Postcommunist Literature – A New Literay Canon?!

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Abstract: *The transition from the communist to the democratic political regime was followed by the emergence of fundamental, social, cultural, moral, economic, and literal changes. The influence of the communist era in literature can be seen long after the fall of the communist ideology, but in this area we find that fundamental changes occur with regards to the canons which formed the foundation of the communist literature. Most programmatic ideas which were the communist canons of literature are no longer valid, they no longer reflect in the established literary work. Why should a canon which was formed on the basis of an ideology that no longer exists be taken into account?Breaking tradition and inventing new canons, and new rules governing literary practice are desired. All these new rules of writing are a form of escapism, perhaps well justified, maybe due to the enslavement that we complain of having experienced in the communist regime. They express the way in which we can take revenge on a system where we had no freedom of expression.*

Keywords: *canon, post communism, reconciliation, freedom of speech.*

1. Romanian communist ideology
1.1. Principles of an Authoritarian System

According to the *Dicționarul Explicativ al limbii române*, communism is „un sistem social, politic și economic constituit pe principiul abolirii proprietății private și al instaurării proprietății colective asupra mijloacelor de producție și de schimb" [1].

We can affirm that the communist regime tried to form a society with a homogeneous structure, but at the cost of imprisonment and alleged (apparent) absolute obedience from citizens.

In a totalitarian system, the principle by which informing the masses works, follows two directions: what people should and should not know. Alex Mucchielli in *Arta de a influența* [2] states that "every word is a setup for influencing the other" [Mucchielli, 2002: 11]. In other words, the speech must be prepared with skill, so that the person you want to influence is under the impression that one acts according to one's own principles. But in fact, the behavior derived from speech is induced (forced), not the product of one's own thinking, but rather the conditions under which it has developed to date. Therefore the relationship between

language and manipulation (since manipulation is also a form of influencing by dishonest methods), in a totalitarian system where political power is required, is more evident. Such communication situation violates the fundamental principles of the act of language [3], and influences the behavior of the receiver in favour of the transmitter. Manipulation, in general, affects the entire culture, changes the system of values, the written and unwritten rules of society, and affects the personal freedom of expression and imposes behaviours. Following an attitude supported by manipulation, changes occur in handling relationships, identity, and representation. Mucchielli disapproves of such an attitude, saying "it is impossible to imagine an interpersonal communication that takes place outside the rules, outside communication patterns" [Ibid: 132].

The effects of this attitude of influenting, and of persuasuading of the totalitarian system on society do not disappear with the change of political regime.

The basic ruling principles of an authoritarian political system mark the society that has incurred them dramatically and at length. Therefore, individuals must be retrained in other circumstances to overcome the condition that was imposed on them..

1.2. Steps Towards the Democratic Maturity

Disappointment, loss of faith in the ideals which seemed to be lasting forever, as well as the final moments of crisis of the communist system, would change the perspective on values known until then. Everything comes to be challenged, and the principles validated by society during the communist era would lose their meaning and would have to be replaced. Is such a radical change really necessary, or does it appear only due to the desire of having new rules, even at the risk that they are less effective than the previous ones?

After the fall of communism, society, hitherto characterized by ingenuity, sometimes lacking initiative and freedom of expression due to an authoritarian system, began a long process of transformation, of changing mentalities, of growing-up. This period of post-communist transformation, of transition [4] to democracy has meant a succession of stages, of states in the evolution of the contemporary society. The major change that was necessary after breaking free from the rules of a totalitarian system was educating the society for adulthood.

In the study *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* [5] from 1784, Kant defines maturity as a "reform of the way of thinking" [Kant, 1784: 35]. This means that individual or collective maturity is, at first, the change in mentality, in representations regarding various areas of society. It requires that communist society's fundamental values are reduced to zero to provide democratic regime with the necessary support to build a new set of rules of life.

Maturity is a prerequisite of democracy. We need to wade through a long process that aims individual and collective growing-up, and overcoming barriers which were imposed over the years. Adorno proposes a solution for reaching maturity: "The only real concretization of maturity" [Adorno, 1970: 145] is education to contradict and oppose the authoritarian political system. This is one of the ways out of secondment of an immature world, of stepping above the basic requirement for years on end without the courage going over it. It is a difficult path that cannot be followed by all members of society in the same way or at the same time.

Manipulation will get to alter will, to block thinking – unused for so long, to induce a passive state, of slowness, and of lack of initiative. Hence, transition is proving to be quite difficult. Michel Mandelbaum suggests the way out of the impasse: "Where intense competiton is the rule, [imitation] is the best formula for survival." [Mandelbaum, 1996: 30]. Also, John Mueller argues Mandelbaum's idea, saying: "Imitation and competition are likely to help in all this" [Mueller, 1996: 138] [6]. Thus, if there is no accountability for change by those who belong to the second category we mentioned, they have as an alternative the mimicking of the attitude of their fellow citizens. Can the same principle of imitation also be applied in literature?

2. Meanings of Canon
2.1. Terminology

Dicționarul Explicativ al limbii române defines canon, from literary perspective, as a „regulă fixă care face parte dintr-un ansamblu de procedee artistice specifice unei epoci" [7], a system under which literary works are evaluated, as well as the conditions of their setting.

In 1948, the German philologist Ernst Robert Curtius brought into question the conditions of designing literature, also using the concept of "canon": "The tyranny" of the *normal classicism* was exceeded. Following rules and imitating the model authors does not entitle one to get high marks. Only matters creative minds matter. (...) It is a selection of a new

way; a canon, if desired, founded only on the idea of beauty, whose forms are known to change and renew" [Curtius, 1970: 460]. It is a simplistic form of construction of literature, based only on "beauty", but which represents a starting point in theorizing the concept.

Since the '80s, literature has increasingly been approached in terms of respecting the canon, integration into predetermined rules. Professor and critic Harold Bloom performed a thorough applied study in 1994, *Western canon. The Books and School of the Ages* [8], which gives an appreciation of the criteria by which selected literary works. Accordingly, the canon is a way to separate the authentic by the inauthentic creations. Thus, there are two orientations: that of gathering together of meritorious works on the basis of common principles and the second, of their classification based on their intrinsic value. Bloom makes a canonical list of authors which does not belong solely to literature. American critic also includes in this list "those religious, philosophical, historical, and scientific writings proving considerable aesthetic meanings" [Bloom, 1998: 413]. Thus, we can extrapolate, saying that the canon presented by Bloom is actually a cultural canon.

2.2. The Canon Principles Formulated by Bloom
1. Strangeness

Strangeness is, according to the Bloom's statement „un fel de originalitate, care ori nu poate fi asimilată, ori ne asimilează ea pe noi în așa măsură încât nu ne mai apare ca stranie" [Ibid: 6] [9]. Each literary work, regardless of the period in which it was written has its novelty and strangeness. The ideas, the language, the building of the characters, the action, they all represent „ceva străin, mai curând o uimire nefirească decât o împlinire a așteptărilor" [Ibid: 6] [10]. Strangeness is an important criterion, „o primă cerință pentru intrarea în canon." [Ibid: 231] [11].

2. Anxiety

Anxiety as the restless, emotional disorder is specific to the literary works showing human struggles, sufferings, fear of death, frustration. Therefore, „operele literare de succes sunt aducătoare de anxietate, nu un antidot pentru ea" [Ibid: 34] [12]. Readers, like writers, experience the same mentioned emotions, and a literature in which they find their own condition, is worthy of inclusion in the canon.

3. Anxiety influences

„O operă canonică puternică nu poate exista în afara procesului influenţelor literare" [13], says Bloom [Ibid: 10]. The previous canonical authors creations influence their successors; the creating a literary work is based on the influence of canonical works, borrowing ideas, and conceptions. For the American professor, a work is born due to the influence other writers, and it is an answer, a response to prior valuable works: „Orice operă literară importantă este o lectură creativ-greșită și o interpretare greșită a unui text precursor (sau a mai multora)" [Ibid: 11] [14]. Creation is born as a result of *deliberate wrong understanding* of the canonical writers' works. In other words, if the interpretation is different from that of the writer which gives birth to influencing ideas, we can speak about originality. But it is not an absolute originality. The writer knows how and how much to borrow so as not to copy. Moreover, the purpose of a writer who wishes to be considered a canon is to sidestep „greutatea apăsătoare a vechilor realizări literare, astfel ca originalitatea să nu fie înăbuşită înainte de a se manifesta." "the weight of oppressive old literary attainments, so that originality is not stifled before showing off." [Ibid: 13] [15]. The anxiety of the influences applies particularly to poetry.

4. Continuing tradition

Harold Bloom supports the idea of continuing the canon, of perpetuating it; he believes that modern work surpasses tradition, but also continues it, while subordinating it: „Milton, ca și Chaucer, Spenser și Shakespeare înaintea lui sau ca Wordsworth după el, a depășit pur și simplu tradiția, subsumând-o. Acesta este cel mai puternic test al canonicității" [Ibid: 26] [16]. To Bloom, there is no rift between the traditional and the modern canon. The modern novel is written by the influence of traditional, and so is poetry. By perpetuating traditional literature as a source of influence for the offspring, we perpetuate the traditional canon. A "high style" has the power of "contamination", which is a pragmatic test of canon formation. Bloom concludes by stating that the idea of continuing the tradition of modern writers „fac legătura dintre marii înaintași și marii urmași" [Ibid: 407]. However, tradition should not limit the individual vision, and annihilate the writer status. Literature is created from their own ideas, not those of their predecessors.

Following the study conducted by Harold Bloom, there are two lines of deliberation: those who defend the canon and the importance of the preservation of the moral, and cultural values, and those who do not understand the need for a canon, since they consider it to be lacking

objectivity. And rightly, I believe that both are correct and logical thinking processes. On one hand, the canon imposes rules, requires a certain style and rhythm that can help many writers who are driven by the scheme. It does not exclude individuality, since it is a value system necessary to social and individual development.

Mircea Martin defends the importance of the canon, saying: „Canonul estetic centrat pe valoarea estetică și pe calitatea intrinsecă a operelor este necesar tocmai ca o stavilă în calea evoluțiilor anarhice, a degradării esteticului și a valorilor în genere. (…). Canonul estetic armonizează iregularitățile evoluției literare, atenuează risipirea formelor, stabilizează valorile" [18].

However, on the other hand, it is unnatural that only creations of great influence may be part of the canon. Thus, the influence is manifested only within the canon. Are we not dealing with discrimination? What happens to those whose literary creations do not appear to be influenced by the great canonical writers? They will not be taken into account from the outset. The influence of the writer over another seems to be a more important criterion to consider rather than the intrinsic value of the work. It should be appreciated that the "battle" for being included into the canon takes place only on aesthetic considerations, each writer thereby having equal chances.

2.3. *Debates canonical Romanian postcommunism*

After the removal of communism in Romania, discussions started „de la recunoașterea necesității revizuirii instituționalizate până la clamarea unor reforme radicale și chiar până la contestarea totală a structurii canonice existente", „pe fondul presiunii progresive a globalizării multiculturale, consumiste și mediatice" [19]. The concept of "canon" was used often in the post-communist period, becoming a real obsession in trying to reshape it. But opinions were very different.

When referring to the Romanian model of criticism from the 80's, we must consider the position of a leading figure in the area of Romanian literary criticism, namely Nicolae Manolescu. He builds the image of a model, a template with which to measure the value of literature. His statement from the end of his book *Metamorfozele poeziei. Metamorfozele romanului* clarifies: „Trăim în așteptarea *marelui poet*, poate nenăscut, care să ne smulgă din iluzoriul nostru echilibru, redându-ne unei singure posibilități, călăuzindu-ne către ea toate aspirațiile, toată iubirea, care să ne releve bucuria uitată de a fi unilaterali, partizani, fanatici" [Manolescu,

2003: 99] [20]. *The great poet* is considered a worthy model, which has the power to contaminate. The same happens with the criticism branch. The anxiety of the influences is also applied to the literary criticism.

Marius Chivu in *Dilema Veche* presents „o listă cu șapte idei (propusă de Ion Manolescu) care ar ajuta la ieșirea din dogma esteticului și reconstrucția canonică: relativizarea marilor adevăruri de istorie literară, desființarea monopolului infailibilității critice, postmodernizarea discursului critic și a metodelor de investigație istorică, adoptarea unei poziții teroretice pluraliste, eliberată de prejudecăți și inhibiții, dinamitarea festivismului canonic, democratizarea canonică, liberalizarea concurențialității istorice" [21].

Mircea Martin in *Despre canonul estetic* concludes: „A crede în existența unui canon estetic nu însemnă a avea o viziune statică asupra literaturii, ci doar a recunoaște o anumită continuitate în evoluția ei, o ordine construită prin ierarhizare. Această ordine reduce, fără îndoială diversitatea, dar o reduce dintr-un punct de vedere cantitativ, nu calitativ" [22].

2.4. The Reconciliation of generations

It is necessary to distinguish between the post-communist period and the literature of postmodern literature. The two periods do not overlap entirely. „Postmodernismul poetic românesc (PPR) s-a constituit intertextual, prin succesiunea antagonică a trei poetici de grup, desemnate impropriu prin sintagmele: generația 80, 90 și 2000" [Parpală, 2011: 7] [23]. Post-communism in Romania comprises mainly the 90's and the millennials' works.

If for the 80's (which deny the originality of the 90's and the authenticity of the millennials), realism was a criterion of critical validation, for mainly the 90's and the millennials the set of ethical and aesthetic values change, yet they approved are by weak criticism

In Article 2005, the critic Ion Pop from Cluj observes that the generations of the '80's, '90's and the 2000's are alike according to the authenticity project, having but minor differences:

„Rezumând, dacă punem față în față programul optzecist și al celor din jurul lui 2000, sunt tentat să spun câteva lucruri care s-ar putea să nu fie pe placul militanților necondiționați și exclusiviști ai ultimei „promoții". Adică: așa cum am scris acum câțiva ani, referindu-mă la raporturile dintre zișii „nouăzeciști" și antecesorii din anii '80, diferențele le-aș aprecia ca fiind mai mult de accent și de nuanță. În linii mari, dacă avem în vedere

programul „autenticist" al optzeciștilor, s-ar părea că urmașii imediați mai curând îi continuă decât îi contrazic. Împlinesc, în fond, tocmai proiectul lor, completând căsuțele goale sau mai puțin mobilate, într-o epocă istorică ce permite, în fine, asemenea completări" [24].

The concept of "canon" associated with a writer leads either to the sacralisation of his / her work, or to the rejection of it. Postmodernists lie between these two lines, while acknowledging the predecessors' values, they paradoxically reconstruct the traditional text to bring it to public attention.

If we think in the terms proposed by Bloom on the continuation of tradition, one might wonder whether postmodern poetry can keep the traditional style. The writer uses tradition, but shapes it according to his / her individual personality. Nicolae Manolescu said that „dacă poezia modernă se constituia ca un refuz, poezia postmodernă generaționistă se constituie ca o acceptare a tradiției literare. Mai mult: este pentru prima oară când tradiția este recuperată și integrată în bloc" [Manolescu, 2002: 185] [25].

One of Brian Mc Hale's conclusions quoted by Matei Călinescu, discourages the followers of Romanian postmodernism: „Transferul de la poetica modernistă la cea postmodernistă *nu este ireversibil*, nu este o poartă care se deschide și care se închide într-o singură direcție. … Este posibil să te *întorci* de la postmodernism la modernism, sau chiar să pendulezi între cele două" "The transfer from modernist poetics to the postmodern *is not irreversible*, it is not a gate that opens and closes in one direction. ... It is possible to turn from modernism to postmodernism, or even swing between the two" [Mc Hale, cited by Matei Călinescu, 1995: 255] [26].

If we look at poetry from a generational perspective, we might conclude that every generation wants the constitution of its own canon only because of the desire to be different from the previous one. It remains to be seen whether these paradigm shifts are obvious, intrinsic, or more one of tone, or superficial.

Contemporary poetry, written by poets belonging to several generations, is not only the validation of new poets, but also the reappearance of older ones, or the reprinting of their creations. In these circumstances, the theorist Simona Sora fears that „problema canonului literar este total nerelevantă, în momentul acesta, în literatura despre care vorbim" [27], with reference to the contemporary literature.

Young writers are not interested in the existence and promotion of a canon, perhaps because of aggressive propaganda of reconfiguration of the

literary canon since 1989. The reaction of the millennials against the 80's does not dispute their poetic, but their menacing spirit, the joint efforts to preserve the programmatic ideas.

Adrian Oțoiu, a 90's novelist, said in the study „An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: the Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation" [28] that the millennials prefer authenticity, contrary to favourite textualism of the 80's. Gh. Crăciun does not attribute authenticity to the millennials, but to different eras of the 80's or 90's, characterized by a *new language* [29]. Marin Mincu, theorizing the concept of "authenticity" is opposed to sincerity [30].

In prose, as well as in poetry, the continuity between generations is most important than the gaps: „Cum s-a observat, de altminteri, și în proza optzecistă, (analizată sub acest unghi mai ales în excelentele interpretări ale lui Adrian Oțoiu), experiențele „textualiste" concurează în interiorul „generației" angajarea propriu-zis existențială, autenticitatea pusă sub semnul amintitei 'tranzitivități' a limbajului" [31].

3. The influence of the communist regime on understanding the canon

3.1. The reinvention of canon

Romanian literary canon has suffered from communist ideology, stifled by political and social stereotypes. Based on ideas formulated by Bloom in understanding the concept of "canon", we must admit that every culture has the right, but also the obligation, to construct a representative canon which is influenced not only by culture, but also by the social, and economic aspects, and which seems to be designed around a valuable writer / poet, having the power or influence.

„Din cauza politicii național-ceaușiste, ceea ce este *național* devine suspect din punct de vedere european   și   invers,   europenii   noștri suspectează literatura așa-zis națională. Odată cu anii 1980 și continuând după 1989 acest clivaj între național și european sau occidental se intensifică în cultura română, care ajunge, spre anii 2000, să se gândească din nou pe sine în simple dicotomii. Revenind pe terenul strict al literaturii, consecințele cele mai nefaste ale acestei atitudini sunt elaborarea a două tipuri de canoane opuse (communist/postdecembrist, șaizecist/optzecist, modernist/postmodernist, etc), a două tipuri de modele opuse, a două tipuri de poetici care se exclud reciproc" [Lucrarea „Modele, continuități și rupturi în poezia contemporană", realizată în cadrul proiectului "Cultura

română şi modele culturale europene: cercetare, sincronizare, durabilitate"
(perioada 2007-2013), Anca – Raluca Perța : 18] [32]

The reinvention or the multiplication of the canon appear as a natural reaction to the current ideological, political, religious, or aesthetic changes. A canon may not remain unchanged under such circumstances, it must be reinvented, but under no circumstances must it be multiplied. There cannot be more literary canons at the same time. We would thus get aesthetics devaluation, cancelling the fight for supremacy.

The era we live in is characterized by confusion of values and by identity crises. The aesthetic canon, as aesthetic fundamentalism opposed to the political and religious fundamentalism, must find solutions to these problems by retrieving identity and restoring aesthetic values. It must stand apart from the socio-political and religious influences in order to restore the aesthetic principles of literature.

Because literature is in constant motion, the canon is also dynamic. There is competition among contemporary writers, which lead to good works. This situation obliges criticism to adapt in order to meet the new aesthetic values, and to reinvent itself.

3.2. The Need of A New Literature

Communism has, for years in a row, also influenced the literary field, along with the social, political, economic, and cultural ones, by printing a canon that was under the ruler's personality. Literature was not considered an important and useful field in communist countries. The emphasis was placed on economic and political reform, and less on the cultural one. Around the 80's, cultural information was properly supervised, reviewed and even changed to match the glorification of the national ideas. This attitude has led to dissent movements for rights and freedoms and the use of a double language to avoid conflicts with authority, but to express the correct data. Intellectuals did not abandone their principles, did not compromise, but did not write to please the totalitarian doctrine. They approached a coded, allusive language as a survival strategy, and as a opposition response to the policy of the regime.

The cultural environment was thus divided by the attitude towards the ideas of the communist system; the development of literature itself experienced a convolution, largely due to the same attitude which was different comparing to the regime.

In the last years of the communist regime, due to the industrialization and the economic growth, as well as the modernization of

education, the level of education grew, and so did the cultural level increased, so manipulation and indoctrination were no longer possible in unfeigned forms. Tightening the communist propaganda and its evolution towards dictatorship, as a result of infidelity signals to the regime, led to complaints that have resulted in riots of '89. New generations have come up with another intellectual horizon, with other aspirations, and with another system of values.

Since the fall of the totalitarian system entailed significant changes in the level of thinking and, later, in practice, regarding the principles of the new political regime, the literary context also changed in order to correspond to the new political scene. Therefore, there was, naturally, a new literature, different from the one of the communist period. The disappearance of political censorship of literature has made literature have historical evidence, exposing memories of the old age in images which were distorted by an artificial, ridiculed language. The past through is linked to the present by these literary creations designed to evoke the communist era, even if by anticommunist attitude. The two socio-political periods must be reconciled by the perspective of literature as well.

Another problem of post-totalitarian literature is the disappearance of the literary criticism. The creations are not subject to evaluation criteria, are not checked against agreed standards of a literary canon. It is therefore appropriate to review and to validate the aesthetic values which underpin the new literary creation. „Scoaterea scriitorilor de sub tutela (legitimatoare, formatoare) a unor reviste sau cenacluri literare, lipsa unor modele-sistem de referință (chiar din rândul scriitorilor, dar nu numai), eliminarea principalilor factori de presiune, diluarea mizei estetice, treptat, înlocuită de aceea comercială, invazia mediatică – toate aceste elemente au determinat, inevitabil, schimbarea profilului tinerilor scriitori de după 1989" [Pârjol, 2014: 147] [33]. The advent of television as a more convenient means of accumulation of information, and of leisure, as well as the financial limitation, reduced the consumption of culture brought by books.

The post-communist literature is divided into two major periods: the period of trials and hesitations writers around the 90's, and the period of the 2000 generation, slightly more detached from the influence of communism, but which hates the use of some predetermined rules, preferring a literature of time consumption. Media influence is observed in selecting certain texts for reading, or even in the decreased interest in any kind of reading. Thus, a paradox appears: either the writer is not interested to provide quality through his writings because the reader is no longer

interested, or the reader is no longer interested to read because the literary creation lacks quality?!

Paul Cernat seems to provide an answer to this dilemma: „Fără îndoială, nici gusturile publicului, nici oferta de modele literare nu mai sunt ce-au fost, valoric vorbind. Una e să ai drept repere pe Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Dostoievski, Cehov, Proust, Gide, Woolf, Papini, Faulkner, Marquez, Borges, Barth, alta e să juri pe Burroughs, Palahniuk, Breaston Ellis, Pascal Bruckner sau Amelie Nothomb" [34].

3.3. Postcommunist Literature

The communist writers' experience has influenced creations since 1989. The theme of the post-revolutionary novels oscillates between the insensitivity of an impassive democratic community, and the memories of the totalitarian regime. Due to the overwhelming influence of communist regime, the literature after 1989 did not bring major visible changes, although we tried to outline a new literary canon. Ion Buzera said that „anul 1989 poate fi considerat un an turnantă, care a modificat nu atât canonul, cât înțelegerea lui" [Buzera, 2003: 20] [35]. The new conditions of existence also changed the perspective of the literary creations, and the lack of an authority to control the quality of a creation, or its inclusion in a literary program, led to the reconsideration of the canon known before. The question is: who has the right or the obligation to reconsider the canon – the literary critics (by establishing principles which enhance the health of the literary culture), or the public (by determining consumer creations)?

Commercial creations, the so-called consumer literature, tailored for the public, have appeared. The language is free, non-academic, superficial, even violent, accessible to the masses, trivial, obscene, defying common sense, taking advantage, even more than needed, of the freedom which was offered.

The writer's attitude brings together irony, sarcasm, detachment, emotional disengagement. Writing in the first person, known as a sign of authenticity in literature, is now seen as a lack of originality and vision, as well as the impossibility of objective input, of considering an action or a character independent of the emotional experiences of the author.

Freedom of expression takes on other dimensions, but does not guarantee success. Is the post-communist literature likely to occur, rather, due to the need to prove what we could not until now on account of prohibitions? That we could write anything, simply write?

The literature of this period is described as "dehumanizing" through a "riot of language" and topics related to „deprimism, mizerabilism, pansexualism și egocentrare patologică" [Mihăilescu, 2006: 16] [36]. Nicolae Manolescu notices the same things, but in another form: „literatură egoistă și egocentristă, senzuală, superficială, interpretând libertatea cuvântului ca pe o libertate a expresiei, de unde spectrul frecvent pornografic" [Manolescu, 2007: 1453] [37].

With the publishing of the novels *Fișă de înregistrare*, *Pulsul lui Pan* (Ioana Baetica), *Legături bolnăvicioase* (Cecilia Ștefănescu), *Băgău* (Ioana Bradea) or *Țara brânzei* (Felicia Mihali), a feminine line is drawn in the literary postmodern creation, and a new theme that seems out of literature, that of pornography.

Another approach, this time in the masculin line, with and ironic, but also humorous attitude, belongs to the writers Dan Lungu, Lucian Dan Teodorovici, Sorin Stoica, Florin Lăzărescu, etc.

It is worth mentioning *Rondo-ul capriccioso* (2007) by Lorana Lupu, the debut novel of Ștefania Mihalache, *Est-falia* (2004), the novels *Urbancolia* (2008) and *Nevoi speciale* (2009) written by Dan Sociu, or *Suflețelul Iustinei* (1995) by Jolán Benedek.

The main themes of post-communist creations include: sexuality, extreme mental states, extravagant characters, rebellion, obsession for the peripheral, the horrors of communism, all these exposed using "street" language to support authenticity. The unmistakable profile of the millenials (the 2000 generation) is reduced to a few traits: „lipsa de complexe, ludicul exacerbat, limbajul licențios și argotic, neglijența căutată, abolirea oricăror convenții, completa dezideologizare, refuzul sistemului, fronda ostentativă dusă până în pânzele albe ale unui *anarhism* literar" [Pârjol, 2014: 153] [38].

4. Conclusions

Communism has influenced all aspects of society over the decades in which it mastered. Political censorship, lack of freedom of expression, citizens' oppression, violation of rights and freedoms have led to the accumulation of frustrations that gave rise to riots, to the desire of opposition, to the contesting of the totalitarian ideology.

With the removal of this instrument of authority, society became free to express itself, to act, to validate the values of the new political system, to produce literature at its whim, on request, and not be penalized for the way it does.

The debate over the literary canon, with revisions and additions, have not reached a consensus. Opinions are divided regarding the principles underlying this aesthetic construct and on the conditions under which it may change. It is natural for the literary canon – with the dynamics of society and, therefore, literature – to change, to rebuild, in order to perpetuate itself. There should be a single canon of literary creation in every age and not a multiple one, that would inevitably lead to the devaluation of aesthetic principles.

Each of generations of the 80′s, the 90′s and the 2000′s wants to move away from the canon of the previous one, either because of the desire to be different, or because of the need to adapt to the conditions of the current society. However, the previous writers′ influence has its mark in a subtle way on new creations, and continuing tradition is needed to establish indestructible links between the authors of the same country.

As long as literary criticism is not well defined, there will be no canon to recommend the rules for framing the new literature. It remains to be seen how long this process will last. The fact is that post-communist literature needs a new literary canon, as the conditions in which the old canon was conceived, no longer exists. It must therefore be adjusted or reconsidered under the conditions present political system in Romania.

NOTES:

[1] *Dicționarul Explicativ al limbii române / Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, second edition, revised and added, 2009: "a social, political, and economic system, based on the principle of abolition of private property, and the establishment of collective property of the means of production and exchange" (o.t.),

[2] Alex Muchielli, *Arta de a influența / The Art to Influence* (o.t.)

[3] The Cooperative Priciple defined by Grice [1975] suggests observing four conversational trends (quantity, quality, relationship, manner) for efficient communication situations.

[4] Transition is defined by Guillermo O′Donnell [1986: 3] as an "interval between two different political regimes".

[5] *«The answer to the question: 'What is enlightenment?'»* (o.t.)

[6] John Mueller, «Democracy, Capitalism and the End of Transition», in Michel Mandelbaum (coord.), *Postcommunism. Four Perspectives,* New York, The Council of Foreign Relations, 1996, pp. 102-167.

[7] *Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, second edition, revised and added, 2009: "fixed rule that is part of a set of specific artistic processes of an epoch" (o.t.).

[8] Harold Bloom, *Canonul occidental. Cărțile și Școala Epocilor / Western canon. The Books and School of the Ages (1994)*, (o.t.), translated by Diana Stanciu, Universe Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998. I'll use the Romanian edition for citation.

[9] "a kind of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or we assimilate it ourselves so much that it no longer appears strange" (o.t.).

[10] "a stranger rather than an unnatural wonder fulfilment of expectations" (o.t.).

[11] "the first requirement for being included into the canon" (o.t.).

[12] " the literary successes generate anxiety, not an antidote for it"(o.t.).

[13] "A strong work canonical process cannot exist outside literary influences" (o.t.).

[14] "Any important literary work is an erroneously and incorrectly interpreted creative reading of a text precursor (or more)" (o.t.).

[15] "the weight of oppressive old literary attainments, so that originality is not stifled before showing off" (o.t.).

[16] "Milton, like Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, before him, or Wordsworth after him, simply exceeded tradition, synthesising it. It is the strongest test of canonicity" (o.t.).

[17] "linking the great predecessors to the great successors" (o.t.).

[18] Mircea Martin, «Despre canonul estetic» / «On Aesthetic canon», in *România Literară / Literary Romania*, no. 5/2000: "The aesthetic canon focused on the aesthetic value and the intrinsic quality of the works is necessary precisely as an obstacle in the way of anarchic developments, of the degradation of the aesthetics and of the values in general. (...). The aesthetic canon harmonises the irregularities in literary evolution, attenuates the waste of forms, and stabilizes the values" (o.t.).

[19] Paul Cernat, «Dincolo de canonul estetic» / «Beyond the aesthetic canon», in *Observator Cultural / Cultural Observer*, no. 126/2002: "with the admission of the need to revise institutions to claiming radical reforms, and even to contesting the overall structure of the canonical existing," "amid the gradual pressure, and the multicultural consumerist, and media globalization" (o.t.).

[20] Nicolae Manolescu, *Metamorfozele poeziei. Metamorfozele romanului / Metamorphoses of the Poetry. Metamorphoses of the Novel*, Polirom Publishing House, București, second edition, 2003: "We live in anticipation of *the great*

poet, perhaps still unborn, to deliver us from the illusion of our balance, restoring us one opportunity, guiding us toward it with all aspirations, all the love that we reveal the forgotten joy of being one-sided, adepts, and fanatics" (o.t.).

[21] Marius Chivu, «Ce mai face postmodernismul?» in *Dilema Veche*, nr. 403/3-9 November, 2011: "a list of seven ideas (proposed by essayist Ion Manolescu) which would help getting out of the aesthetic dogma and of the canonical reconstruction: relativising of "the great truth" of literary history, eliminating the monopoly of critical infallibility, post modernizing the critical discourse, and the methods of historical inquiry, adopting a theoretical pluralistic position, free of prejudices and inhibitions, dynamiting the canonical festivism, canon democratization, liberalization of the historical competition" (o.t.).

[22] Mircea Martin, «Despre canonul estetic» / «On Aesthetic Canon», in România literară / *Literary Romania*, no. 5/2000: "Believing in the existence of an aesthetic canon does not mean having a static view of literature, but recognizing a certain continuity in its evolution, an order constructed by ranking. This order undoubtedly reduces diversity, but it also decreases from a quantitative, not quality point of view" (o.t.).

[23] Emilia Parpală, Notă asupra volumului *Postmodernismul poetic românesc / Romanian Postmodernism Poetic*, Universitaria Publishing House, Craiova, 2011, p. 7: "Romanian Poetic Postmodernism (RPP) was formed intertextually, by the sequence of three poetic antagonistic groups, improperly designated by the expressions: the generation of the 80's, the 90's, and the 2000's" (o.t.).

[24] Ion Pop, «Bilanțul douămiismului» / «The Balance of the Millennials» (I-II-III) in *România literară / Literary Romania*, no. 18, 19, 20, 2005: "In summary, if we face the program of the 80's and the 2000's, I am tempted to say some things that might not be to the liking of the last unconditional and exclusive militant promoters. That is: as I wrote a few years ago, referring to the relationship between the so-called 90's and predecessors of the 80s, I would appreciate the differences as being more on emphasis and nuance. Overall, if we consider the authenticity programme of the 80's, it would seem that the immediate followers continue rather than contradict it. After all, they accomplish their very project, filling empty or less furnished cells in a historical epoch that finally allows such additions" (o.t.).

[25] Nicolae Manolescu, *Despre poezie / On Poetry*, Aula Publishing House, 2002, p. 185: "if modern poetry was a refusal, generational postmodern

poetry is the acceptance of the literary tradition. More: it is the first time that tradition is recovered and integrated into the block" (o.t.).

[26] Mc Hale, cited by Matei Călinescu, *Cinci fețe ale modernității / Five layers of modernity*, Bucharest, Univers Publishing House, 1995, p. 255: "The transfer from modernist poetics to the postmodern *is not irreversible*, it is not a gate that opens and closes in one direction. ... It is possible to turn from modernism to postmodernism, or even swing between the two" (o.t.).

[27] Simona Sora, răspuns la ancheta „Bursa de valori", in *Bucureştiul cultural* / answering the survey of the „Literary Exchange" in *Cultural Bucharest*, no. 6-7 / 2005: "the question of the literary canon is totally irrelevant at this point, in the literature we are talking about" (o.t.).

[28] Adrian Oțoiu, «An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: the Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation» in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 23, nr. 1-2, 2003.

[29] Gheorghe Crăciun, *Generația '80 în texte teoretice / Eighties Generation in theoretical texts*, Pitesti, Vlasie Publishing House, 1994.

[30] Marin Mincu, *Textualism şi autenticitate / Textualism and Authenticity*, Pontic Publishing House, Constanța, 1993.

[31] Ion Pop, «Bilanțul douămiismului» / «The Balance of the Millennials» (I-II-III) in *România Literară / Literary Romania*, nr. 18, 19, 20, 2005: "As observed, moreover, in 80's prose (analyzed from this angle in the particularly excellent interpretations of Adrian Oțoiu) "textual" experiences compete inside the "generation" ones, with engaging themselves in the existential authenticity challenged to the said 'transitive' language" (o.t.).

[32] Anca – Raluca Perța, Lucrarea *Modele, continuități şi rupturi în poezia contemporană*, realizată în cadrul proiectului "Cultura română şi modele culturale europene: cercetare, sincronizare, durabilitate", 2007-2013, Anca – Raluca Perța, p. 18 / The work *Patterns, Continuities, and Ruptures in Contemporary Poetry*, written under the "Romanian Culture and European Cultural Models: Research, Synchronization, Durability" (2007-2013), p. 18: "Because of Ceauşescu's national policy, what is national is strange from a European perspective and vice versa, Europeans suspect our so-called national literature. With the 1980's and continuing after 1989, the gap between national and European or Western culture is developing in Romanian, which goes to the 2000's, lying back on itself in simple dichotomies. Back to the field of stern literature, the worst consequences of this adverse attitude are developing two types of opposite canons (communist / post-December, sixties / eighties, modernist / postmodernist,

etc.), two types of opposing models, two types of mutually exclusive poetics" (o.t.).

[33] Florina Pârjol, *Carte de identități / Book of Identities*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, București, 2014, p. 147: "Removing writers from the tutelage (legitimizing, forming) of magazines and literary circles, a lack of models – reference system (even among, but not limited, to writers), eliminating the major sources of pressure, diluting the aesthetic stake, gradually replaced by commercial media invasion – all these elements have inevitably changed the profile of young writers since 1989" (o.t.).

[34] Paul Cernat, «Puncte din oficiu pentru literatura tânără» în *Observator cultural* / «Points of default for young literature» in the *Cultural Observer*, nr. 437 / august 2008: "No doubt, neither the public taste, nor the literary models which are offered are what they used to be, speaking in the terms of value. It's one thing to have Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Proust, Gide, Woolf, Papini, Faulkner, Marquez, Borges, Barth as benchmarks, and a different thing to swear Burroughs, Palahniuk, Breaston Ellis, Pascal Bruckner or Amélie Nothomb" (o.t.).

[35] Ion Buzera, «Reinventarea unor noi forme de existență literară» in *Canon și canonizare* / «Reinventing new forms of literary existence» in *Canon and canonizing* (coord. Marin Mincu), Pontica Publishing House, Constanța, 2003, p. 20: "1989 can be considered a turning year that did not change canon in itself, but more likely its understanding" (o.t.).

[36] Dan Mihăilescu, «Literatura română în postceaușism» / «Post-Ceaușescu Romanian Literature», second volume, *Prezentul ca dezumanizare / The Present as Dehumanization*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2006, p. 16: "deprimism, pessimism, pansexualism, and pathological egocentering" (o.t.).

[37] Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române. 5 secole de literatură /A Critical History of the Romanian Literature. Five centuries of literature*, Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești, 2007: "selfish and self-centered literature, sensual, superficial, interpreting the freedom of speech as a freedom of expression, hence the often pornographic spectrum" (o.t.).

[38] Florina Pârjol, *Carte de identități / Book of Identities*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, București, 2014, p. 153: "lack of complexity, exacerbated playfulness, licentious language and slang, sought negligence, the abolition of any convention, complete lack of ideology, system denial, ostentatious rebelliousness carried to the bitter end of a *anarchism* literary" (o.t.).

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Descrierea ekphrastică și jocul simetriilor romaneşti în opera „Accidentul" de M. Sebastian

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