

Title: An Ideological Reading of Romanian Realism in the 20th Century: Liviu Rebreanu, Marin Preda, Petru Dumitriu

Summary: The work aims to reevaluate the canonical and didactic interpretations of classical texts from Romanian literary history, specifically those of Liviu Rebreanu, Marin Preda, and Petru Dumitriu. The main focus is on tracing the evolution of the realist perspective, with its defining elements, throughout two stages of "modernity": the liberal and communist eras.

Realism, as defined by Georg Lukács and expanded by scholars such as Lucien Goldmann, Franco Moretti, and Frederic Jameson, is viewed as an established epic genre within the capitalist system, serving as a critical recording of class tensions, ideological struggles, and the evolution of popular classes. While considering Eric Auerbach's perspective on realism, the reading proposed by Lukács is globally recognized in academia, taking into account parallel developments brought about by major historical changes like the Russian Revolution and the establishment of communism in the entire Central and Eastern European bloc after World War II. The work also suggests a "normalization" of the view on socialist realism, dismissing it summarily as an "ideological-literary" failure, yet associating it seamlessly with masterpieces like "Family Chronicle" or "Morometii". Instead of socialist realism, the term "plain realism" is proposed, acknowledging the mutations imposed by a different type of modernity initiated by the Eastern European political regime post-war.

As we move towards Eastern Europe, following Franco Moretti's evolutionary model, bourgeois realism, which was consolidated in the 19th century in Western Europe, undergoes changes in perspective. In the case of Liviu Rebreanu's novel "Ion", the perspective is that of the Transylvanian petit bourgeoisie in a declining empire. This perspective is crucial for understanding the construction of the image and voice of the peasant, as well as comprehending the complexity of the overall "objective voice" construction. Major political changes after 1945 bring about significant modifications in Romanian realist conventions. Hasty anti-communist criticisms categorize works by Petru Dumitriu or Marin Preda as either "compromised" or "uncompromised". The aim is to track the changing realist conventions prompted by social and political shifts, and to delineate the new realist perspectives, with the entry of the voices of the "dispossessed" - the voices of peasants and workers - in the new novel supported by post-war popular regimes. Therefore, realism is seen in its historical evolution, along with the alterations imposed by its dispersion in the global system, as a class tension, complemented by elements of narratology and critical theory.

The main objective of this work is to challenge the hegemony, established over the last five decades, of the exclusively aesthetic interpretations of these significant authors. This is achieved by carefully examining how they encoded and recorded various stages of Romanian modernity, mapping out this social space. The strictly aesthetic reading is not just one version among many, but it is already a harmful method that destroys vital innovative elements in the works of these three authors. Each of them presents a different form of realism precisely because they are intimately tied to the class rhetorics that produced them.

The method of analysis varies depending on the author, the historical period analyzed, and the way the work was conceived. The chapter on Liviu Rebreanu employs "crossed" methods to capture the creation of the realistic objective convention and the evolution of the petit-bourgeois narrator, from one haunted by marginality within an empire, to the precarious petit bourgeoisie in the Principalities or post-Union Romania of December 1, 1918. Biographical details, journal entries, testimonies, and letters help shape a Rebreanu who is highly conscious of the technical changes brought about by realist methods for various reasons: commercial, ideological, and even political opportunism. Therefore, the chapter on Rebreanu occasionally takes on a monographic character, with certain passages involving theoretical speculation, sociological inferences, etc. The chapters on Marin Preda and Petru Dumitriu are much more focused on the ideological evolution of the authors, as their negotiation with the communist system is what also changes the realist conventions and the perspective from which reality is recorded. In Preda's case, the contradiction between the critical observation of a rising communist society, initially optimistic, leading to the "disillusionment" phase in his later creative period, is very important. It seems we have a paradox here: Preda provides the platform, the matrix from which anti-communist critique will develop in novels like "The Most Beloved of Earthly Beings", while being a dedicated communist actor, which can be observed in his journalism. His anti-communist legacy is largely a construct of his admirers and, from a theoretical and ideological perspective, of the estheticizing sixties current. On the other hand, in the case of Dumitriu, another ideological paradox is constructed over time: in just two decades, he produces an important work both communist and anti-communist, but the two are linked by invisible threads that actually offer subtle, profound explanations and motivations for the abuses of the 1950s. This is also the reason why the two chapters on Preda and Dumitriu follow an ideological decoding, understanding the creative process along with ideological friends (Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, Paul Georgescu) and confrontations with the censorship institution. Moreover, they are constructed following a polemic thread aimed against anti-communist reductionism, some ideological directives, the progressivism of the view on the female character, for example, imposing in some texts extremely interesting and unique characters, unprecedented in the history of our literature.

In the Appendices, three case studies have been added to complement the critical analysis in the body of the work: a reading of the chapters dedicated to these authors in school manuals; a brief overview of the most important film adaptations and the associated ideological distortions; and an analysis using the same methods as in the chapters on Preda and Dumitriu, in a condensed formula, of the realist-socialist dimensions, but also the mannerist slips in Eugen Barbu's work. For the sake of the demonstration's flow, I have preferred to reduce the space dedicated to quotes from literary works, many of which are well-known to the specialist reader, as well as to the general public. Where the texts are less familiar, I have increased the space dedicated to quoting the works. I have trimmed down the critical bibliography and the works studied to the points of interest in the work, focusing primarily on critics and theorists concerned with the intersection of literary theory and ideological criticism, sociology and literary interpretation. The intention of the work is not an exhaustive coverage of the critical corpus associated with these authors.

The west-east translation of realism as a literary genre, from the classical bourgeois perspective of 19th-century realism, towards a petit-bourgeois perspective from the semi-periphery of the capitalist world-

system, is the focus of the chapter on Liviu Rebreanu. Then, the shift in perspective generated by the spotlight on the masses, peasants, and workers, after 1948, is the focus of the analyses in the works of authors like Marin Preda, Petru Dumitriu, and Eugen Barbu. The thesis brings, we hope, new interpretations of canonical authors; furthermore, it should shed new light on their contributions in a global literary system regarding the mutations of the realist genre generated by a literary field constructed in a communist society.