

AVOIDING THE COMMUNIST CENSORSHIP IN PROMOTING THE NATIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract

Censorship existed and still exists, in different forms, in all kinds of social regimes and in all the states of the world. The most harsh and destructive form of censorship was applied and is still being applied by the totalitarian regimes, among which Romania was a part of, during the period 1948-1989. At the beginning censorship and the political regime in Romania were imposed by the Soviet Union. Later on, the Romanian totalitarian regime promoted its own form of suppressing the freedom of speech for its citizens. After the formal abeyance of censorship in Romania, the majority of writers, journalists and artists appealed to self-censorship in order to not get into any conflict with the state's authorities. The censorship of the communist regime in Romania stimulated the creative imagination of a number of talented writers, who managed to find solution to publish their works, as well as the methods to promote Romanian culture worldwide.

Keywords: *worldwide censorship, censorship in Romania, self-censorship, totalitarianism, communism, forbidden writers, Romanian culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the communist regime in Romania was triggered by pressures on behalf of the Soviet Union (NISTOR, 2011), a situation which occurred in all the states occupied by the Red Army, during World War II. As a result, the regime in Bucharest was enslaved to Moscow and applied the "Stalinist prescriptions" for leadership and relationship with the population: terror, censorship, discreditation or elimination of the opponents and deprivation of liberty for all those who did not obey, the personality cult, etc.

Mass media was forced to represent the pick of the iceberg when it came to persuading the population to obey the orders of the single party (ILIESCU, 2015) and that is why Ilie Rad considers that "it was not concerned about the truth, but about "painting the lie"." (RAD, 2008)

Writers, poets and all artists were exposed to censorship in order to promote the politics of the single party (NISTOR, 2011). Some of the people who complied with this situation were rewarded with important positions in the party and in the state's institutions (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004), whereas those who opposed were sent to jail (ALEXA, 2017), deprived of some rights, forced to go into exile (DIMISIANU, 2007) or even physically abused.

Despite all these harsh conditions there were some literature and art creators whose works were highly appreciated not only in Romania, but also worldwide and they were given some prestigious international awards (CILINCĂ, 2016) or they were nominated for some international awards (ZIARE, 2016).

At present, there are controversies regarding the literature of the communist period and its creators. Some writers are contested (PENA, 2018) because the partially or totally obeyed the requirements of the single party (BĂDICĂ, 2019; UNGUREANU, 2015), a fact which triggered requests "to review" the assessment of the writers from that period (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004).

2. SHORT HISTORY OF WORLDWIDE AND ROMANIAN CENSORSHIP

2.1. Short history of worldwide censorship

There is no unanimously accepted definition of censorship, but the essence of the existing ones is approximatively the same and it refers to "a certain type of power relationship between two instances, a leading instance which holds control over the whole relationship and a led instance, subordinated to the first" (NISTOR, 2011). The censorship

relationship established between the leaders and the led refers to “the conditioning act of any political, religious, military or administrative entity of expressing/broadcasting information, opinions, ideas, in a larger sense, intellectual creations, which the public has the right to know, according to the values that it understands to protect, at a certain moment in time.” (PETCU, 1999)

Censorship appeared simultaneously in organising people into communities (NEWTN, 2010) and it played different roles, according to the historical period, political regime and the culture of that respective human society. At the same time, censorship has experienced, over time, multiple intensities and forms, “becoming indispensable to the functioning of the democratic societies and even to the contemporary ones.” (CREEAZA, n.d.)

In ancient Rome and Greece, the censor represented the attestor of good governing and his mission was considered honourable because he was observing certain moral principles established by the leaders of the community (BRITANNICA, n.d.). One of the most well-known examples of censorship during antiquity is that of Socrates who was sentenced, in 399 BC, to drink poison as he was accused of having corrupted the youth through his behaviour and ideas related to divinity, which were seen as opposed to the established moral norms (EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY, 2003).

In the Middle Ages censorship was preponderantly instituted on religious grounds. The leaders of the Catholic Church used censorship to discourage heresies and the deviations from its dogmas. Censorship was put into practice by the Inquisition, a structure which appeared during the time of Pope Gregor the 9th, in 1231 (ARIE, 2004) **and disappeared in 1908, during Pope Pius the 10th.** (CERGHIZAN, 2018)

The discovery of the print allowed the rapid multiplication of books and it facilitated people’s access to the ideas of the book authors. Therefore, in 1559, Pope Paul the 4th issued an order which established the first Index of forbidden books. The lists of forbidden books were updated 20 times, the last time in 1948 and abrogated in 1966 (UPSHER SMITH, 2016).

The Inquisition confiscated all forbidden books and burned them and their authors on

pile, as well as the promoters of some ideas who were considered heretics. Some of the best well-known personalities burned on pile by the Inquisition were Jacques de Molay –the great master of the Knights Templar (19.03.1314, Paris), Jan Hus – Czech reforming priest (1415), (COLUMBIA, n.d.) Ioana d’Arc (1431), (ABBOT, n.d.) Thomas Morus (1535) and Giordano Bruno (17.02.1600) (ACCOCELLA, 2008).

Burning the Maya codices, in the 16th century, was one of the greatest crimes of Inquisition in relationship to the culture and history of a people and even of humanity (WIKI, n.d.a).

Burning books and people who were considered harmful was a practice used not only by the Catholic Church. History records the burning of some books, including the library in which they were kept in China, in 221 BC. A similar situation appeared in England, in 1683, when the library of Oxford was burnt, following the king’s order (THEDAILYBEAST, 2010).

The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century – Nazism, Communism, and extremist Islamism – destroyed numerous books which contained ideas that were incompatible or even hostile to the fascist, communist or Islamic-extremism ideologies.(BOISSONEAULT,2017) In Soviet Russia and its satellite states censorship revolved around the Stalinist and the Gorbaciovian style, going from “the temporary thaw” instituted by Hruscirov and the come back to the harsh style of Brejnev. (LOUDIS, 2017)

Censorship was not imposed only by laws and specific legislation. The states’ authorities found solutions to limit or even forbid the printing of books and newspapers by controlling and forbidding paper import, a manner in which the emperors of the Holy Roman-German Empire acted during the Thirsty Years’ War. (1618-1648) (HISTORYLAPSE, n.d.).

Euripide (*Suppliants*, 438-442) (FIESER, 2017) was the first one who supported the freedom of speech and the first abolish of censorship took place in Great Britain, in 1694, when the 1643 law entitled “The Licensing Act” was cancelled, following John Milton’s campaign, whose climax was his speech in the Parliament, entitled “Areopagitica.” (MILTON, 1644)

Although Sweden was the first country to issue a law related to guaranteeing the freedom

of speech, in 1766 (WEIBULL, n.d.), followed by Denmark and Norway, in 1770 (ÖRTENHED & WENNERBERG, 2017), the best well-known normative acts on this topic are The first amendment to the American Constitution (1787) (GOVINFO, 1992) and the Declaration of the National Gathering of Revolutionary France (1789) (WEBER, 2015).

In the 19th century most of the Western European states formally gave up censorship, but they also used other forms of limitation and even of forbidding the promotion of the ideas which were seen as negative for their citizens. For example: libraries were allowed to refuse the books whose content was harmful to the youth. In the 20th century most democratic states limit the freedom of speech using laws that: forbid infantile pornography, forbid the broadcasting of speeches which urge to hate, terrorism, irredentism, the influencing of national sovereignty, incitement to public disorder etc (LAW LIBRARY, 2019). Apparently, these limitations are contrary to the principles included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of human rights. In reality, the limitations are based on article 29 from the above-mentioned declaration, meaning that "the practice of the freedom of speech must not break the rights and liberties of other people, the rights and liberties cannot be exerted in contradiction with the purposes and principles of the United Nations" (STURGES, 2006).

History mentions the reintroduction of censorship in the democratic states through special laws, usually during armed conflicts. However, there are other subjects besides those previously mentioned, which are constantly censored, even in the most democratic societies, either through classical deletion, or through the lack of financing. For example, "Great Britain has often censored the conflict with Northern Ireland on BBC, Channel 4 and ITV. In 1985, in France, following a court decision, all the copies of Jean-Bedel Bokassa's self-biography were confiscated and burned, because of the defamatory passages addressed to the French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing. The United States suppressed, including through the use of censorship, the anti-slavery movements which will form the Confederation, before the Civil

War, respectively the supporters of syndicalism and of socialism" etc (IONICĂ, 2015).

In Turkey, censorship is preserved even today through the 1991 antiterrorist law, which arguments the necessity of this measure through the protection of the national security against the Kurdistan Labour Party, considered to be a terrorist one (NEWTH, 2010).

The Franch Bernard Noel considers that, at present, the totalitarian systems use both the censorship of text, which he calls *Censure*, and the censorship of meaning - *Sensure*- which "deprives of meaning both the imaginary excess and the rational values, in a saddening synonymy with the purposes of the totalitarian system: it benumbs the critical spirit "occupying" it with images of the spectacle." (IACOB, 2003) The same author also states that "censorship in nowadays press, without being a phenomenon controlled by a certain organisation, refers to at least two aspects: either to a proper limitation regarding ethical responsibility (a sort of self-censorship due to a professional lack of culture), or to pragmatic forms, of legislative or economic nature." (IACOB, 2003)

2.1.3. Short history of censorship in Romania

One of the first studies on censorship in Romania belongs to Radu Rosetti, a study "dedicated to the censorship institution and to corresponding legislation from Moldova during the years, an approach published by the author in the first decade of the past century. (VLAD, 2002)

After 1960, there are other points of view published, referring to theatre censorship, belonging to Ioan Massof, (MASSOF, 1961) and book censorship between the 17th and 19th century, in an article written by Cornelia Papacostea Danielopolu and Lidia Demeny (PAPACOSTEA DANIELOPOLU & DEMENY, 1985).

After 1989 many books and articles related to the history of censorship in communist Romania were published, among which I mention: Adrian Marino, *Politics and culture-For a new Romanian culture*, Polirom, Iasi, 1996, Doina Jela, *The night news bulletin*, Polirom Publishing house, 1997; Bogdan Ficeac, *Communist censorship and the formation of "the new individual"*, Nemira Publishing house, 1999; Marian Petcu, *Power and*

culture. *A history of censorship*, Polirom Publishing house, Iasi, 1999; Paul Caravia, scientific coordinator, *Forbidden thinking, Censored writings, Romania 1945-1989*, Enciclopedica Publishing house, Bucharest, 2000; Ciprian Lupșe, *Adrian Marino: Censorship in Romania - Introductory historical sketch*, Aius Publishing house, Craiova, 2000; Radu Marin Mocanu, *Communist censorship (Documents)*, Albatros Publishing house, Bucharest, 2001; Virginia Blînda, *Reading and censorship in the Romanian principalities, Books on the move - the temptation of modernity in the Romanian principalities (1830-1850)*, 2002; Adrian Marino, *Freedom and censorship in Romania. The beginnings*, Iasi, Polirom, 2005; Emilia Șercan, *The cult of secrecy. Censorship mechanisms in the communist press*. Polirom Publishing House, 2007; Liviu Malița, *Romanian theatre under the communist censorship*, Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing house, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, Eugen Negrici, *Romanian literature under communism. 1948-1964*, second edition, completely updated, Cartea Românească Publishing house, 2010.

Ovidiu Pecican believes that “in the middle eve [...] in the territories inhabited by Romanians [...] there was a political, moral, religious and ideological censorship [...] fluctuant, hesitating, incoherent.” (PECICAN, 2003) To support his conclusion, professor Pecican offers some political arguments (“the bedroom had to represent the venue for some mobile and flexible political games [...] an attitude which hindered the development of some drastic norms whose application was to immediately be put into practice”), administrative-religious (“there were not enough priests [...] and they couldn’t handle the needs of every community [...] the boyars in the royal council were the servants of the lord and of the state, at the same time”) and cultural (“the majority of the clergy was not able to read, poorly trained and it did not strictly notice the behavioural rules prescribed by the church”). (PECICAN, 2003)

Emil and Letiția Turdeanu note that in the Romanian countries there was also an index of forbidden books “from the 14th century” edited by Ieremia, a Bulgarian priest, who condemned a number of apocryphal writings. Although its circulation among Romanians can be demonstrated only beginning with 1667-1669,

since the date of the oldest Romanian editorial office [...] this index could have orally circulated even prior to this year.” (TURDEANU & TURDEANU-CARTOJAN, 1995)

According to Ciprian Lupșe, who quotes Adrian Marino, in the Romanian principalities, censorship was mainly applied by the Church, during the 16th and 17th centuries, in accordance with the European trend of that time and this led to “the development and proliferation of the indexes of forbidden book” (LUPȘE, 2003). In Transylvania, starting with 1559, the Index of lost books approved by Pope Paul the 4th was applied. (ILIS, 2011)

In Moldova and Wallachia, a Slavonic Index was applied, issued in Moscow, in 1646, one that was not meant to end up in lay hands. (LUPȘE, 2003; ILIS, 2011)

After 1787, the reforms initiated by emperor Josef the second, also referred to censorship which become lay and religious and, in Wallachia, it was applied by a committee that worked under the direct authority of the government. The list of forbidden books was comprised of 800 titles, compared to 5000, as the previous one. The books which contained pornographic, antichrist, superstitious and dangerous political content were banned. Moreover, the orthodox religious books edited in Moldova and Wallachia were also forbidden. (LUPȘE, 2003; ILIS, 2011)

Virginia Blînda stated that censorship was officially introduced in the Romanian principalities starting with the year 1832 (BLÎNDA, n.d.), an opinion confirmed by Laurențiu Vlad: “In Wallachia, the censorial regulation took effect starting from 1833, following its publication in *The Official Bulletin* (II, extraordinary supplement, 1, pp. 21-23), signed by Barbu Știrbei.” (VLAD, 2002)

Some of the best well-known censorship actions in Moldova refer to the banning in 1840 of the “Dacia literară” journal led by Mihail Kogălniceanu, because in the content of an article the adage “the problems of the fish appear from the head”, an allusion to the ruler Mihail Sturza, (CREEAZA, n.d., PLATON, 1974, CHELCU, 2017) and in 1844 there was the “the truncation of the article-programme and of the title of the periodical *The flourishing, scientific and literary*

paper), (CHELCU, 2017) (a title belonging to the authors V. Alecsandri, Ion Ghica, M. Kogălniceanu and C. Negruzzi), which became "Scientific and literary paper," following the intervention of the censor. (GHICA, 1967)

Besides the censorship practiced by the political power, in the Romanian principalities and later on in pre-war Romania there was a "censorship of value," (IVAN & PETRESCU, 2018) an activity which belonged to the editors and chief editors of various publications. This type of censorship turned into self-censorship during the communist period.

After the end of World War II, "according to the settlements of the great victorious powers [...] Romania entered in the influence sphere of Soviet Russia. According to the vision of the communist parties which were ruled by Moscow, literature and culture in general represented conquering or consolidating tools for the political power" (COMISIA PREZIDENTIALĂ PENTRU ANALIZA DICTATURII COMUNISTE DIN ROMÂNIA, 2007).

After the communists came into power in Romania censorship was applied following the directions received from Moscow, (NISTOR, 2011) and this is why the 1948-1953 period was named by some critics "The Siberia of the spirit" or the era of the most compact dogmatism. (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004) In order to direct the censors, The Ministry of Internal Affairs published the volume *Forbidden publications up to May 1, 1948*, which was comprised of 8000 titles, and during the following period 2000 more titles were added. (LOVINESCU, 2014)

Up to Stalin's death in March 1953, censorship was extremely harsh, affecting not only the literary creations, but also those of the other arts, including their authors. Some of them were deprived of their freedom because they were seen as "enemies of the people", others were not allowed to publish anymore and others were forced to emigrate. Even after 1953 there were some trials for some writers because the decision-makers of the single party were interested in eliminating the soviet influence and not to set up liberalism in Romania. In other words, "censorship closed only one eye, and it was ready to reopen it at any time." (MANOLESCU, 2014)

The "thaw" promoted by Hrușciov, the new general secretary of the Soviet Union, both in relationship to his own people and with satellite states was also reflected in literature. The "thaw period" in Romania lasted until 1971 when Ceaușescu, following a visit in China and North Korea, ordered to "July thesis" to be published, inspired by Mao's cultural revolution and by the relationship manner of the single Korean party with the people ("the improvement of education and political action of the Romanian communist party"; the intensification of the political-ideological education in schools and universities, in the children, youth and students' organizations; the expansion of the political propaganda using the radio, TV, publishing houses, cinemas, theatre, opera, the artists' unions, promoting a "militant revolutionary" character in the artistic productions" etc.). (ILIESCU, 2015) The directions included in "the July thesis" dissatisfied the writers and some of them officially manifested their revolt during a meeting they had with N. Ceaușescu. Most of the people who revolted suffered later on.

Both Romanian and foreign authors who dealt with the subject of censorship in East European countries stated that restricting the freedom of speech and the access to information for Romanian citizens was more severe than in the other communist countries TV broadcast time was reduced to two hours and most of this time was spent praising the accomplishments of the party and the personality cult of the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu.

The festival "The song of Romania", organised with the stated purpose of illustrating the accomplishments of the country and of its citizens, generated the illusion of the freedom of speech and equality among the amateur and professional music and poetry creators. Some post December literary critics considered that the Romanian folklore, promoted by the festival "The song of Romania" represented a fake because it was "in fact dedicated to the personality cult of Ceaușescu and to the primitive nationalism." (BĂDICĂ, 2019)

Some well-known writers and plastic artists agreed to "regiment themselves" and to create works that promoted the politics of the communist party and this brought them some important

positions in the party and in the various cultural institutions of the country, social positions which were awarded very important privileges. (BORCEA, 2013)

In 1977, the Romanian Communist Party declaratively gave up censorship, because in reality, it continued to exist and to be applied in publishing houses, editorial offices and by the leaders of the cultural institutions and everything was guarded by the Security. (CARAVIA, 2000)

According to Andreea Iacob, the media was “a kind of castrato dog” whose roles “were clearly drawn.” (IACOB, 2003) Even if, at a declarative level, the single party had given up censorship, one could not talk about “an authentic freedom of the press”, but about a hidden control over it. Anyway, the press during the communist period had to faithfully reflect ideological line of the party.” (LAZĂR, 2012)

3. THE MECHANISMS OF CENSORSHIP IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

At the beginning Romanian censors, as well as those from the other East European countries, had to put into practice the orders coming from Moscow, on June 2, 1947, which asked for the development of a cultural-educational activity meant to generate “complete antipathy regarding churches [...] or to contribute to the elimination from schools of the teachers who were very popular [...]. History was to show the baseness of the kings and the struggle of the oppressed people [...] faculties were to have students coming from the lowest social categories... . (NISTOR, 2011)

The censors or “the people with scissors,” (DIMISIANU, 2007) as most of the authors call them, were specialised on various fields and struggled to apply the politics of the communist party, controlling everything that was about to be published. (PREDA, 2014)

Iulian Bodea notes that censorship is executed in two stages – the preventive stage (before the publishing) and the post-publication stage. Nicolae Manolescu also considers that there are at least two types of different censors: one of an ideological type which decided “what works and what don’t” and a laxer one, at a certain

moment it lost its ideological basis. (MANOLESCU, 2014)

Censorship acted coordinated with propaganda and security. Propaganda used the party and mass media documents in order to influence public opinion. Security imposed the party’s politics through physical and mental torture and censorship influenced the intellect, blocking and abducting it “slowly for the purposes directed by the party.” (MOCANU, 2001) Basically censorship had the purpose to determine “by means of successive pressures the development of a literature compatible with the exigences and whims of the communist party.” (MALITA, 2009)

“Censorship simultaneously played two roles: a negative one, that of forbidding and purging, and a positive one, that of creating, through an ideological selection, a “literary front”, “a scientific front” through which new elites are produced.” (FICEAC, 1999) The positive role of censorship is, according to Ana Selejean, a betrayal of intellectuals because “that particular elite was converted to the party’s politics and it manifests orderly, loyal and devoted.” (SELEJAN, 2005)

In order to decide the acceptance or the refusal of books and publications, the censors guided themselves according to a brochure edited by the Culture Council and according to lists of words and phrases, periodically updated by the same organism, lists that referred to “the enemies of communism [...] counterrevolutionaries [...] the ones who died in the battle against communism [...] irredentism [...] chauvinism [...] Nazism [...] monarchy [...] forbidden cults – Pentecostals and Jehovah’s Witnesses, pornography, erotism” Antonescu, the wealth of the Romanians, Bessarabia, writers, dissidents and refugees etc.” (CONSTANTINESCU, n.d.)

Unlike other states, Chile, for example, during the dictatorship of Pinochet, in Romania, the forbidden books and publications were not destroyed but kept at the “S fond” (secret or special), which possesses even today some million copies. At the beginning, the “S fond” included the works of N. Iorga, Eminescu, Alecsandri, Simion Mehedinți, A.D. Xenopol, Constantin C. Giurescu and of the writers who had emigrated in the West etc. (CERNAT, 2009)

4. METHODS USED BY ROMANIAN WRITERS IN ORDER TO AVOID/OUTWIT CENSORSHIP

The opinions referring to the methods used by Romanian writers to avoid/outwit censorship are different and sometimes even contradictory. If some literary critics appreciate the writers' efforts, materialised in creativity, intelligence and literary techniques in order to avoid/outwit the censors, others consider that everything that was written during that period can be included in what they called "the Siberia of the soul"

Augustin Buzura considers that "Romania was not far from a "Siberia of the soul" like Ioan Petru Culianu said because "Those from my generation who – I dare to say – in extremely difficult situations managed to change the face of Romanian culture, we first thought about the country and then to our humble existence." (BUZURA, 2011)

Augustin Buzura also considered that writers did not have any other solution in relationship with censorship than that of changing their texts or of giving up their publishing. The same author also wrote that sometimes one could negotiate with the older and wiser censors, but in the limits of the regulations. (LESCU, 2018) Changing the texts meant avoiding the critics of the regime and of its leaders, respectively self-censor, regarded as being even worse than censor because "it meant a humiliation which was difficult to accept, a daily halving, in each family and in the society [...] it represented a general alienation at a personal conscious level and collective unconscious level, and each word could be interpreted as hostile and it was immediately remembered by an informer who forwarded it to the Security". (PASCU-OGLINDĂ, 2016)

A similar point of view with that of A. Buzura belongs to Ana Codrea-Rado: in order to be an artist in communist Romania one has to comply with the requirements of the party or to use different subterfuges in order to avoid them. (CODREA-RADO, 2017)

The literary techniques used by the Romanian writers in order to deceive the vigilance of the censors are seen not just as artistic forms of expression, but also truth experimented in the

cosmic space ("the ideal research environment for the effects of censorship on the poetic expression and literary culture" (FANDSEN & MITROI SPRENGER, 2013)), aimed to help them survive. The successes of the people letters in their fight against censorship determines Naomi Frandsen and Anca Mitroi Sprenger to draw the conclusion that in this way censorship also had an unintentional effect, that of stimulating and strengthening the Romanian poets." (FANDSEN & MITROI SPRENGER, 2013)

Romanian poets tried to write "authentic poetry" in order not to get into conflict with the orders of the single party. When they approach the political field and criticised the communist regime, they used an esopical language, rich in metaphors, double meanings and allusions, which sent coded messages to the readers. (FANDSEN & MITROI SPRENGER, 2013)

Another method adopted by many writers was the avoidance of the approach of the politico-ideological field, by using aestheticism (which does not have to be understood as "formalism, but by a cult of values" (MANOLESCU, 2014), writing novels and poetry for children and youth, approaching some historical subjects (subjects different from those include in what some critics name protocronism), which become, according to some people, a doctrine of the communist party which promotes the superiority of the Romanian culture in relationship to the international one (ADAM, 2018)) and science-fiction. In case some politico-ideological subjects were addressed, the writers used an esopical language (TERIAN, 2012) or they used codes to hide the message that they wanted to present to their readers. This is how the novel with keys appeared and they presented an incredible development, like in no other period of the Romanian literature." (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004)

According to the critic Eudgen Negrici, self-irony represents a way of "exerting recording techniques, a space which goes beyond the strict control of censorship." (NEGRICI, 2003) The same author also notes that "the stimulation and fulfilling of the obligations towards the party [...] you just have to fulfil certain formalities" (for example to approach the topic of "class struggle") in order to be allowed to be yourself." (NEGRICI, 2003)

The literary critic E. Negrici also mentions “the interest for strange behaviours, for new activities and for strange individuals will give birth (under the signature of E. Barbu, N. Velea, F. Neagu, D. R. Popescu, Nicuță Tănase etc.) to a less innocent literature than it first seemed. Even the ethnographic picturesque, used in proses about gypsies (E. Barbu), tartars (Z. Stancu), isolated communities from areas that are less in contact with civilisation (F. Neagu) also represent an insidious way of avoiding the major topics and the official typologies.” (NEGRICI, 2003)

The writers whose parents or relatives stemmed from the bourgeoisie, aristocracy or clergy or the ones who had a legionary background and had certain limitations when it come to the social affirmation in the new arrangement, for example, they were not allowed to go to university, chose the solution of publishing their works using a pseudonym (Ana Blandiana is the pseudonym of Otiliei Valeria Coman, (CILINCĂ, 2016) daughter of a priest, Nora Iuga is the pseudonym of Eleonorei Almosnino, (MAREȘ, 2011) Vintilă Horia -the pseudonym of Vintilă Caftangioglu, legionary, Nina Cassian is the pseudonym of Renee Annie Cassian (IONESCU, 2016) etc.)

5. WRITERS WHO WON OR WERE NOMINATED FOR INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

The value of the works of the Romanian artists and writers was acknowledged and appreciated both in Romania and in other countries and they were nominated for prestigious awards and translations of their works in other languages.

During 1965-1989 the following individuals were offered the Johann Gottfried von Herder international award, offered by the University of Vienna: 4 prose writers (T. Arghezi, Z. Stancu, Eugen Barbu and András Sütő), 4 poets (Nichita Stănescu, E. Jebeleanu, Ana Blandiana and Maria Banuș), 2 literary critics (Adrian Marino and Zoe Dumitrescu Bușulenga), 2 folklorists (Mihai Pop and Gheorghe Vrăbie - folklorist and literary historian), 2 composers (M. Jora and Zeno Vancea), 2 historians (C. Daicoviciu and Emil Condurachi),

one art historian (Virgil Vătășianu), a linguist and philologist (Alexandru Rosetti) and one sculpture (Constantin Lucaci). (WIKI, 2016)

Vintilă Horia was selected to be offered the Goncourt (France) award, in 1960, but this prize was not awarded because of some disputes, (WIKI, n.d.b) but he received the Il Conciliatore (Milano, 1961), Bravo (Madrid, 1972), Dante Alighieri (Florence, 1981) awards.” (VINTILĂ, n.d.)

Another way of appreciating the value of the works of Romanian writers was their nomination to prestigious prizes. For example, the poet Lucian Blaga was nominated, in 1956, for a Nobel for literature, but the Romanian state did not agree, considering him a bourgeois. (PITIGOI, 2011) A similar nomination was awarded to the poet Tudor Arghezi, in 1965, but the prize was finally awarded to Mihail Șolohov. (ZIARE, 2016)

Translating the works of Romanian writers into other languages represents an act of appreciation and recognition for their international value. Among the names of the writers with international recognition we chose that of Norman Manea, “an author well-known and valued everywhere. This is proved by the numerous translations of his books, and the echoes that he received in France, Italy, Germany, America, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic and even in China.” (OBSERVATOR CULTURAL, 2016)

Referring to the value of the literary works of Romanian writers, the literary critic Alex Ștefănescu states that “where Eminescu is, is the seat of the world’s poetry. Where Nichita Stănescu is, is the capital of the universal poetry. When Nichita Stănescu was alive there were ordinary Serbians, not poets who learned the Romanian language in order to read Nichita Stănescu. The capital of the world’s poetry moved to Bucharest due to Nichita Stănescu.” (ZIARUL LUMINA, 2008)

6. CONCLUSIONS

The assessments of the Romanian literature during the communist period made after December 1989 include a large range of completely negative opinions (“minor literature,” “cultural blank,” “a Siberia of the spirit,” “progress through imitation” (RAD, 2009) etc.)

and some positive, almost superlative ones (“the writers deserve to occupy a front place at the negotiation table” (MANOLESCU, 2014), the writers “changed the face of the Romanian culture” (BUZURA, 2011) etc.). There are also some balanced assessments (censorship allowed you to be yourself “if you simulated your obligations towards the party,” (NEGRICI, 2003) “the damned communist censorship refined our style” (MAREȘ, 2011) and “it forced us to write in a particular manner,” (MANOLESCU, 2014) “the blank cultural thesis during the communist period” (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004) is denied by the value of the works written during that period), some of them coming from some foreign writers (censorship also had “an unintentional effect of stimulating and strengthening the Romanian poets.” (FANDSEN & MITROI SPRENGER, 2013).

According to N. Manolescu “Communism was defeated not only because of the political, economic and social errors, but also by the written word, the writers being not supervised and persecuted, but also winners.” (MANOLESCU, 2014)

Nicolae Breban and Ana Blandiana believe that their valuable works will resist and the others will not. (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2004)

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