these reflections. The subsequent imagery escalates this trajectory of epistemological disorientation: darkness overtakes the courtyard of the mysterious church, foreshadowing the abandonment of the real world. The entrance gate becomes a symbol of total escape, initiating the spectacle of thought. An inexplicable snowfall within the church interior marks the first sign of a new, fantastic dimension that will come to host the protagonist. The matchsticks, found with difficulty among her personal belongings in her bag, are lit one by one, illuminating a visual spectacle of thousands of butterflies clustered on the stained-glass windows of the church.

Yet, connections to reality remain open. Foremost among them is the perception of non-dilated time. The author retains in her consciousness that one minute—an ordinary but deeply utilized unit of measurement in the life of any individual—through which one periodically reaches turning points or moments of revelation. James Joyce refers to these as *epiphanies*, while certain mythologies speak of the intersection of *Chronos* (chronological time) and *Kairos* (the opportune moment), when the divine incarnates in history. The narrator, however, inhabits a desacralized world, in which only the absurd is revealed. Another sign of the tether to reality is the powerful memory imprinted on her consciousness upon returning to the original world. The volume *Projects of the Past*, published in 1982, marks a new narrative approach, aligning Ana Blandiana's prose with the literary tendencies of the time—particularly the construction of *allo-histories* as a response to the political context of the 1980s, which could no longer be confronted through transparent language.

The richness of symbols detectable in Ana Blandiana's short stories is the result of an artistic ambition to *suggest*, to generate meaning, to construct worlds that draw their vitality from the reality in which the author is condemned to live. The close connection between imagination and the past, encapsulated in the original conception expressed by the statement *"to imagine is to remember,"* explains the emergence of the two volumes of short prose. Thus, *Projects of the Past* (*Proiecte de trecut*) comprises artistic projects of the present, nourished by a reconstruction of the past.

This confessional mode continues with an incisive examination of the ways in which agents of power exerted pressure on intellectuals who did not embrace the communist doctrine. The censorship of texts was accompanied by the intimidation of intellectuals by state security forces. Such restrictions inevitably led to rebellion, which became the driving force behind the depiction of realities laden with meaning. The horrors of communism are subtly alluded to through a range of narrative strategies and subterfuges specific to the period.

Another parable of the totalitarian world is proposed by Marius Tupan in his trilogy ***Invisible Battalions***. Published in the 2000s, this work stands as a meditation on how nations become victims of socio-political, technological, and economic experiments, turning the ordinary individual into a mere guinea pig, irrelevant to the course of history. The author is now able to make explicit references, as the text is no longer subject to censorship.

The trope of the enclosed, carceral space is preserved, as in his earlier novels. There is no longer a need to dig physical barriers to isolate the communal space from the rest of the world; condemned to involution and to entropy through the exhaustion of information, the natural configuration of a crater provides the enclave in which fear of external invasions is artificially sustained. This is a strategically maintained fear. The message is that power can be upheld through the dissemination of disinformation and the deliberate induction of confusion.

The topos of the text is a nine-level crater, a space conducive to human experimentation, which can be associated with Dante's Inferno. The inhabitants of the crater are subjected to absurd laws imposed by deranged minds. The remnants of the former totalitarian regime are evident: every character with decision-making power over others exhibits an abusive attitude reminiscent of Communist Party activists. These figures are trapped in a system defined by the constant search for new strategies of subjugation—strategies that are humiliating for the ordinary individual, who is reduced to nothing more than a victim of history. Fear of betrayal, deceit, lies, and immoral decisions characterize the behavior of those in power.

The novel ***Farewell, Europe!*** (Adio, Europa!) by I.D. Sîrbu, written in the 1980s, captures the atmosphere of that decade through a parabolic narrative, in which the references to the abuses of totalitarianism are unmistakable, despite the oriental tone of the depicted events. As expected, the text remained in the drawer until the fall of communism, subsequently receiving due attention from contemporary critics. As Gabriela Gavril notes, this reception was marked by a spirit of recuperative enthusiasm.

The action is set in an ***Isarlâk*** populated with oriental markets and characters adorned in turbans and brightly colored ***şalvari*** (traditional trousers). In such a world, the act of offering tribute becomes essential. To enjoy the privileges of fate, one must have a powerful patron to whom these gifts are delivered. The narrative presents an entire network of interests, governed by unwritten rules known by the so-called 'respectable society.' Gaining the favor of influential individuals is vital in a city where laughter is banned in most public places, and where obsessive self-censorship regarding one’s speech becomes the norm. Grotesque figures, strategically stationed along the town's streets, monitor every gesture and expression of the ordinary person. Within this environment, survival necessitates compromise. The first step to avoiding imprisonment is the strict observance—instilled through a programmatic, cultivated fear—of hierarchical structures. The description above reflects the sick and absurd principles of

totalitarian politics and the arbitrary manner in which representatives of power operate. The narrator becomes aware of the disappearance of common sense. Chivalry, which implies notions of nobility and sacrifice, vanishes—dissolved in the crucible of a contemporary daily life dominated by the petty interests of corrupt minds who secure their comfort through the sacrifices of the lower class. In this world, the narrator must remain silent, as any gesture, any laughter or grimace, is subject to interpretation and regarded as an act of defiance.

The narrator, however, does not possess the vocation of silence and is, as Elvira Sorohan describes him, a "captive spirit" who cannot suppress his "fury of irony drowned in revolt." Particularly compelling is the narrator's reflection on the pride of those in power and the concern of the lower classes not to disturb the leaders' peace through their choices. Wives must be uglier, and children more unruly and less successful than those of the leaders—precisely to ensure one's own tranquility.

The judgments concerning the regime's network of influence are delivered with biting humor. An ironic spirit, the narrator—although trapped in a world whose values he rejects—remains lucid and mocks the web of societal interests. He finds salvation in dark humor, which becomes both a life philosophy and a means of survival in the oppressive atmosphere of communism.

Gabriela Gavril argues that an attentive reader can discern the real-life correspondences of the places described in the text. Thus, Isarlâk represents Moscow—the origin of all influences and the topos that hosts characters belonging to the sphere of power. Genopolis stands for Cluj, while the Alutans represent the inhabitants of Craiova. Gavril further observes that, since the Russian capital functions as the center of the entire universe—decisions made there continuously affecting characters from all other locations—*agia* can be interpreted, by analogy, as the omnipresent secret police, the regime's instrument of control. Allusions to compromise and the art of surviving under communism are constantly present throughout the narrative.

Monica Lovinescu's remarks in the opening of *Unde scurte* are highly relevant to understanding the pressure experienced not only by writers within Romania but also by those in exile, who were aware that the secret police (Securitate) were monitoring them and that their surveillance files were constantly being updated. Post-1989 studies dedicated to the functioning of the censorship apparatus reveal the extensive machinery mobilized in service of the single-

party state, aimed at rejecting any texts that might expose or denounce incriminating aspects of the totalitarian regime.

As early as the 1980s, Monica Lovinescu spoke of a specific "code of prudence" that readers needed to apply when interpreting texts published in the country—an approach that could, to some extent, protect the writer being analyzed. This brings to the fore the issue of conscience and the cautious mission that critics and writers in exile were expected to assume and be fully aware of. Lovinescu believed that a single word of praise for the work of an apolitical writer could result in the addition of a considerable number of pages to that writer's secret police file back home.

In order to obtain approval for a book's publication, justificatory reports were required, and employees who failed to demonstrate sufficient vigilance were subjected to official reprimands. Another phenomenon emerged—one frequently encountered in the Soviet sphere, albeit on a larger scale—namely, *post-censorship*. Bookstores and libraries received directives demanding the withdrawal of certain titles from circulation following re-evaluations. Among the banned authors were Norman Manea, Constantin Abăluță, Nora Iuga, as well as Adrian Păunescu—a figure once protected by the regime.

A comparative analysis of the prose from that period, of the *drawer diaries* (personal writings kept hidden and unpublished until after the 1989 Revolution), and of historical studies examining the sociopolitical context can reveal how these realities were experienced and how they were transposed into a literature rich in metaphor. Traumatic historical events—such as the workers' revolt of November 15, 1987, in Brașov—are discussed and documented only in the journals of exiled writers, in memoirs, or in post-1989 historical analyses. The period is marked by disinformation, with the local press blatantly distorting historical truth. A telling example is the Brașov newspaper's coverage of a day marked by bloodshed in the streets, presenting it instead as a festive occasion celebrating the organization of electoral proceedings—illustrative of how communist propaganda systematically falsified reality.

The communist party routinely staged electoral charades to legitimize the continued presence in power of the same regime loyalists. Monica Lovinescu documented the Brașov events two days later, demonstrating the regime's efficiency in covering up incidents that could have damaged the dictator's carefully curated image. Information left the country with difficulty,

precisely because Ceaușescu was aware that the Western press was sensitive to the brutalities of his policies.

Journalists were also required to produce reports on the achievements of the single-party state, employing what historian Adrian Cioroianu refers to as the *neo-language* of the communist regime. Cioroianu notes that in Eastern European countries governed by totalitarian policies, state-controlled press and literature monopolized certain terms specifically to render socialist progress more credible. The dictator had no use for traces of the past that might elevate historical figures capable of overshadowing his own image. The parables and allegories of the period expose the harsh realities hidden behind the so-called "achievements" praised by a subservient press using this ideologically loaded language.

A significant number of fictional works that managed to evade the strict filters of censorship feature protagonists experiencing genuine personal dramas—narratives that sharply contrast both with the regime's declarative claims of progress and expansion, and with the propagandistic portrayal of the communist "savior-hero," promoted as the embodiment of national salvation.

This was the image game Ceaușescu played. The press—especially television in the 1980s—functioned as a medium for what Cioroianu identifies as "a ritualized reinforcement of the cult of personality." He further observes that the only form of art that still maintained a degree of credibility while showcasing the so-called accomplishments of communism was cinema. Socialist realism, meanwhile, was in visible decline, against the backdrop of growing public dissatisfaction.

Facing a severe image crisis both domestically and internationally, Ceaușescu relied on artistic works to portray himself in a favorable light. Painters, sculptors, popular and folk musicians, and writers were summoned to contribute to the restoration of his internal image, as relations with the West had become irreparably damaged. Consequently, the popular music hits of the period were heavily politicized. Prominent artists compromised by entering the apparatus of propaganda, which mandated the obsessive repetition of state-approved songs on national radio. *Radio Free Europe*, though heavily jammed by regime loyalists, offered the public an alternative—uncensored political news and access to contemporary Western music, including Dire Straits, Deep Purple, and Pink Floyd. It is evident that the audience, far from naïve, did not turn to party literature, which sought to construct glorified portraits of the supreme leader.

One tradition from Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's regime, perpetuated by party policy but failing to gain popular support, was the creation of so-called *artistic brigades*. These performances, marked by kitsch and clichéd expressions of pathos, had little success with audiences but functioned as a convenient form of pseudo-art for the totalitarian regime. In the early 1950s, against the backdrop of large-scale urban industrialization, factory directors were tasked with "discovering" talent among the working class—individuals who would then showcase their abilities in carefully orchestrated propaganda programs. Patriotic songs, choreographed dance routines, and the recitation of laudatory verses dedicated to supreme leaders were intended to serve as state-sanctioned alternatives to genuine artistic expression.

Crossing the border entailed an enormous expenditure of energy and a series of humiliating experiences for the intellectual, who was subjected to intense scrutiny by the authorities—especially in the final decade of the totalitarian regime, when border crossings or the act of remaining in a Western country became increasingly common. Fascinating in this context are the diaries of Adrian Marino and Gheorghe Ursu, which offer a striking contrast between the free world and the dictatorship. On the other hand, the journals of Ana Blandiana and Doina Cornea capture the mounting tension in the days leading up to the fall of communism. The pressure exerted on nonconformist intellectuals became a topic of significant post-1989 interest, accounting for the surge in the publication of "drawer diaries"—long-suppressed personal writings by Ana Blandiana, Doina Cornea, Radu Ciobanu, Mircea Zaciu, and others.

Despite heavy censorship, this bleak and oppressive universe was depicted in literary works that managed to elude the vigilance of state control. A clear example is the seven-story collection *Memories from the Provinces* (*Amintiri din provincie*) by Petru Cimpoeșu. The fourth piece, *Homework: Describe an Extraordinary Event in Your Life*, functions as a detailed, ironic description of a monotonous evening in the apartment of an ordinary family. The story is presented in the form of a school assignment written by a child. This seemingly naive narrative frame is cleverly used by the author to densely pack the "homework" with everyday details, exposing the harsh conditions under which the average person lived during late communism. A seemingly mundane evening unfolds in complete darkness. When the electricity goes out, the father bursts into a tirade against the regime, using harsh language to condemn the country's leadership. His outburst—confined to the intimate space of the family—reveals the simmering anger of the working class, forced to endure the consequences of the regime's aggressive

austerity policies. The father's spontaneous act of rebellion underscores the deep disillusionment with the so-called “flourishing socialism” proclaimed by the authorities—socialism that was, in practice, nowhere to be found.

Other short prose works that depict the struggles of ordinary people within the bleak framework of communist life share the same fate. One explanation for their ability to bypass censorship may lie precisely in the brevity of these texts. The pretense of merely portraying the banality of everyday life—often within a limited number of pages and, at times, with a humorous tone—proved effective in securing approval for publication. Such is the case with *Cauze provizorii* (*Provisional Causes*), a volume by prose writer Romulus Rusan, whose surveillance file compiled by the Securitate during the 1980s was anything but slim.

The totalitarian regime was experiencing a severe credibility crisis. As historian Adrian Cioroianu points out, one of the clearest symbols of this loss of legitimacy in the second half of the 1980s was the Romanian population's growing desire to access foreign television broadcasts. Propaganda had lost its persuasive power and could no longer be taken seriously. In this context, allegory and parable became the preferred narrative modes for many prose writers of the period.

Two years before the 1989 Revolution, Alexandru Ecovoiu published the short story *Călătoria* (*The Journey*) in a collection of prose, a text that can now be read as a subtle yet powerful manifesto against the totalitarian order. The story follows twelve travelers departing from the capital on New Year's Eve, heading toward the northern part of the country. They meet by chance in the dining car, each unaware of the others' lives. Coming from different social backgrounds and spanning various age groups, they agree to spend the journey together by rejecting the conventions society imposes daily. They refuse to introduce themselves in the traditional manner, disclosing only their professions. The professor, the students, the stuntman, the peasant, the priest, the schoolboy, the biologist, the archivist, the miner, the auditor, and the electronics technician all embrace this original form of protest. No names are revealed until the end of the journey.

A spirit of adventure permeates the narrative, as all characters seek escape from the stifling environments of their respective provinces. The setting exudes an unusual sense of opulence, sharply contrasting with the material constraints imposed by the totalitarian society. Western music plays in the background, and during their shared meal, the travelers engage in deep conversation—eventually touching on questions of justice and injustice.

An equally compelling text is *Dans în lanțuri* (*Dance in Chains*), an autobiographical novel based on the author Bergel's experiences during his imprisonment. The "dance in chains" becomes a metaphor for defying the imminent threat of death—a symbol of survival under the harsh and dehumanizing conditions of incarceration. Memoirs and prose centered on the reconstruction of carceral experiences often bring the inner workings of the secret police interrogations to the forefront. The depiction of fear and despair becomes a recurring motif in this type of writing. Intellectual solidarity—adhering to shared ideas and supporting one another—emerges as a strategy for resistance and psychological survival in such an oppressive environment. It is within the confines of Jilava prison that the character of Dr. Braha appears—a figure whose spirit remains unbroken.

Braha's words are an outburst, an assertion of the belief that moral reparation must always prevail over the abuses of a totalitarian system. Ana Blandiana once stated that despair and the conviction that she would not survive the communist regime deeply marked her life during the oppressive 1980s. Similarly, the protagonist of Bergel's novel has lost all sense of hope, overcome by the feeling that everything is irretrievably lost.

The novel *Drumul la zid* (*The Road to the Wall*), published in 1984, is subtitled "An Epic Poem"—not only because the author aligns himself with the trend of genre hybridization characteristic of late modernist fiction, but also because the narrative invites multilayered interpretation, including metatextual and symbolic readings. The wall becomes a central metaphor for confinement and condemnation—a closed-off space where hope no longer exists. Breban's core objective lies in character construction. Both the author himself and contemporary critics emphasized that the novel's strategic focus was the creation of figures whose destinies would reflect and expose the oppressive realities of the time. What could not be openly stated—given the constraints of 1980s censorship—had to be implied: Breban's protagonist embodies the burden of the individual crushed under the weight of the totalitarian regime.

The novel opens with a reference to the final verse of Dante's *Inferno*: "...and then we emerged to see the stars once more." This allusion, and the subtitle itself, must be read within the socio-political context of its publication. From the moment of its release, the novel was interpreted by critics as a deeply ideological work. At its center stands Castor Ionescu, a bureaucratic functionary trapped in a bleak, impersonal system. He is a character of diminished presence—an emblem of the standardized individual molded by the regime, and a participant in a

banal, mechanized social ritual. Each morning, he reports to a drab office where he performs his duties with unremarkable precision. After work, he rushes through markets and shops in an exhausting attempt to keep his household supplied. His life seems entirely oriented toward the survival of his wife and two daughters—figures who are never described in detail, reinforcing their symbolic function as faceless dependents.

Castor's only reprieve comes through brief moments of escape, serving as psychological release valves that allow him to endure the monotony of his existence. On payday each month, his outing with Vezoc becomes a small luxury, during which the two men engage in conversations about imagined "departures"—a thinly veiled reference to the common man's dream of escaping the country's borders in pursuit of freedom.

The narrative unfolds on two interrelated levels. On one hand, there are the linguistic automatisms imposed by the ethical framework of the communist regime: Castor takes measures, organizes his life, and so forth. On the other hand, there is a Christological trajectory of symbolic resurrection from the tomb of life under dictatorship, evoked through the evangelical word—akin to Lazarus being called forth from the grave by Jesus. This transformation operates metaphorically rather than literally. Instead of a rational illumination, Castor undergoes a metaphorical bodily transformation. What had functioned as a Ford-like machine—an automatism of habitual gestures—now becomes an embodied awareness in which his body acquires shape, is mapped, and emerges as a universe unto itself. Indifference is characteristic of nature; in contrast, Castor feels his body structuring and differentiating, acquiring a center in opposition to the periphery of its limbs, much like the distinction between a metropolis-state and its colonies.

The "lady from the colonies," who penetrates his body, awakens his consciousness to the existence of the very differences upon which language and culture depend. The colonies symbolize non-Europeanism: the primitive, barbaric, and instinctual—elements opposed to the civilization, order, and rationalism of the metropolis. Yet, the lady is seemingly an intruder in the colonies, much like imperial governors and officials. She functions as a customs officer between civilization and barbarism, capable of imparting to Castor hermeneutic abilities—a figure reminiscent of Hermes, the customs officer and interpreter between the divine and the mortal. Castor becomes her host, a mortal visited by a deity or spirit.

This dual nature henceforth must continually contend with the social slave bound by the obligations prescribed by party leadership and trade unions. The tension between these two narrative registers exemplifies the fractured social psychology of the era, revealing the extent of individual alienation and the degradation of social relations to the point of disintegration of any authentic sense of community or communication. These were replaced by an artificially induced collective guilt consciousness, along with trauma of culpability, which served the preventive function of hindering the formation of any organized opposition group.

In the 1980s, while in Paris, Breban wrote *Culoarul cu șoareci*, a short play that could not be published at the time. The mere exposure of the text to the censorship authorities would have caused significant difficulties for the author. The theatrical form, relying solely on dialogue, is much more direct and raw, making the message less ambiguous and harder to obscure. Consequently, the play remained in manuscript form until 1990, when it was published in the journal *Contemporanul*, which Breban himself was then editing. The play exposes the abuses of power and the moral deficiencies of those in authority. The character Marieta attempts to denounce the injustices perpetrated by a superior supported "by the party" and places hope in moral restitution by a general known to her for a long time.

Both works construct schizoid characters who oscillate between the wooden language and ideological slogans imposed by the party—through which social communication was reduced—and the abyss of a psyche momentarily freed in semi-conscious outbursts, repressed by the force of dictatorship, from which fragments of authentic experience emerge. However, this authenticity never attains a full redemptive enlightenment or Dostoevskian revelation but remains a search for a higher meaning whose value lies solely in the search itself. Both texts feature a circular structure, with characters returning at the end as at the beginning, creating a repetitive cycle that signals the impossibility of escaping the prison-like space of social life.

The theater, by its nature, lacks the capacity prose has to contain metaphors and invoke subversion. Breban's desire to write drama can be understood in the context of the 1980s, when censorship pressures were severe. *Culoarul cu șoareci* can be read as a gesture of protest—a novelist's outburst who strives to depict, across hundreds of pages, the dramas of various social classes. He needed to create dialogues in which characters passionately express their revolt. In an interview given during the 1980s, Breban acknowledged that his interest in theater was a constant throughout his literary career.

A controversial publication in the context of the 1980s is *Şoarecele B şi alte povestiri*, authored by I.D. Sîrbu. Although the work critiques totalitarian policies, the novella that gives the volume its title was included in a Romanian short prose anthology of the same decade. The character Fronius, a doctor of philosophy, conducts experiments with small rodents in his own laboratory. The experiment performed on the mice serves merely as a pretext for depicting the condition of the individual under totalitarianism. The metaphor is evident, implicitly suggesting the process of conditioning toward submission.

Herta Müller occupies a distinct place within the literary landscape of the 1980s, as an author who, like many of her contemporaries, resorted to metaphor to suggest the historical context of that decade—a time when her characters experience the pervasive fear induced by the totalitarian regime. Müller's personal and literary trajectory is closely tied to the *Aktionsgruppe Banat* (Banat Action Group), a collective of young writers whose work and ideals clashed with state-sanctioned literature. In her Nobel Prize acceptance speech in December 2009 in Stockholm, Müller acknowledged that her entire literary destiny was shaped by her association with this movement.

The group's aim was a noble one: to challenge official discourse and resist the conformist cultural climate of the time, embodying the combative spirit and idealism of a new generation of writers. Like many young authors from Banat in the 1970s who wrote poetry and short prose, Müller was placed under surveillance by the Securitate.

Four years after the fall of communism, her novel *Animalul inimii* (*Herztier* in the original German) was published, once again in German. The novel reconstructs the traumatic experiences of a group of young people caught in the absurd and dehumanizing rules imposed by the communist regime. In 1996, following its English translation, the book received the prestigious International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award—clear evidence of the Western literary world's interest in works of historical and cultural reclamation.

Following the Nobel Prize in Literature, *Animalul inimii* became Müller’s best-selling book for five consecutive years. The atmosphere throughout her work remains consistent: Müller’s writing is marked by a sustained focus on fear and terror. Her characters are frequently stripped of their humanity by hunger and subjected to forms of psychological and physical degradation that evoke animalistic behavior.

În 1992, *Încă de pe atunci vulpea era vânătorul* (*Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger*), a controversial novel by Herta Müller, was published in Hamburg in German. The Romanian translation appeared 18 years later, reigniting the interest of the Romanian literary community in the wake of Müller's receipt of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Notably, the translation was carried out by Nora Iuga. In 1993, Müller wrote the screenplay for the film *Vulpe – Vânător*, a feature-length adaptation of the novel directed by Stere Gulea.

The novel unfolds around the experiences of Adina, a young schoolteacher subjected to surveillance by the Securitate due to her nonconformist spirit and her openly defiant attitude toward her pursuers. The moving shadows that follow Adina at every step become a powerful metaphor for the omnipresence of the secret police—cold, inhuman, and relentlessly observant, noting even the most trivial details of the teacher's life.

The image of the dictator, as constructed by the official press, stands in stark contrast to the lived reality of ordinary citizens. Rural life is marked by poverty and hopelessness. Fishermen are routinely denied their catch; at times, their hooks retrieve only gelatinous, unrecognizable fish—or even dead cats. Humanity is portrayed as impoverished and resigned. Compromise becomes the norm, and people internalize the futility of rebellion. Adina's survival strategy is detachment through irony—a bitter humor that enables her to continue in spite of the regime's absurd constraints. The aesthetic of deprivation permeates the narrative: women wear torn stockings, the brims of cheap men's hats act as gutters in torrential rain, and the streets are filled with people waving empty, dirty bread bags in the wind.

In this environment, every citizen is subject to constant monitoring. The telephone operator seems to read minds through letters, and the doormen know exactly who requires surveillance. A perverse social hierarchy, built on fear and submission, is maintained. Terror ensures the functioning of the totalitarian state. People are indoctrinated to obey their superiors; abuse and oppression become normalized. Surveillance of ordinary people reaches grotesque proportions, reflecting the deeply dehumanizing nature of the regime.

A recurring motif in the novel is the fox fur in the teacher's apartment, which mysteriously changes position after each visit from the Securitate. After the revolution, the same individuals remain in their positions within the school, but the hierarchy shifts. The world continues to operate according to distorted laws, and the movements that lead to the fall of the dictatorship fail, unfortunately, to bring about genuine change.

Herta Müller's prose thus serves as an example of *alternative history*, offering a testimonial account of the dehumanizing experiences under the totalitarian regime. Her literary strength lies in the creation of characters that are representative of the social classes most affected by the communist state's oppressive policies. Hunger, poverty, and social inequality are present, but they are overshadowed by an even more pervasive reality imposed by the regime: the fear of the Securitate. This omnipresent institution infiltrates every aspect of daily life, generating a form of obsession and psychological distress that destroys lives.

The panic arises from the overwhelming sense of constant surveillance and from the absence of a private refuge—any space in which the individual might feel free to speak without whispering, to exist without fear. Distrust is methodically implanted in close relationships, further fragmenting human connection. The dehumanization caused by fear becomes a defining feature of Müller's works. The lives of Banat Swabians, their deportation to Soviet labor camps as retribution for Hitler's politics, and the trauma of a childhood marked by violence and repression are recurring themes in her prose. Müller's commitment is to a *documentary literature*, a literature of witness, which functions as an antidote to forgetting.

The absurdity of life under totalitarianism also shaped the course of literature during the period. It has often been said that the era was dominated by a minimalist aesthetic, as countercultural strategies appeared more effective in resisting the regime. For some writers, literature became a space of refuge, an outlet for escaping the nightmare of daily existence—as Ana Blandiana attested. For others, literature was indistinguishable from life itself, often taking the form of prison or exile diaries.

Certain texts of the period serve as *resonance chambers* for an oppressive historical reality and the long shadows it cast: historical discontinuity, the effects of trauma, and the confusion brought about by the post-truth era and the rise of hyperreality.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources:

1. Abăluță, Constantin, *A sta în picioare*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1986.
2. Asturias, Miguel Angel, *Oameni de porumb*, București, Ed. Univers, 1978.

3. Baconski, A.E., *Biserica neagră. Echinoxul nebunilor și alte povestiri*, București, Ed. Curtea Veche, 2011.
4. Bănulescu, Daniel, *Dumnezeu ține întreg universul pe degetul său mic*, Chișinău, Ed. Știința, 2021.
5. Bănulescu, Ștefan, *Cartea Milionarului, I, Cartea de la Metopolis*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1977.
6. Bănulescu, Ștefan, *Opere- I*, București, Ed. Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, 2005.
7. Bergel, Hans, *Dans în lanțuri*, București, Ed. Arania, 1994.
8. Bergel, Hans, *Metamorfozele doctorului Fulda*, Editura Eikon, București, 2022
9. Bioy Casares, Adolfo, *Invenția lui Morel*, București, Editura Rao, 2018.
10. Blandiana, Ana, *Cele patru anotimpuri, Proiecte de trecut*, București, Ed. Art, 2011.
11. Blandiana, Ana, *Istoria ca viitor și alte conferințe și pagini*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2017.
12. Blandiana, Ana, *Mai mult ca trecutul*, *Jurnal*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2023.
13. Blandiana, Ana, *Povestiri fantastice*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2016.
14. Borges, Jorge Luis, *Aleph*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2011.
15. Borges, Jorge Luis, *Opere 1*, București, Ed. Univers, 1999.
16. Breban, Nicolae, *Drumul la zid*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1984.
17. Caraion, Ion, *Jurnal 1*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1980.
18. Caraion, Ion, *Ultima bolgie. Jurnal 3,* București, Ed. Nemira, 1998.
19. Carver, Raymond, *Despre ce vorbim când vorbim despre iubire*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2015.
20. Cimpoeșu, Petru, *Amintiri din provincie*, București, Ed. Junimea, 1983.
21. Cimpoeșu, Petru, *Erou fără voie,* Editura LiterNet, 2002.
22. Ciobanu, Radu, *Jurnal*, Timișoara, Ed, Amarcord, 1999.
23. Ciobanu, Radu, *Țărmul târziu, Jurnal 1985-1990*, Deva, Ed. EMIA, 2004.
24. Constante, Lena, *Evadarea imposibilă*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2013.
25. Cornea, Doinea, *Rugăciune*, în vol. *În căutarea îngerilor pierduți*, Cluj- Napoca, Ed. Școala Ardeleană, 2019.
26. Crăciun, Gheorghe, *Generația `80 în proză scurtă*, Pitești, Editura Paralela 45, 1988.

27. *Desant 83*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 1983.
28. Ecovoiu, Alexandru, *Călătoria*, Editura Albatros, București, 1987.
29. Ecovoiu, Alexandru, *Cei trei copii- Mozart*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2008.
30. Ecovoiu, Alexandru, *Saludos*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2014.
31. Faulkner, William, *Absalom, Absalom!*, București, Ed. Univers, 1974.
32. Goma, Paul, *Scrisuri*, București, Ed. Nemira, 1999.
33. Gracq, Julien, *Țărmul Syrtelor*, București, Ed. Univers, 1970.
34. Grămescu, Mihail- *Aporisticon*, București, Ed. Albatros, 1981.
35. Groșan, Ioan, *Caravana Cinematografică și alte povestiri*, București, Editura Corint, 2005.
36. Groșan, Ioan, *O sută de ani de zile la Porțile Orientului,* Iași, Polirom, 2007.
37. Groșan, Ioan, *Caravana cinematografică*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 1985.
38. Hemingway, Ernest, *Câștigătorul nu ia nimic*, București, Editura Biblioteca pentru toți, 1964.
39. Hemingway, Ernest, *Zăpezile de pe Kilimanjaro și alte povestiri*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2007.
40. Horasangian, Bedros, "Plăcinta de berbecuț", *Contemporanul,* nr. 12, 2012.
41. Horasangian, Bedros, *Portocala de adio*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1989.
42. Horasangian, Bedros, *Sala de așteptare*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 1987.
43. Iliescu, Nicolae, *Departe.... pe jos*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1983.
44. Ioanid, Ion, *Închisoarea noastră cea de toate zilele*, *I*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2013.
45. Kadare, Ismail, *Palatul viselor*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2018.
46. Lăcustă, Ioan, *Liniște*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1989.
47. Lovinescu, Monica, *Jurnal, 1985-1988*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2003.
48. Lovinescu, Monica, *Unde scurte*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1990.
49. Lovinescu, Monica, *Unde scurte. Jurnal indirect*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1990.
50. Marino, Adrian, *Evadări în lumea liberă*, Iași, Ed. Institutul European, 1993.
51. Mălăncioiu, Ileana, *Îngropați în picioare*, *Poezii*, București, Editura Vitruviu, 1996.
52. Müller, Herta, *Animalul inimii*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2006.

53. Müller, Herta, *Încă de pe atunci vulpea era vânătorul*, București, Ed. Humanitas Fiction, 2009.
54. Müller, Herta, *Leagănul respirației*, București, Ed. Humanitas Fiction, 2010.
55. Müller, Herta, *Regele se-nclină și ucide*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2005.
56. Müller, Herta, *Ținuturile joase*, București, Ed. Humanitas Fiction, 2012.
57. Mușina, Alexandru, *Budila- Express*, Chișinău, Editura Știința, 2022.
58. Nedelciu, Mircea, *Opere IV- Tratament fabulatoriu,* Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2016.
59. Nechita, Liliana, *Pâine cu ceva. Amintiri, ca să se știe cum se trăia în comunismul oamenilor simpli*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2022.
60. Pecican, Ovidiu, *Lumea care n-a fost*, Iași, Polirom, 2018.
61. Popescu, Dumitru Radu, *Iepurele șchiop*, București, Editura Cartea românească, 1980.
62. Popescu, D.R., *Leul albastru*, București, Ed. Minerva, București, 1981.
63. Popescu, Dumitru Radu, *Podul de gheață*, Cluj- Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1982.
64. Popescu, Dumitru, Radu, *Vânătoarea regală*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1976.
65. Porter, Katherine Anne, *Corabia nebunilor*, București, Ed. Mister Press, 1990.
66. Rusan, Romulus, *Cauze provizorii*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1983.
67. Sîrbu, Ion D., *Adio, Europa!*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1997.
68. Sîrbu, Ion D., *Jurnalul unui jurnalist fără jurnal*, Craiova, Ed. Fundația pentru Scrisul Românesc, 2009.
69. Sîrbu, Ion D., *Șoarecele B și alte povestiri*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1983.
70. Șlapac, Florin, *Jucăria*, București, Ed. Dacia, 1989.
71. Tokarczuk, Olga, *Poartă-ți plugul peste oasele morților*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2019.
72. Tupan, Marius, *Batalioane invizibile- Rhizoma*, București, Editura Luceafărul, 2006.
73. Tupan, Marius, *Batalioane invizibile*, București, Ed. Fundația Luceafărul, 2001.
74. Tupan, Marius, *Batalioane invizibile- Asteroidul*, București, Editura Luceafărul, 2006.
75. Ursu, Gheorghe, *Europa mea*, Cluj Napoca, Ed. Dacia, 1991.
76. Zaciu, Mircea, *Jurnal, III*, București, Ed. Albatros, 1996.

Secondary Sources

1. Alexandrescu, Sorin, *Identitate în ruptură*, București, Editura Univers, 2000.
2. Alexandrescu, Sorin, *Lumea incertă a cotidianului*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2021.
3. Albu, Florența, *Zidul martor*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 1994.
4. *Au ales libertatea! Dicționar, 2265 de fișe personale din evidențele Securității*, București, Ed. PRO Historia, 2007.
5. Barthes, Roland, *Plăcerea textului*, Cluj, Ed. Echinox, 1994.
6. Bădărău, George, *Fantasticul în literatură*, Iași, Ed. Institutul European, 2003.
7. Băilești eanu, Fănuș, *Refracții*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 1980.
8. Benoist, Luc, *Semne, simboluri, mituri*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995.
9. Bernic, Corina, Wichner, Ernest*, La început a fost dialogul. Grupul de Acțiune Banat și prietenii- Poezii, proză, polemici*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2013.
10. Betea, Lavinia, *Ceaușescu și epoca sa*, București, Ed. Corint, 2021.
11. Bodiu, Andrei; Dobrescu, Caius, *Repertoar de termeni postmoderni*, Brașov, Editura Universității Transilvania, 2008.
12. Boldea, Iulian, *Ana Blandiana, Monografie*, Iași, Ed. Aula, Brașov, 2000.
13. Braga, Corin, *Concepte și metode în cercetarea imaginarului*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2007.
14. Butler, Christopher, *Postmodernism- A very short introductio*n, Oxford Publishing, 2012.
15. Călin, Vera, *Alegoria și esențele*, București, Ed. pentru Literatură Universală, 1969.
16. Călin, Vera, *Curentele literare și evocarea istorică*, București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1963.
17. Cărtărescu, Mircea, *Postmodernismul românesc*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1999.
18. Cătălui, Iulian, *Vertebre românești*, *Mărturii ale rezistenței anticomuniste*, București, Ed. Eikon, 2020.
19. Cesereanu, Ruxandra, *Herta Müller, un puzzle*, *Studii, eseuri și alte texte*, București, Ed. Școala Ardeleană, 2019.
20. Cioroianu, Adrian, *Nu putem evada din istoria noastră*, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2016.
21. Cioroianu, Adrian, *Pe umerii lui Marx*, Editura Cartea Veche, București, 2005.

22. Cliț, Radu, *De la traumă la scris, un punct de vedere asupra creației literare a Hertei Müller*, Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2019.
23. Cliveț, Nicoleta, *Ioan Groșan- Monografie*, Brașov, Ed. Aula, 2001.
24. Cornea, Delia Roxana, *Cazul „Artur" și exilul românesc. Ion caraion în documente din arhiva CNSAS*, București, Ed. Pro Historia, 2006.
25. Cornea, Doina, *Libertate?*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1992.
26. Corobca, Liliana, *Controlul cărții. Cenzura literaturii în regimul comunist din România*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 2014.
27. Corobca, Liliana, *Instituția cenzurii comuniste în România*, Editura Ratio et Revelatio, Oradea, 2014.
28. Courtois, Stephane, *Cartea neagră a comunismului. Crime. Teroare. Opresiune*, București, Ed. Humanitas și Fundația Academia Civică, 1998.
29. Crăciun, Gheorghe, *Competiția continuă. Generația `80 în texte teoretice*, Pitești, Editura Paralela 45, 1999.
30. Crăciun,Gheorghe; Marineasa, Viorel, *Generația `80 în proză scurtă*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 1998.
31. Crăciun, Gheorghe, *Introducere în teoria literaturii*, Cluj- Napoca, Ed. Dacia XXI, 2011.
32. Crăciun, Gheorghe, *Pulsul prozei*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2018.
33. Crețu, Bogdan, *Utopia negativă în literatură*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 2008.
34. Crihană, Alina Daniela, *Scriitorul postbelic și„teroarea istoriei"*, București, Ed. Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române, 2013.
35. *D.R. Popescu, Interpretat de*...., Editura Eminescu, București, 1987.
36. Deac, Mircea, *Brâncuși- Surse arhetipale*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1982.
37. Diaconu, Mircea A., *Poezia postmodernă,* Brașov, Ed. Aula, 2002.
38. Dragoste, Cosmin, *Herta Müller- metamorfozele terorii*, Craiova, Ed. Aius PrintEd, 2007.
39. Evseev, Ivan, *Dicționar de simboluri și arhetipuri culturale*, Timișoara, Ed. Amarcord, 1994.
40. Foucault, Michel, *A supraveghea și a pedepsi. Nașterea închisorii*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2005.

41. Foucault, Michel, *Lumea e un mare azil. Studii despre putere*, Cluj Napoca, Ed. Idea Design&Print, 2005.
42. Foucault, Michel, *În loc de închisoare*, București, Ed. Curtea veche, 2022.
43. Foucault, Michel, *Ordinea discursului*, Editura Eurosong& Books, București, 1998.
44. Gavril, Gabriela, *De la „Manifest" la „Adio, Europa!",* Iași, Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza", 2003.
45. Geertz, Clifford, *Interpretarea culturilor*, Editura Tact, Cluj- Napoca, 2014.
46. Ghidirmic, Ovidiu, *Proza românească și vocația fantasticului*, Craiova, Ed. Scrisul Românesc, 2005.
47. Ghidirmic, Ovidiu, *Studii de literatură română modernă și contemporană*, Craiova, Ed. Scrisul românesc, 2004.
48. Giurescu, Dinu C., *Distrugerea trecutului României*, Editura Museion, București, 1994.
49. Gogea, Vasile, *Fragmente salvate*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 1996.
50. *Handbook of Literary Terms, Literature, Language and Theory*, Pearson Education, 2005.
51. Hale, Brian Mc, *Ficțiunea postmoderistă*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2009.
52. Hamelet, Michel-P**,** *Nicolae Ceaușescu. Biografie și texte selectate*, București, Ed. Politică, 1971.
53. Hutcheon, Linda, *Politica postmodernimului*, București, Ed. Univers, 1997.
54. Iacob, Miruna, *Umorul literar al experienței comuniste*, Brașov, Ed. Universității Transilvania, 2020.
55. Leal, Luis, *Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature. Magical Realism*, New York, Editura Zamora and Faris, 1967.
56. Lovinescu, Monica, *Est- etice, Unde scurte- IV*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 1994.
57. Lovinescu, Monica, *O istorie a literaturii române pe unde scurte*, București, Ed. Humanitas, 2014.
58. Lowell, Amy, Hemingway, Ernest, Carver, Raymond, McInerney, Jay, Minot, Susan, Cisneros, Sandra, McCarthy, Cormac, (Robert Charles Clark, *American Literary Minimalism*, Digital version. University of Georgia, 2011).
59. Malița, Liviu, *Ceaușescu. Critic literar*, București, Ed. Vremea, 2007.

60. Malița, Liviu, *Să nu privești înapoi. Comunism, dramaturgie, societate*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2022.
61. Mamina, Alexandru, *Cultură sistemică și cultură antisistemică. Literatura și arta în societatea românească* (1829-1889), Târgoviște, Ed. Cetatea de scaun, 2023.
62. Manolache, Gheorghe- *Degradarea lui Proteu*, Sibiu, Ed. Universității „Lucian Blaga", 2004.
63. Manolache,Gheorghe- *Regula lui doi*, Sibiu, Ed. Universității Lucian Blaga, 2004.
64. Manolescu, Nicolae, *Literatura română postbelică. Lista lui Manolescu, Vol. 2, Proza. Teatrul*, Brașov, Ed. Aula, 2001.
65. Marineasa, Viorel, Vighi, Daniel, *Rusalii '51- fragmente din deportarea în Bărăgan*, Ed. Marineasa, Timișoara, 1994.
66. Marino, Adrian, *Dicționar de idei literare*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1973.
67. Marino, Adrian, *Cenzura în România. Schiță istorică introductivă*, Craiova, Ed. Aius, 2000.
68. Mihăilescu, Dan C., *Literatura română în postceaușism. II. Proza. Prezentul ca dezumanizare*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2006.
69. Mircea Iorgulescu, *Arhipelag, Proză scurtă contemporană*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1981.
70. Moise, Ion, *Apocalipsa după Marius Tupan*, în *Mișcarea literară*, nr. 3, Bistrița, 2006.
71. Negrici, Eugen, *Literatura română sub comunism*, Ed. Fundației PRO, București, 2003.
72. Nemoianu,Virgil, *O teorie a secundarului*, București, Editura Univers, 1997.
73. Oprea, Marius, *Moștenitorii securității*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2018.
74. Oprea, Nicolae, *Literatura română postbelică între impostură și adevăr*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2000.
75. Oțoiu, Adrian, *Ochiul Bifurcat, Limba sașie. Proza generației 80. Strategii transgresive.* Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2003.
76. Pauwels, Louis, *Dimineața magicienilor*, București, Ed. Nemira, 2005.
77. Păcurariu, Francisc, *Individualitatea literaturii latino-americane*, București, Ed. Univers, 1975.
78. Perian, Gheorghe, *Ideea de generație în teoria literară românească*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Limes, 2013.

79. Perța, Cosmin, *Introducere în fantasticul de interpretare*, București, Editura Tracus Arte, 2011.
80. Petcu, Ion, *Ceaușescu. Un fanatic al puterii. Biografie neretușată*, București, Ed. Românul, 1994.
81. Petcu, Marian, *Puterea și cultura. O istorie a cenzurii*, Iași, Ed. Polirom, 1999.
82. Petrescu, Liviu- *Poetica postmodernismului*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 1998.
83. Petroșel, Daniela, *Kitschul. Funcții literare, disfuncții culturale*, București, Ed. Eikon, 2023.
84. Petroșel, Daniela, *Retorica parodiei*, București, Ed. Ideea europeană, 2006.
85. Podoabă, Virgil, *Metamorfozele punctului. În jurul experienței revelatoare*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2004.
86. Pugh, Jonathan, „*Island Movements: Thinking with the Archipelago", Island Studies Journal,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 2013.
87. Queneau, Raymond, *Une histoire modèle*, Paris, Ed. Gallimard, 1979.
88. Răchieru, Adrian Dinu, *Romanul politic și pactul ficțional*, Iași, Ed. Junimea, 2018.
89. Regman, Cornel, *Dinspre „Cercul Literar" spre „Optzeciști"*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1997.
90. Roșioru, Ion, *Marius Tupan între utopie și parabolă*, București, Ed. Semne `94, 2001.
91. Ruști, Doina, *Mesajul subliminal în comunicarea actuală*, București, Editura Tritonic, 2005.
92. Sasu, Aurel, Vartic, Mariana, *Romanul românesc în interviuri*, I, Partea I, București, Ed. Minerva, 1985.
93. Simion, Eugen, *Cronologia vieții literare românești*. *Perioada postbelică. Volum XXVI. 1980*, București, Editura Muzeului Literaturii, 2021.
94. Simpkins, Scott, *Sources of Magic Realism/ Supplements to Realism in Contemporary Latin American Literature. Magical Realism,* Ed. Zamora and Faris, 1995.
95. Simuţ, Ion, *Cele patru literaturi***,** în *România literară,* nr. 29/ 1993.
96. Sorohan, Elvira, *Ion D. Sîrbu sau suferința spiritului captiv,* Iași, Ed. Junimea, 1999.
97. Sorohan, Elvira, *Salon Literar cu prozatori contemporani români și străini*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 2014.
98. Spiridon, Monica, *Ștefan Bănulescu. Monografie*, Brașov, Ed. Aula, 2000.

99. Todorov, Tzvetan, *Introducere în literatura fantastică*, București, Ed. Univers, 1973.
100. Tokarczuk, Olga, *Caut întotdeauna ceva care să nu fie vizibil la prima vedere*, în *Observatorul cultural*, nr. 894, 2017.
101. Tucan, Dumitru*, Introducere în studiile literare*, Iași, Ed. Institutul European, 2007.
102. Tupan, Maria- Ana, *Discursul postmodern*, București, Ed. Cartea românească, 2002.
103. Ungureanu, Cornel, *Proza românească de azi*, București, Ed. Cartea Românească, 1985.
104. Ursenco, Igor, *Alertă de grad zero în proza scurtă românească actuală*, București, Herg Benet Publishers, 2011.
105. Vasile, Geo, *Lecturi în filigran*, București, Editura EuroPress Group, 2017.
106. Vlasie, Călin; Oprea, Nicolae, *Literatura română postbelică între impostură și adevăr*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2000.
107. Vlasie, Călin, *Știința apropierii de viitor*, Pitești, Ed. Paralela 45, 2017.
108. Waugh, Patricia, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, London, Methuen, 1984.
109. Zamfirescu, Dan, *Un om pentru istorie*, București, Ed. Eminescu, 1985.
110. Zanini, Walter, *Tendințele sculpturii moderne*, București, Editura Meridiane, 1977.

Periodicals:

1. *Apostrof*, anul XXXV, nr. 8 (411), 2024.
2. Blandiana, Ana, *Zăpadă*, în *România literară*, nr. 2, 1980, pag. 5.
3. *Breban, Nicolae, Contemporanul*, 1990, nr. 6, pag. 5.
4. *Flacăra Iașului*, 20 august 1954.
5. Horasangian, Bedros, Plăcintă *de berbecuț*, în *Contemporanul*, nr. 12, 2012
6. Moise, Ion, *Apocalipsa după Marius Tupan*, în *Mișcarea literară*, nr. 3, Bistrița, 2006.
7. Müller, Herta, *Literatura nu acuză. Când scrii tendențios, nu faci literatură*. *Interviu*, în *Observatorul cultural*, nr. 542, Septembrie, 2010.

8. Mușina, Alina, *Catalizatorul prozei scurte: Desant 83*, în *Observatorul Cultural*, nr. 1110 (21 martie 2022).
9. *România literară*, nr. 2, 1980.
10. *Opinia*, 23 martie 1949.
11. *Opinia*, 5 februarie 1951.
12. *Opinia*, 29 aprilie 1951.
13. Sorohan, Elvira, *Proza scurtă a lui I.D. Sârbu (III)*, în *Jurnalul literar*, anul VIII, nr. 49-52, decembrie, 1997.
14. Sterbling, Anton, *Cuvinte pentru timpuri plănuite*, în *România literară*, nr. 2, 1980.
15. Tokarczuk, Olga, *Caut întotdeauna ceva care să nu fie vizibil la prima vedere*, în *Observatorul cultural*, nr. 894, 2017.

Online sources:

1. Cogut, Sergiu, *Concepţia lui Mihail Bahtin despre genul romanesc şi literatura subversivă în viziunea telqueliştilor*, http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/838.
2. Herrmann, Sebastian M (*Poetics of Politics: Textuality and Social Relevance in Contemporary American Literature and Culture,* a.o. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015, https://books.google.ro/books?id=aIqhDAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false
3. Lloyd, David, "*The Poetics of Politics: Yeats and the Founding of the State*." *Qui Parle*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1989, pp. 76–114. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20685891.
4. McLaughlin, Robert L., "Post-Postmodern Discontent: Contemporary Fiction and the Social World." *Symplokē*, vol. 12, no. 1/2, 2004, pp. 53–68. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40550666.
5. Montrose, Louis A.: '*Professing the Renaissance: the Poetics and Politics of Culture*'. In: Newton, K.M. (eds) Twentieth-Century Literary Theory. Palgrave, London, Palgrave, 1997, pp. 240-247. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25934-2_47

6. Munteanu, Roxana, *Recurențe ale drumului în romanul Drumul la zid de Nicolae Breban*, https://dacoromania.inst-puscariu.ro/articole/2006-2007_15.pdf.