

The Ideological Discourse in the Construction of the Feminine Character During the First Years of Romanian Communism

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Rezumat: *Lucrarea de față se dorește o analiză a modului în care personajul feminin se contruiește sub presiunea ideologiei în literatura primilor ani de comunism în România.*

O primă caracteristică a reprezentării personajului feminin în această literatură ar fi absența conceptului de „diferență”, trăsătură ce va caracteriza și configurarea personajului masculin în primii ani de manifestare a realismului - socialist. Totodată, invocarea conceptului de „diferență” va implica în mod necesar și unele referințe la discursul feminist și la valorificarea sa propagandistică.

Tributară conceptului de „om nou”, femeia comunistă este ea însăși un construct ideologic, validându-se, într-o anumită măsură, prin brutala ruptură cu reprezentarea literară a femeii interbelice. Maniheismul reprezentat de formula „femeia comunistă vs. femeia burgheză” va structura conflicte și va delimita trăsături previzibile.

Astfel, cu o nouă privire asupra unor lucrări reprezentative pentru perioada studiată („Cântecul uzinei”, de Cella Serghi, „Ana Roșculeț”, de Marin Preda, „Ana Nucului”, de Remus Luca, „Cronică de familie”, de Petru Dumitriu,

„A doua moarte a lui Anton Vrabie”, de Nicolae Țic etc.) vom încerca să analizăm fenomenul creat de transformarea „literară” a ideologiei. Devenită un trup – oglindă, de altfel, ca și personajul masculin, femeia se va regăsi doar ca modalitate de a reflecta Partidul, o victimă a specularității negative care, negând complexitatea personajului, va nega chiar literatura acestei perioade.

Cuvinte-cheie: *comunism, personaj literar, corp - oglindă*

Socialist – Realism: Defining Ideology as Literature or Ideologizing Literature

Bearing in mind the famous beginning of the communist party manifesto and the reality it has eventually (re)created, one can say that, from the moment communism was no longer a ghost, everything else became one. A transformation that questioned the very existence of the individual, perceived as real or as a literary reflection, in both cases recognizing him/her only as a manifestation of ideology.

The immediate consequence will be the annulment of aesthetic autonomy and the development of a mimesis based on political utopy, since, in a literature subservient to the system, „the tendency is to equalize the fictions, to install a contiguity between the fictions of the power and the ones of literature” [1] under the imperative of historical necessity, on both the thematic and the verbal level. The ideological substratum (and stratum) of socialist – realist literature would offer it constant novelty by „following humanity step by step in the acknowledgement and transformation of nature and society”, „permanently dismissing the estrangement between art and reality” [2]. It is, however, a secondary type of reality [3], a reality of the dogma, of utopia, a premise for mystification or, less euphemized, a premise for the manipulation of the individual and for his transformation into an impotent anonymus of the mass. Literature, annexed to the mechanism of communist propaganda up to overlapping with it, will transcribe the ideological „fiction”, minimalistically re-fictionalizing it, and, at best, one can barely identify the narrative hybrids [4].

Literary discourse represents the privileged space of transfer and distortion of political ideas, the phrase with a pedagogical end, that is to educate the nation, being the common denominator of the two spheres, reinterpreting manicheistically, with ideological eloquence, the forces of the political and social system and literary humanity. Understanding the way, in the Party spirit, under the action of propaganda, becomes the totalitarian alternative to catharsis. In a presentation of the functions of propaganda in relation with the female condition in the communist years, Gheonea describes, in fact, the program of subservient literature, as characterized by „the informative – formative function”, „the mobilizing function”, „the function of conducting a permanent analysis of

the existent structures and the function of improving them”, „the function of creating clear conceptions on the ruling of the society” [5].

We will have in view, throughout this paper, writings like *Ana Roșculeț* by Marin Preda, (1949), *Cântecul uzinei* by Cella Serghi, (1950), *Ana Nucului* by Remus Luca, (1953), *Cronică de familie* by Petru Dumitriu, (1956), all novels reflecting different literary periods (the period of total Stalinism and the one of formal de-stalinization), aesthetically uneven but eloquent for an approach of the literary construction of the feminine character under the pressure of ideology.

Aligning literature and ideology, due to the mutations created by the tensions between reality and fiction, the literary character and the real person are condemned to superposition, both re-modelled on the pattern of the ideological character. Class struggle, programmatic hate, militancy will become the structural elements that the profile of the literary character is built on, attitudes derived from the intended social and political reality, the unabated flux between concepts and representations being provided by the ideological content.

So, Riurikov explains, “when Lenin advised the writer to create a literary type out of his political oponent, he was in fact teaching him to see and expose the social, political essence of his activity, he was teaching him to concentrate the features of the enemy in a vivid manner, which would activate the feelings of hate and contempt into the reader” [6]. An identity transfer takes place between the real individual and the fictionalized one, converted into a literary character.

The mass critique will represent the organism having the privilege to dissolve the bounderies that can no longer separate a precarious fiction, due to the lack of an aesthetic criterion and a reality of the dogma, a female worker from the „Filatura Română de Bumbac” indignantly stating that she wouldn’t send „someone like Ana Rosculeț, who didn’t do much in production or as part of the workers’ union” to „Congresses” [7]. The same fervent reader, a labourer at the maintenance preparation section in F.R.B. and a member of the Cultural Committee of the Department draws everyone’s attention to the way in which the character deviates from the ideological set course, therefore refusing the didactical principle of the literature of the period: „But so, what example can the book offer? After Ana Roșculeț starts correcting her mistakes, she gets bored during her holiday, buys herself expensive shoes, despite the fact that her daughter needed so many things. Habits of a bourgeois lady...”. Following the same direction, of contesting the presence of ideologically „exemplary” pattern, J. Popper’s article on the same novel begins with exemplary figures of real life female labourers, who, successfully adapting to the apprenticeship courses at school (one or two-years long) have managed to „exemplarily” qualify as „assistant craftsmen or craftswoman” [8].

However, one has to admit the validity of a certain connection that could be established between reality and fiction, of course, not in point of the modality that reality is artistically filtered. Bearing in mind the artistical values, denied in such a time and through such a literature, one can easily identify a one-to-one relation between the condition of the „fictional being”, (non)aesthetically portreyed, and the ontological condition in a totalitarian state: they both exhibit fundamental transformations, being closely confronted with dissolution.

The Propaganda Effect – the Literary Character Effect

The communist ideology having as subject the female status bases its political speech on the echoes of a mimed feminism which, far from being the cause of an emancipation movement, represents the inherent effect of a utopian intention: class equality, acquired through work and devotion towards the Party. In order to achieve it, self-denial and the leveling of genre differences are mandatory along the process. Simone

de Beauvoir was drawing attention to this vision of a society without classes, without genres: „And when the socialist society is present throughout the world, there will no longer be men and women, but only workers equal among themselves” [9]. Unlike feminism, the communist discourse seems set to aim at – and to obtain it, at least in theory – the very emancipation of the woman from her own self.

As a matter of fact, there was no feminism under the communist regime, given the denial of all forms of individual autonomy [10]. The emancipation of women, in a democratic spirit and as an argument for the modernity of the political factor, meant in fact the exploitation of a category perceived as a minority, easy to manipulate and able to manipulate in return. Zoe Petre remarked that the aim of communist campaign was in reality „to discharge a supplementary work force for the great industrial projects”, as well as „to drastically limit the autonomy of the family nucleus and, in the end, to destructure and destroy it” [11]. Thus, punctually following the final consequence of the communist discourse – the dissolution of one’s individuality – literature became the exact transcription of the ideological discourse: the literary theme of work and the refusal of intimacy reconfigure the other themes, adapting them to the Party’s imperatives. Love, a literary theme traditionally related to a hypostasis of femininity, will become an important criterion for the picture of woman in the communist imagery.

Propaganda will depict the woman, in the first years under the influence of the Soviet model, installed in the same professional spaces patriarchally consecrated, as textile industry, agriculture, medicine, which are characterized by dexterity, socializing skills, devotion, and self-sacrifice. Nonetheless, the „hard” hypostasis can be found as well, like driving the tractor or with „a gun hanging around her neck” [12], motivated not only by her spirit of justice, but also by her maternal love. The work theme becomes therefore another constitutive factor for the identity of the analysed characters: a factory worker in the flourishing textile industry (Ana Roşculeţ), a doctor in the countryside (Maria, in Lucia Demetrius’ story), the head warden of a village hall that has not yet been set up, but which will undoubtedly produce a cultural revolution (Ana Nucului), a reeler, fascinated by the cutter and lathe, by bolsters and stencils (Mitana, in Cella Serghi’s novel).

The Mirror – Body. The Impossible Self-reflection

More than ever, the feminine body in communism is a social construct, therefore an ideological construct. The feminine character is born, obviously, out of the word, from the rib of the „new man”. However, in contrast with the biblical Eve, an image of difference and of the complementary double, this new emanation of the feminine bears a striking resemblance to the Adam of communist beginnings.

The ideological communist discourse seems to have borrowed the misogynist component of the feminist discourse, misogynist feminism being defined as the attempt to imitate the male traditional model, the patriarchate patterns and axiology being perceived as superior. Thus, it will not promote a woman equal to the man, but a woman identical to the man, not only in „thoughts and feelings”, which are those of the Party, but also through the physical appearance. The feminine body becomes a mirror of the ideological image, therefore a mirror of the masculine body: the woman is exiled from her own body, which has now become a recipient modelled and filled with ideological sawdust.

The fluid delicacy of the inter-war heroines is now a sign of physical decay, of an „unhealthy” human nature, together with a similar social origin. Ioana Pârvulescu, in an article on the authentic or imagined misogyny of the inter-war writers, justifies the diaphanous representations of the feminine figures of inter-war literature through men’s resistance to the new, the latter perceiving the newly achieved rights of women and the transformation of their image (with short, boyish hair, a (too) short skirt) as an

„estrangement” which they are trying to abolish through literary creation [13]. The inter-war writers were, in fact, refractory to novelty, trying to stop or at least to delay woman’s transformation from a pre-raphaelite *donna* into a disquieting Dora Maar. They were not looking for the annulment of women, but for the conservation of a femininity which, even if defined by a different exteriority, was comfortable given its previsibility. Apart from the patriarchal conservatism, the intentions that governed the artistical representation of the woman in the period prior to communism is justified by the attempt to guard the genre difference (even if it was manifested for the obvious social disadvantage of the feminine genre). What this analysis intends to point out is the necessity of genre difference for the inter-war imagery since the communist concept of „new” is a difference pulverizer: the “new man”, should „he” be a man, should „he” be a woman, disposes specific features, sketched without any shake of the ideological pen.

So, when she is not robust, she is slender, in all cases agile, indisputably skillful and competent in order to indicate her innate compatibility with work, physical and spiritual one, the latter residing in the capacity of mobilization and of problem solving, usually the problems of a particular factory department or, why not, of the entire plant, in the name of the Party. The propaganda images of the woman manoeuvring the tractor, the mould, and the baby (in the optimistic version of the heroine mother, „the babies”) with the same working enthusiasm have become a common place of the visual representations.

Under the pressure of this image, Vlada, Radu Cosaşu’s character from his short – story, *Vlada* [14], will “tragically” feel the incompatibility between her delicate frame and her revolutionary, proudly communist impulses, amplified by her position as a doctor on a construction site. The first person narrator, a masculine and amused voice, will, however, not ignore the young doctor’s one hundred and so systematic observations plan meant to re-establish hygiene among the workers. In a white robe, that seemed too large for her, Vlada is constantly under the impression that she is not taken seriously due to her physical appearance. The narrator himself has to hide, all the time, with an apparently innocent gesture, his smile caused by the difference between the ideological image and the corporeal reality.

Mitana, in Cella Serghi’s novel, *Cântecul uzinei* (*The Song of the Plant*), is a product of the „healthy” origin, from the country side, conjugated with a „healthy” environment: the factory. Without evoking a classical ideal of beauty (Marin, meeting her, immediately compared her to Lila, blonde and elegant), Mitana responds to the communist ideal of „femininity”: she has a cut on her nose, „that doesn’t look bad on her” [15], a bold tip of the nose, green and daring eyes, thick eyebrows, black and thick plaits of hair and a „white as chalk” parting. Everything in her looks must suggest, and it suggests easily, without literary skill – simplicity and immaculacy.

Lila, the opposite term of the feminine doublet, is the prototype of the bourgeois woman captured in the communist daguerreotype of ideology. An inventory of her clothes would show that she never wears overalls, a quick glance through her purse would reveal „mirror, puff-box, lipstick, novotex”, signs of her shallow concerns for physical appearance, her vanity and, eventually, her capacity to disguise and manipulate by lying (since she is also the ally of the former owners of the factory, Roby and Boby).

Clothes are the ideological extension of the body, the communist woman showing interest exclusively for practical clothes, so she *will not* stumble while climbing up the glorious path to socialism. The engineer „always wears the same black, pleated skirt”, (the functional, neutral element), „the same white vest, with red and black leather stitching” (the traditional element); „her blouses are all the same, or maybe it’s the same, but it’s always white as snow and a little starched” [16] (a sign of her housewife vocation, beyond the intellectual distinction). In opposition to a description structured by the word „the same” and the adverb „always” in order to suggest repeatability, therefore stability and the lack of

preoccupation for the bourgeois emptiness of physical appearance, Lila, the ideological antimodel for the engineer and for Mitana, is portrayed „always” „the same” for her elegance, wearing, for instance, a dress „copied from a Parisian design” at the football game. Mitana, convinced that practicality is the new aesthetic, will cut her hair and proudly march in her overalls, much to Marin’s anger, her husband, who will analyse his feelings later on in order to acknowledge and re-educate his bourgeois tendencies.

Usually made from a thick fabric, with no imagination in the cut or in the choice of the colour (neutral), the overalls shape the (too)feminine body, aligning it in the single – coloured lines of the working party. It is, however, seen as a „practical achievement of fashion”, a natural evolution of the dress „once the soft gestures and the life of laziness definitively broken with, once the woman entered the working life” [17]. With a practical end, necessary for the working subject during the process of his/her activity, the overalls do not only offer protection, but also, on a symbolic level, portray a collective identity. Not only do they state the emancipation through work, but they also seem to imitate the masculine shape, reduced, in turn, to an identity hemmed in by the Party. As a uniform of the working space, the overalls become the textile symbol of equality gained through work (this representing the general situation of the individual immersed in the working mass) and of the equality achieved by the annulment of the bodily expressed genre difference (in the particular case of the woman miming the masculine silhouette).

Woman’s representation as „the masculine woman” or „the phallic woman” [18] has rightfully become a *locus communis* of the studies on the ideological status of the woman in communism. The suspension of the genre differences is expressed by stating the validity of only one genre, that is, the masculine one. Moreover, the woman is not created after the likeness of man, but made after the likeness of the communist new man. The twisted contours of Dora Maar, with their inherent complexity, will be coherently, thus predictably, organized, following a given pattern, in the brutal linearity of the woman in Vera Muhina’s „The Worker and the Kolkhoz Woman”. The vocation of monumentality, in the simple and vectorially alike lines of the two figures composing the Soviet statuary group, imposes the dissolution, on one hand, of the delicate inter-war silhouette, and on the other hand, of everything that came to be considered the decadentism of a seldom contradictory intimacy, abyssmal through its complexity and, one may say, through what literature has called the feminine ineffable. Along with socialist–realist literature, we too find out that the eternal feminine mystery has been conquered by the laws of social and historical determinism, decrypted and categorized as an expression of the bourgeoisie. Communism seems to unveil the woman, in order to show the man that the veils that he could not overcome were nothing but an illusion entertained by a literature of the vague, and, in fact, underneath the veil there is the image of a being resembling his, predictable, just like him, miming his every move, his body and his thoughts in the Party’s mirror. It is a negative specularity, since it dissolves the specificity of the subject and it can only perceive itself when reflected by and/or reflecting the Party.

But how can this „phallic” woman be an object to the masculine desire? Could it be that the man is no longer a man, or the desire is no longer a desire, or, better yet, both? In the case of communist imagery, one based on ideological literature, the answer will be that the communist man desires the communist woman and his erotic instinct is a construct based on the Party’s command. What a man must desire, a desire emptied by any erotic object, is the Party. The woman is only a physical means for the man to possess the Party, and he loves, he must love this phantasm in a woman. The genetic code of the new man/woman operates the selection of the partner based on the purity of his communist features. If love represents, traditionally, a modality to negate the difference in order to recover the lost feeling of the origins, thus possessing an ontological basis, the only origin,

alpha and omega, allowed in a communist regime is that of the Party, the only basis, the Party's. The totalitarian organism is fundamentally narcissistic, functioning by self-miming and by multiplying its image through the mirror – bodies (and souls) of the individuals lacking the possibility of self – reflection. Therefore, one can only contemplate “the unsettling depth of the Nothingness” since “the I does not exist and the doctrinal armour is the one replacing it” [19].

The Woman, the Man and the Party

In the Party's absence, the socialist – realist character can constitute himself only as a negative type of literary character. Bearing in mind the categories of the character in communist literature, women can also be classified as “enlightened”, “about to be enlightened” and “never to be enlightened”, of course, by the powerful lightning bolt coming from the Party. The first category presents women already vividly aware of their part, the second looks upon those uninitiated (the novices), those about to achieve the clarification, being aligned, by the end of the text, with the ones from the first category. The ones condemned to eternal darkness are, obviously, the aristocrats, the ones refusing to understand a condition that seems incompatible with their very being.

To these three categories that define the literary character facing the communist doctrine we could also add the woman “enlightened” about the true values, but not officially converted to communism, and for this particular category the examples would be Isabela Giurgea – Roșcanu and Maria – Theresia Dumitriu, the wife of Captain Dumitriu and the daughter of Sofia Lascari and her first husband, Carol von Debretzy. The former will be strongly influenced by her friend, dr. Ana Antim, and the latter will be suspected of harbouring communist beliefs given her refusal to accept, along with her husband, the death of the innocent Bulgarian peasants, revealing a „highly moral purity” [20]. Communism is, therefore, a state of mind, a way of living: by refusing to participate to the injustice done to the others you automatically become a communist, because no other measurement of morality exists.

The independence of the woman implies the affirmation of a Party – principled ego; in this aspect, a woman does not love a man, she loves the Party, she does not give birth to her children, she brings sons of the Party into the world. The socio – political conflict, usually consisting of a problem regarding the Party's assignments, gets pigmented in *Cântecul uzinei*, as in *Ana Nucului* by Remus Luca, in *O noapte grea (A Hard Night)*, by Lucia Demetrius, or in Marin Preda's *Ana Roșculeț* with moral examples concerning conjugal love (the first two novels) or the removal of the masculine factor that led to perdition. Furthermore, comrade Pascu (for Mitana), comrade Pavel Vasile (for Ana Roșculeț) or nurse Ana for Maria in *Limpezire* by Lucia Demetrius are the normative guide marks: the characters do not have access to a solution of some sort, they are unable to decide, so the solution always comes from the outside, and it is always optimum, thoroughly organizing a passive, predictable interiority. Mitana does not morally justify her choices, she permanently relates them to the “teachings of the Party”, realizing that Pascu, that is the Party, will never accept her breaking up with Marin if he knows she is expecting a child, since the comrade argues that keeping together a marriage is “not their problem” (men's), “it's our problem” [21] (the Party's).

The woman also plays the part of the educator, in order to show the stray man the right and bright path of the Party. Ana Nucului reads, to her husband and to the eager villagers, the newspaper; Mitana, connected to the great achievements of the Eastern neighbour, “cuts from the newspaper photographs of the front rank workers and puts them with drawing – pins on the wall”, “copies phrases from magazines and books in a notebook” [22] marking the

achievements of the blacksmiths from Culebac or from the Ordjonichidze factory and underlining them with red ink, so that Marin will not ignore them.

Marin, Mitana's husband, and Petre Nucului, Ana's husband, are reflections of masculine pride, a typical bourgeois feeling, discontent that their woman's admiration and energy (while invested in the factory's production, in the first case, or in the recently acquired position as the village hall warden, in the second case) has now a different object: the construction of socialism. Living as a couple demonstrates selfishness, a version of living on your own, isolated; the conjugal cell has to be absorbed (therefore, annulled) in the giant organism of the Party. There are no illustrations of the love theme, only ideological re-definitions of it, as the erotic couple has become socialist comradeship, the ideal of this eros without eros being the Party leader (if need be, for her, as for him).

The conflictual triangle is, in this case, created between the man, the communist woman and the character *in absentia*, the Party, man's jealousy being rooted in the conviction that the woman is no longer his property, like all his other assets; she has become the property of the state and she is entirely controlled by the Party. While reading about the proletarians who are redeeming themselves from their petit bourgeois preconceptions, Marin recalls that Mitana herself accused him of manifesting bourgeois tendencies. After a brief self – analysis, in the Party spirit, the repented husband turns into a repented communist, realizing that “deep down, he would have wanted a submissive wife, frightened, like his grandmother in Broșteni, who walked two steps behind his grandfather and dared not murmur”[23].

Studies have proved that, in reality, the state and the husband represented, during the communist regime, two forms of patriarchy simultaneously oppressing the woman [24]. However, in the literary text, which is tributary to the optimistic end, the man shakes off his bourgeois outbursts, solves the production problem, annihilates the destroying influence of the class enemy (on him, as on the production of the factory), self – criticizing himself (the socialist–realist version of interior monologue) because “he wasn't vigilant enough, doubtful enough. He drifted away from Ghețuș, from Pascu and even from Mitana. He had listened to Lila' whispers, to her words, to her calculations” [25]. Marin, regaining the charisma that captivated the ignorant Mitana from the very beginning, academically explains chemical processes, much to the admiration of his fellow workers, especially to the admiration of Mitana, who puts, for the fourth time, salt in her soup. Once her admiration for his extended knowledge resuscitated, love is also regained. The moral: be a good and upgraded communist if you want to be loved by a revolutionary woman.

Another version of the erotic communist triangle, seen as a pseudo – erotic triptych, is to be found in Lucia Demetrius' text, *A Hard Night*. The doctor, Maria, blends in her speech of self-mobilization for the saving of her village patients infected with diphtheritis, an analysis of her feelings for Emil, “the handsome doctor with a private office” in the city, who is unable to understand her sacrifice. In the cold night of her peregrination at her patients' houses, only the light from the Party's office messianically gives her strength. Comrade Mocanu, towards who the thoughts of the virtuous doctor make their way, becomes a solution *in abstracto* for the self-censored relation with Emil, whose marriage proposal she refused, suspecting him of individualism and lack of revolutionary commitment. Comrade Mocanu is the one who keeps the bright light on at the Party's office, he is the one who works, incessantly, symbolically.

The Aristocrat or the Woman of the Past

She is, of course, everything the woman of the future is not and despises ontologically: vain, shallow, unable to care for anyone else but herself, indifferent to the

rest of the world (for the sake of which the communist woman breathes, thinks and, basically, exists).

The women of *Cronică de familie* (*A Family Chronicle*) by Petru Dumitriu do not find themselves, not even for a moment, in the shadow of the men surrounding them, saved as literary characters by the talent of the writer, but condemned as fictional beings by their social condition. Davida Lascari, Elena Vorvoreanu and Eleonora Smadoviceanu, in the first volume, and Elvira Vorvoreanu in the last two, appear to dominate the Cozianu generations, seeming to expand their existence *ad libitum* through the retrospectives and the temporal realignments that the prolific Chronicler indulges in.

These characters, as well, are born out of ideology, but their existence amplifies its meanings by denying the doctrine: the aristocrats are, ideologically, anti – models, and the narrative discourse is built on an implicit antithesis, in which the term that it is compared to is systematically kept silent.

The term is nonetheless insinuated to the reader that witnesses the trials and tribulations of a social class, of a mentality that, while disgracefully waning, will watch in agony the reign of that element that it has ignored and, together with it, the entire world will regain the sense of morality, of true values, of integrity, all being, of course, communist. The negative characters become main characters, at least in an analysis on a literary basis, because they will become premises for the affirmation of the superiority of the communist regime, in an analysis using political glasses.

In this manner, the elements opposing the system become a pretext for genuine literature, satisfactorily neutralizing the effects of ideology, which will not, however, be entirely abolished. This vision of the past will also reconfigure literary themes like work and eros.

The local colour is thoroughly reconstituted through the numerous descriptions of interiors, the Chronicler skillfully recording every detail, from the cracks in the tapestry work to the evolution of the society's preferences for a type of furniture or another. The desire to recreate the local colour could also be blamed for the avidity with which the clothing and the body are depicted, observed, with an eye for detail and an eloquence of the nuance that forgives nobody, man or woman.

Socialist realism registers the struggle of the communist present, with characters bearing identities like dictionary notes – usually, identical ones; the attempt for the genuine realism creates a world, the only accepted one, with ideological legitimation: that of the past.

What else can the Chronicler be witness to if not to the marriage for practical reasons, in its adulterous version, with its conjugal hate or indifference; to the exploitation of the poor, to the political manipulation and, in general, to the development of a series of negative features for a character condemned by its social condition because, before existing as literature, it existed as a figure of ideology?

The heavy, baroque corporality of Cleopatra Cozianu, „the massive and blonde beauty” of Elena, Elvira's or Davida's slender frames will become the marks of a sexuality that the corporally un-eroticized communist society condemns as a symptom of decadence. Moreover, these women know how to manipulate by cutting out small gestures and images of their bodies, mainly after having studied them at large in a mirror. Cleopatra reproaches to Bonifaciu, her brother-in-law, that he „doesn't pay attention to the people”, gambling the result of her flirtatious behaviour on the image of the „black and satiny bun on a neck of a mat white, under the large, white hat, and the cleavage with the almost bare shoulders, with a black beauty mark between the blade bones, and the flow of her light summer dress” [26] that she displays for the man. Elvira adjusts, in front of Ionel Bonifaciu, the effects of her age using some obscure light and carefully chosen gestures while Bonifaciu, aware of

the feminine tricks, asks himself, after a meeting with a certain Mrs. Ascherliu: „How the hell does she manage to blush?” [27].

The description of the clothes could, of course, be interpreted in an ideological sense since they are testimony of a time when the woman, „silent, sad, dressed with the most expensive clothes with the sole purpose to please the man”, was „kept in a cage, with no air or freedom”, in opposition with the present when the woman, „aware of her role in society”, is dynamic, „preoccupied with a diversity of problems awaiting solving”[28].

That the Cozianus’ way is not the right one the reader can easily infer from the tragical depiction of an existence unable to justify itself: Davida, in a photograph taken forty years later, has „an empty” look, „full of the despair of someone who doesn’t understand, didn’t understand and will never understand” [29], Elvira will suffer from the same awareness of having followed a useless path, Dimitrie Cozianu will catch a glimpse of the right road to be taken through Isabela, but will lose it, due to Ida Gherson, unable to synchronize his feelings with the feeling of purity the relation with a woman „too exalted, too moral, too independent”[30] provided him with. Isabela, with an impressive biography, created under the ideological impulse of self-sacrifice [31], a nurse on the battlefield and a nurse in a tuberculosis sanatorium after her break-up with Dimitrie Cozianu, will be regarded as „crazy” in the aristocratic circle, once again proving the impossibility of an alliance between the two social (and moral) classes.

The Same Ideology for Different Conclusions

The presence of ideology in the texts of subservient literature can be perceived at different levels when approaching it. Apart from the pre-text it offers and the reading effect it intends, ideology is present in the daily life of the character, constructing not only the character, but also the entire universe in which it mechanically exists.

The character seems to self-construct under the influence of the ideology it assimilates, in order to create ideology, turning into a model reader for the real reader of the text. Ana Roșculeț and Ana Nucului synchronize their future activity with the great communist achievements, usually Soviet ones. Mitana has a revelation when she understands that the Party can reveal the human essence, because „these writers point a finger at you. It is like they are saying: «look, this is what you are, this is your problem, and look why you’re having it and here’s the solution for it””, reproaching to Marin that „he is speaking and living as if he doesn’t read *Scântea*” [32].

Isabela Giurgea – Roșcanu preaches to Cozianu about altruism and the duty to sacrifice in the name of mankind. The Chronicler, given Cozianu’s amazement in front of Isabela’s attitude („she looked like a pearled porcelain doll and somebody else seemed to have talked” [33]), will disclose that, in fact, Isabela was using Ana Antim’s words, who was a doctor, a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, an „initiated” one. Tomiță, Ana Roșculeț’s lover, is awestruck when she manages to break free from his malefic influence, „unable to understand where these words came from” [34], but realizing, in the end, what „smartened her”: the workers’ union. The characters themselves are amazed by this transformation, which will be finalized with them speaking in public, thus becoming voices of ideology twice: once for the readers, and another time for the other characters. Besides, speaking in the name of the Party is one of the mandatory trials for the heroines and Ana Roșculeț, Ana Nucului, and Mitana successfully pass this test, proving themselves characters able to take over the narrator’s discourse and multiply it, as an infinite number of mirrors, in and beyond the fictional universe.

Notes

- [1] Cordoș, Sanda, *Literatura între revoluție și reacțiune*, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 156.
- [2] George Munteanu, *Realismul socialist și sensul noului*, in *Probleme actuale ale literaturii realist – socialiste*, ESPLA, București, 1960, pp.72 -73.
- [3] Thom, Françoise, in *Limba de lemn*, translated by Mona Antohi, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005, p. 64.
- [4] As Eugen Negrici names the writings „more agilely embodying ideology” during “ the de-stalinization years”, in *Literatura română sub comunism*, vol. I, *Proza*, Editura Fundației Pro, București, 2006, p. 108.
- [5] Gheonea, E.S., Gheonea, Valentin, *Femeile în propaganda regimului comunist*, in Olteanu, Cristina Liana, Gheonea, Elena-Simona, Gheonea, Valentin, *Femeile în România comunistă. Studiu de istorie socială*, Editura Politică SNSPA, București, 2003, p. 84.
- [6] Riurikov, B., *Literatura și viața*, Editura Cartea Rusă, București, 1955, p. 10.
- [7] Adela Pagu, worker at F.R.B., *Despre o cronică din Flacăra și chipul muncitoarei de azi*, în *Flacăra*, nr. 8 (112), 25 februarie 1950.
- [8] Popper, J. Marin Preda, « Ana Roșculeț », în *Flacăra*, nr.4 (108), 28 ianuarie 1950.
- [9] De Beauvoir, Simone, *Al doilea sex*, vol. I, Editura Univers, București, 2006, p. 93.
- [10] Miroiu, Mihaela, *Drumul către autonomie*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2004.
- [11] Zoe Petre, *Promovarea femeii sau despre destructurarea sexului feminin*, în *Miturile comunismului românesc*, (coord. Lucian Boia), Editura Universității București, 1995, p. 26.
- [12] Barbu, Eugen, *Tereza*, in *Tereza. Nuvele*, Editura Pentru Literatură, București, 1961, p. 95.
- [13] „What scared the inter – war writers and made them appear as misogynists was woman’s estrangement. They saw the novelties in women’s lives as a loss of femininity and were in a rush to wall-in their image, through literature, in the purest feminine, in order to protect them from the change”, Ioana Pârvulescu, *Erau interbelicii misogini?*, *România literară*, nr. 6, anul XLII, 26 februarie 2010.
- [14] Cosașu, Radu, *Vlada*, in *Energii*, Editura de Stat Pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1959.
- [15] Serghi, Cella, *Cântecul uzinei*, Editura Tineretului, București, 1950, p. 3.
- [16] *Ibidem*, pp. 72 – 73.
- [17] *Moda femeii muncitoare*, no author mentioned, in *Femeia muncitoare*, seria II, an 7, nr. 4, iunie 1946.
- [18] Popescu, Alice, *O socio – psihanaliză a realismului socialist*, Editura Trei, București, 2009, p. 105.
- [19] Besançon, Alain, analysing Lenin’s personality, observed that the marxist ideology created a „prosthesis for his ego” in order to hide his void of identity, in *Originile intelectuale ale leninismului*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2007, translated by Lucreția Văcar, p. 244.
- [20] Dumitriu, Petru, *Cronică de familie*, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, București, 1956, vol. III, p. 599.
- [21] Serghi, Cella, *op.cit.*, p. 127.
- [22] *Ibidem*, p. 101.
- [23] Serghi, Cella, *op. cit.*, pp. 118 – 119.
- [24] Miroiu, Mihaela, *op.cit.*, p.188, Claudia Florentina Dobre, *Comunismul și drepturile femeii*, în *Memoria – revista gândirii arestate*, Nr. 68 – 69 (3 – 4/2009).
- [25] Serghi, Cella, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
- [26] Dumitriu, Petru, *op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 210.
- [27] *Ibidem*, p. 301.
- [28] Teodorescu, Lenuș, *Femeia de ieri, femeia de azi*, în *Femeia muncitoare*, seria II, an 7, nr.4, iunie 1946.
- [29] Dumitriu, Petru, *op.cit.*, p. 116.
- [30] Dumitriu, Petru, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 221.
- [31] Miroiu, Mihaela, *op.cit.*, p.192.
- [32] Serghi, Cella, *op.cit.*, p. 98.
- [33] Dumitriu, Petru, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 203.
- [34] Preda, Marin, *Ana Roșculeț*, în *Scrieri de tinerețe*, Editura Minerva, București, 1987, p. 201.

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