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**ANA BLANDIANA – A PORTRAIT OF THE
INTELLECTUAL IN HER TIME**

– Abstract –

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Key-words: Ana Blandiana, authenticity, aesthetical canon, G. Călinescu, censorship, CNSAS, aesthetical compromise, communism, literary convention, dissidence, expressivity, the phenomenology of memory, radio „Free Europe”, feminism, generation of the 60’s, grotesque, ideology, intellectuals, irony, history of Romanian literature, oral history, drawer literature, literature for children, post-war Romanian literature, memory, New Historicism, parody, gender perspective, socialist realism, power relations, artistic representation, resistance through culture, aesthetic subversion, memoirs, poetic parable, Securitate, literary sociology, surveillance, forgetfulness.

ABSTRACT

The starting point of this thesis is a paradox, with regard to the writer Ana Blandiana: while in the discussions regarding the 1960's literary canon her name is ever-present and has the appreciation of the public space, in the didactic canon, Ana Blandiana continues to be the writer preferred by elementary or middle school teachers, owing to the poems which focus on Arpagiu the tomcat or to those poems descriptive on the surface and which can still be found in the auxiliary didactic materials for the preparation of the National Evaluation at the end of the eighth grade. As to the writer's reflection in the academic canon, the way in which Ana Blandiana's image is assembled, in the exegesis, is illustrative of the inertia and idiosyncrasies of the post-1989 literary criticism: while, before 1989, the literary critics approached strictly the aesthetic element of the works, which is full explainable because of the socio-political background, the later critical reception has relied – more often than not – either on the retrieval of the reviews written in the communist period or on a formal contextualization unrelated to the work.

The main hindrances encountered by the critical reception are the following: readings flawed by the mix-up between the writer's biological gender and the literary text, the 1960's critics' (especially) pathological adhesion to short-lived sensitivities, to the value judgment simultaneous with the printing of the volume, and then – the transformation of these unrevised observations in versions of the post-war Romanian literature –, the lack of a coherent monographic approach, in the writer's case, as well as the preconception relating to the critically assigned hierarchy of genres, which means Ana Blandiana is not acknowledged as a prose writer, but as a poet who *also* writes prose – with the default critical opinions of this inaccurate classification.

All these aspects call for an unbiased reconsideration of both Ana Blandiana's work and her intellectual portrait. Subsequently, the general objective of the research will be a revision of the history of literature from the viewpoint of new historicism, for the purpose of restoring of complex image of the intellectual in the (post)totalitarian climate, toward a double commitment – in literature and in the agora.

Thus, the first target of this investigation is the approach of the concept of "*feminine literature*". Since one of the main complaints relating to Ana Blandiana is concerned with her writing's lack of femininity, in parallel with the writer's marginalization by her inclusion in the chapters of "feminine literature" of the histories of the Romanian literature, a double digression – in the feminist literature and in the last century's histories of the Romanian

literature – reveals the (dys)functionality of this theoretical construct based on the confusion between the writer's gender and the characteristics of the literary product.

While second wave feminism in the West was fighting a critical canon resistant to such reading grids, in communist Romania, a largely male critical group analyzed Ana Blandiana's work from the angles we could call as those of a feminism *à rebours*. The critics seek "femininity"-related themes and engage in a permanent pursuit of a constantly postponed or rationalized sensuality. Against this backdrop, the writer's recanting of her own gender identity can have a twofold explanation: either the poet rejects or even inhibits her femininity in the name of the generational battle, thus illustrating, purposely or not, the feminist model of the first wave, namely the suffragette-poet, the equal of man in the city of poets, or Ana Blandiana's aesthetic programme exceeds the feminist polemics by the removal of the "feminine" – "masculine" binomial.

Unfortunately, we note that feminist approaches avoid female writers and literature in totalitarian spaces, by choosing to focus on a criticism of the ideology that abuses the woman by a double full-time employment – as a mother and as a worker. Although a feminist approach would be more productive in such a context, with the woman being twice "*the other*" – as a woman and as a writer – in general, feminist (re)readings take literature as a products of a *de jure* democracy, unexposed to ideological censorship. Nevertheless, feminist approaches signal the circumscription of literature written by women in the sphere of weak discourses, an idiosyncrasy also seen in the Romanian critical discourse.

The starting point is given by Mihaela Miroiu's notes on the failure of the second feminist wave in the communist environment. Since communist feminism comes under an androcentric model, we need to see the extent to which the literary criticism and the mainly masculine critical canon are feminist or, on the contrary, sexist, when they demand that a female poet write like a woman would.

Women's emancipation in literature is initially distinguished quantitatively, but, at the same time, the dominating discourses and practices act subversively, toward the self-identification of feminine literature with what it is claimed to be "*women's writing*", as remnant of unconsumed masculine experiences.

To understand how communist and post-communist literary criticism relates to feminine literature we need a quantitative, qualitative and chronologic analysis of the discourse on this literature, in the inter-war, post-war and post-communist literary histories. The objective of this approach is to reveal how critical preconceptions and *pre*-writings in the

reception of texts written by women are continued in the post-war period, despite the professionalization of writing.

Since the 1960's Romanian literary criticism is not at all the prisoner of an *anxiety of influence*, but rather of a *need* of influence, the critical discourse reconnects to Călinescu's, from which it borrows the substance and, thus, indistinct concept of "feminine literature" and the entire related universe – the penchant for interiority, sensuousness, drama. While, by proclaiming a strictly *aesthetic* grid of analysis, G. Călinescu applies an *identity* grid that turns into a means of aesthetic value judgment, the 1960's critical institution borrows Călinescu's confusion and assimilates the identity grid to aesthetic (de)valuation. The phrase *feminine lyric poetry* is, therefore, sexist, it fills a territory of aesthetically valid poetry which is not produced by men. *Feminine lyric poetry* and *femininity* in the poetry written by women are a modality of the critical institution to reconfirm that masculine poetry keeps its cerebral, rational, androcentric superiority as compared to the more recent feminine lyrical writing which, however, does not have a permit to enter the city unless it reports the *other* poetic experiences unconsumed by and impossible for the "poet", namely the feminine and female experiences.

Therefore, Ana Blandiana remains an "unintelligible" genre, one of the rare cases where "women's literature" cannot find its match in "feminine literature" – a field of literature which requires either the intentionality of a position, *the auctorial assumption*, or the existence of an *aesthetic grid* that could overcome its inherent sexism by the validity of its application to the "small universes" in the literature written by some men, without suggesting any castration complex.

The second chapter starts from the premise that approaching Romanian literature written during communism requires the transition to another type of discourse. The main burden of this discourse is the coalescence of analysis criteria: text analysis should reflect its aesthetic value. The author's biography, if committed to a potential deal with the Power, creates doubt in relation to the aesthetic side of the literature written by the respective author. On the contrary, the writer's dissidence is likely to absolutize and exacerbate the aesthetic value of the work. Moreover, inter-generational competition may influence the value judgements of a writer's work if the researcher chooses to self-define in relation to the generation they analyze. Last but not least, the discourse *about* the literature written in totalitarianism is largely captive to Manichean axiological judgements, where the writers and the Power are perceived monolithically: either tolerated by or subject to a Power that censors or rewards them according to their resistance to compromise.

Thus, the Romanian literature of the communist period establishes its “resistance to inquiry”, as labeled by Jean Starobinski. Based on the resistance of the object to inquiry, a constructive analysis of the Romanian literature in the communist period should first overcome the preconception of the writer-Power Manicheism and pursue the phenomenology of the literature-political factor relationships, as stated by Eugen Negrici.

A schematization of censorship from a typological and – especially – historical angle is helpful to the approach of the literary phenomenon. The information taken from censorship studies in various fields retrieves a timeline of censorship which could integrate both the apparently minor and the social event, in order to reestablish the key-moments in the evolution of the censorship institution, the areas in which apparent arbitrariness operates and the reflexes in the field of the literary imaginary. One of the working hypotheses – as theorized by Liliana Corobca – is that the writers-censorship relationship acted in at least three directions: the rewriting of the cultural past, the writing of the auctorial present, the pre-writing of the identity future, all of them circumscribed to an institutional framework in which the adaptation to the literary policies was directly proportional to the access to resources and to prestige – as argued by Ioana Macrea Toma. Replicated to the scale of the entire society, censorship focused not only on libraries, manuscripts and discourses of guidance and promotion, but also on the stocks of paper, on food, on the female body, on the labor market – all planned in line with the party politics and inescapably undertaken as literary reference, as more or less subversive, ideologized (i.e. distorted) “traces” in literature.

We can then see how the history of Romanian literature in the communist period is a product of self-censorship and, thus, a forgery. An analysis of the Ana Blandiana’s multiple debuts is likely to account for the mechanisms by which the history of literature is tampered with, for the use of a manipulated, unverified memory touched by therapeutic “forgetfulness”. Inevitably, such an approach should use the notions and taxonomies operated by Paul Ricoeur in relation to memory, history and forgetting. Understood as a product of memory, history is subject to the more or less deliberate forgeries of a selective and aporetic memory.

The proof that this test of the personal memory’s relating to the memory of the close ones is absent is seen in how the history of literature borrowed *tale quale* the time interval 1954 (sic!) – 1964 in Ana Blandiana’s bio-bibliography. Here, the researcher faces multiple difficulties: first, there are the fabrications caused in the field of literary history by the author’s (bearer of an abused memory) unverified statements. The second level of the problem relates to the ethical inconsistencies raised by the comparison of the literary history indexing paradigm – texts signed by Ana Blandiana in the periodical of that time (amounting

to seventy) – with the writer’s statements about the 1959-1964 time interval, during which she did not have the right to sign works. Last but not least, the discussion also touches on the level of identity contrapositions that follow from the confrontation between this abused memory and a supposedly therapeutic obliviousness. Once the timeline is retrieved, we can discuss the case of a “stratified” censorship: Ana Blandiana does not appear in the main literary magazines (“Contemporanul”, “Luceafărul”, “Gazeta literară”, “Tribuna”) between November 1961 and April 1963, but her name vanishes from the critical discourse for a longer time interval, between January 1961 and May 1964. One potential conclusion is that the institution of literary criticism either is considerably more subject to censorship or it avoids naming an undesirable in order to prevent ideological exposure, while literary publications are much more permissive with the names that should have been suppressed.

Persoana întâia plural [First Person Plural], by far Ana Blandiana’s most heteroclitic volume, enables an analysis articulated in two directions: on the one hand, the criterion of the relationship with oneself, with the others, respectively with transcendence, and, on the other hand, the analysis of the poems in the second section of the volume – clearly ideologically committed – from the angle of expressiveness. In the discussions on the first section poems, axiological and aesthetical value judgements come first, while the second section poems are analyzed from the angle of their adequacy to the socialist realism paradigm. Furthermore, the manner in which the debut volume was approached in Ana Blandiana’s author anthologies is also investigated as an indicator of self-reregistration, in the writer’s case, since the reiteration of debut volume poems in author anthologies suggests, apart from the incompleteness inherent to the principle of anthologizing, a reregistration of this volume in the history of literature. Practically, the volume is re-censored and rewritten in the memory of the Work, in order to reflect only the “*uncontaminated oases*”, as suitably put by Alex Goldiș. While the selection is explainable, the fabrication, the forgery is amendable. Thus, the (writer’s) “hindered” memory has been validated as keeper of the truth, by the plain perspective of moral authority, while the reconciliation of “personal memory”, of the memory of the “close ones” and of that of “the others” is absent.

The next chapter looks into the 1965-1971 period, a time interval that coincides with a stage of relative ideological thaw in the Romanian culture, when Ana Blandiana’s scholarly portrait becomes more complex, once the writer asserts her presence in the public space. The ideological thaw is, however, relative, because, on the one hand, the discourse on literature is articulated within the aesthetic-centric patterns, by euphemizing the hot zones of literary text subversion, and, on the other hand, literature itself adjusts to the archetype of a self-definition

toward the autonomy of the aesthetic. Nevertheless, a subversive potential is present in some of the writer's texts, and the purpose of this analysis is to identify it and investigate it in line with the adequate, i.e. extra-aesthetic grids of interpretation.

In the next volume, *Călcâiul vulnerabil [Achilles' Heel]*, a retrieval of the event timeline enables the mapping of the breaches in the censorship mechanism, from the possibility of "self-censorship by supplementation" to overloading or the censors' complicity with the authors. Paradoxically, Ana Blandiana managed to publish in literary magazines almost all of the works in the second volume, just as it was being rejected by censorship. Furthermore, the reviewers' difficulty in offering a plausible interpretation to poems that had an oblique message favored a careful analysis of the impossibility to "translate" poetic subversion in the critical discourse, during totalitarianism.

As to the reception, the – vast – thesis of the categorical difference between Ana Blandiana's first two volumes has only one purpose: to obliterate *Persoana întâia plural*, especially the second part of the volume. Nonetheless, there is continuity between these two volumes, especially in relation to the self-definition of the poetic I linked with the self and with the others. Such themes are approached unobtrusively in the first volume, such as the revolt against complacency, against gratified self-superiority and self-detachment from the sphere of an amorphous alterity. On the other hand, in *Călcâiul vulnerabil* we discern the foundations of an inner mythology, barely drafted in the previous volume – the Father, the vain detachment from the "others", the dignity, the subversive allegory – as well as the first text reconfigurations, by re-contextualization in a volume.

The next volume, *A treia taină [The Third Sacrament]*, configures – in the wake of the egocentric assertion of the self in the first volume and the vain recanting of a morally compromised alterity in the second volume – the inscription of the self in the sphere of transcendence. The representation of the relationship with a God lost and reclaimed takes place at a complex level, where the overlapping of the images of the Holy Family and of the Family is recurrent; for this reason, the volume can also be read as a spiritual autobiography. Subversive against communist censorship by infusing the volume with the biblical para-text, subversive against the biblical text by a rather demonic attitude, in *A treia taină* the writer offers a solution of inner improvement as effect of regaining access to transcendence.

We then follow the ambiguous relationship between writers and the Power, in 1970-1971 – more precisely, the way in which each group used the relationship with "the other" at the beginning of the decade, at the Power's celebrations or after environmental disasters, such as the 1970 floods. This is how the public space and the cultural field are made aware of Ana

Blandiana's assertion: especially in the columns assigned in the magazines "Contemporanul" and "Amfiteatru".

Some of the short pieces published by Ana Blandiana in the magazine "Contemporanul" are printed in the volume *Calitatea de martor [Acting as a Witness]*, in 1970. Most of the times, subversion against the regime is obtained, at the textual mechanisms, by placing the evil in an undefined age. A sensitive aspect, however, in relation to the decontextualization of the pieces by their collection in an individual volume relates to a misappropriation of the interpretive horizon, caused by the suspension of the initial context, an aspect analyzed in three comparisons of the pieces (tablets) with the text in the volume. Therefore, we may say that *Calitatea de martor* is an equally subversive and self-subversive volume, because of the same decontextualizing mechanisms that dislocate the reference and integrate the event in the pattern of a double discourse.

The writer's first poetic anthology, *50 de poeme [Fifty Poems]*, seizes change – of age, of expectations, of imaginary, of tone. The ethical debate is rather an involuntary reflex of the accommodation of self-awareness in the space of artistic creation. Ana Blandiana's poetic profile obtained after the selection is marked by the sharpening of sensations, by the stylization of the poetic imaginary, by anchoring the world in an increasingly better outlined mythology and, most importantly, by a just calibration of the poetic voice, for the avoidance of ostentation and of theatricality.

With *Octombrie, noiembrie, decembrie [October, November, December]*, Ana Blandiana's lyrical universe changes in the sense of a shift from view to vision. The poetic subject's eye no longer seeks to contain the reality in the – narrow – frames of a language that fails to deliver perfection at any point; instead, it seeks to push the boundaries of language in order to point to the being's dramatic and indefinable condition. It is only in this volume that the language experience is interiorized and the barriers of the untold are breached. At an ideative level, the crisis of poetic expression is mirrored by the perpetual non-fulfilment of the self in and through the world. Although praised by the reviewers and read as an agreement of the writer's gender with the guidelines of a literature written by women, love – as illustrated in this volume – merely confirms its ontological impossibility. In fact, the working hypothesis in relation to this volume is that discoursing on love exceeds the structure of lust and attains all the four stages of love theorized in Antiquity: *éros, philia, storge, agápe*.

The fourth chapter looks into how Ana Blandiana represents herself in the form of "creative consciousness", between 1974 and 1989, initially in the volume *Eu scriu, tu scrii, el, ea scrie [I Write, You Write, He, She Writes]* – crucial in this sense. Strictly quantitatively, the

volumes publishes in this period engage another shift of emphasis, this time from poetry to essay, article and prose writing, and – as distinct subgenre, connected to the writer’s hypertext – to children’s poetry: five volumes of essays, two volumes of short stories, three volumes of children’s poetry and four anthologies of poetry, respectively only three new volumes of poetry.

Essay writing turns out to be a permeable ground for the defense of poetry and for theorizing on solidarity and on the poet as “*creative consciousness*”. Moreover, Ana Blandiana’s prose – enhanced by the accounts on the genesis of the two volumes – falls under what Ion Simuț calls “*evasive literature*”, and Ana Blandiana’s censored poems (in the magazine “Amfiteatru” and in *Întâmplări de pe strada mea [Events on My Street]*) enable both an analysis of the texts and a restoration of the process of reading secrecy, invested with a “*therapeutic role [...] in a totalitarian system*”, according to Sanda Cordoș.

The effects of the *July Theses* are more visible in three of Blandiana’s volumes – a poetry volume, a prose volume and a volume of memoirs: *Somnul din somn [Sleep within Sleep]* (1977), *Cele patru anotimpuri [The Four Seasons]* (1977), *Cea mai frumoasă dintre lumile posibile [The Most Beautiful of the Possible Worlds]* (1978). Despite their different genres, they were published within one year and, owing to their linking resonances, they build a rhetoric of the alienation from literature, from the self, and from the world. The most significant clue to the coherence of these books is the representation of space as “non-home”. The self feels it lives between two worlds and cannot adjust to any of them, that rest is not possible, not even in death, because death becomes an eternal morning that enforces the awakening upon the being.

With *Ochiul de greier [Cricket Eye]*, Ana Blandiana returns to the self-representation as a poet, after four years. The volume spans over at least three existential planes, matched by rather peripheral solutions: frail attempts to rebalance the self in relation to the world, the I that aspires to the state of increate and to the rhythms of androgyny, the ironic distancing from the new world, which spoils words, numbs consciousness and standardizes identities.

As to prose writing, we note that Ana Blandiana’s fantastic texts transit to another stage of evolution, with *Proiecte de trecut [Projects for the Past]*. Perfect balance between aestheticism, onirism and political subversion, the second volume of short stories expands the perspectives and the typologies initiated in *Cele patru anotimpuri*. From the absolute nucleus of the fantastic event, the author now transfers the perspective of the characters, postpones the end and the revelation of the miracles, creates a rhetoric of eccentricity. By using key terms, obsessions already encoded in the self-referential system, Ana Blandiana obtains a fantastic

canvas starting from realistic nuclei, while the epic development takes the path of a permanent subversion of reality.

With its kernel dating back to 1983, the volume *Stea de pradă [Star of Prey]* is a shift in the subject's attitude toward the world and, after 1989, it will be recognized unanimously as a turning point in the poet's evolution, especially owing to the marked ethical attitude. Although eccentric in the economy of the world retrieved by the poetic discourse, the subject has the gain of understanding it: frightening, alienating, centrifugal, narcoleptic and desacralized, the world allows its appropriation by the beholder (the subject) – unlike the later volumes, *Sertarul cu aplauze [The Drawer of Applause]* and *Arhitectura valurilor [Architecture of the Waves]*, in which the subject's adventure will be the quest for meaning in an absurd universe.

The poetry series published in “Amfiteatru”, in December 1984, is submitted to an aesthetic test and the restoration of the timeline allows a series of observation on the literary climate of the 1980's. Filtered through an aesthetic grid, from the four poems only three can be included in Ana Blandiana's literary biography. The poem *Totul [Everything]*, albeit electrifying in that age, is at present a series of terms which, in the absence of the reference and deprived of the self-reference of the writer's poetic language, are worthless and, as stated by the author, are a mere list of words resembling a surrealist poem.

Further on, the segment of children's literature, as therapy by writing, raises a problem of auctorial intentionality: could we speak of a total “childishness”, a release of the writer from reality or, on the contrary, does the author give away her approach and turns children's literature in a reaction to reality? The latter answer explains why the world proposed by Ana Blandiana to the children centers on a playful-ironic reproduction of reality, but the reality *re-*presented here cannot be *un-*historicized, since elements of communist imaginary can be seen right from the beginning. The scandal started by the megalomaniac Arpagic, in 1988, is only the natural climax of the three volumes. This proves that, in a writer's bibliography, children's literature cannot be as a distinct genre, but as a subgenre equally personalized at the level of the representation mechanisms and infused by identical axiological principles.

In an attempt to obliterate literary memory, the former Securitate (State Security) began to seek out the copies of *Întâmplări de pe strada mea*, therefore the analysis of the documents in the CNSAS files is relevant for the Power's view on literature in the last years of Romanian communism. The communication sent to the county centers explained the recall of the book from the bookstores on the grounds that it contained “*interpretable poems*” (my emphasis C.G.). Hence the conclusion that, in its last years, censorship – a collective tool of

denunciation and engagement toward the annihilation of a potentially subversive text and, in this case, the joining of the forces of the Securitate, C.C.E.S., antiquaries, booksellers, librarians, school inspectors, teachers etc. – did not stop “only” at the ideological control or at the identification of potentially “hostile” texts, but it tried to cancel that which is specific to literature – its interpretability, its plurality of meanings.

The documents of the former Securitate also allow a contextualization of the Romanian literature in the communist period, from the angle of the Power. From the perspective of the regime, the intellectuals, writers especially, were a permanent threat to national security, which was why there were followed, warned, manipulated, threatened, enlisted or punished, depending on their attitude toward the political factor. The complex relationship between the writers and the Securitate – as agent of the communist Power – can be better understood by the use of Michel Foucault’s “*power-knowledge*”.

The CNSAS archived files offer an alternative historical narrative, where the various groups of the cultural field are approached equally suspiciously and with an objectivity – read not necessarily as the product of added knowledge, but as absence of any bias – difficult to retrieve in post-1989 research.

Therefore, for the researcher who also has access to the files of the former Securitate, the history of the Romanian literature in communism can appear beyond the limitations and preconceptions regarding the interactions of the various groups that drove the cultural field, because the State Security acted more often than not as a *deus ex machina* in order to iron out the differences within the writers’ fellowship, to annihilate and to compromise rebel spirits, irrespective of the barricade on which they stood. Diligent defender of national interests, the State Security used all its human resources, in all imaginable ways, to help induce fear of “the other”, wariness of revolt, helpless anger of the one who was and knew he was supervised, but not by whom, how and when. Thus, the State Security files operate as a calculator of the writers’ “power-knowledge” and issue algorithms to help prevent errors.

Another conclusion allowed by the analysis of the files is that – in her position of member of the Writers’ Union - Ana Blandiana is a peripheral character in these files. The State Security’s interest was in the writers’ whose evading potential was greater and who were deemed more unpredictable by the Power.

The last chapter of the research focuses on the writer’s literary and civic activity, after the 1989 events. Initially, we are following the way in which personal and collective memory retrieves Ana Blandiana’s history, between 1988 and 1989 – as censored writer, but also as a writer’s who tricks censorship, by publishing anonymously in the magazine “Familia”. We

then analyze the volumes *Arhitectura valurilor* and *Sertarul cu aplauze* – both of them “concealed” writings which require a complex methodology. The aesthetic grid is doubled by the political one, since both texts mark the subject’s reactions to the communist regime. Furthermore, the two volumes are also analyzed from the angle of language self-referentiality, because they fall under a personal literary mythology, within which “obsessive images” and “key terms” have their own semantic weight.

The analysis of the post-1989 historical context completes Ana Blandiana’s portrait as a writer with the portrait of an intellectual committed to the reconstruction of civil society, through “Alianța Civică” and Memorialul Sighet. We are also revisiting the writer’s interactions with the political organizations F.S.N. or with P.A.C., as well as the campaigns that sought to discredit Ana Blandiana; thus, we seek to complete the writer’s portrait as an intellectual and to clarify her relationships with the post-1989 power.

The three volumes of poetry published by the writer after 2000 (*Soarele de apoi [Sun beyond]*, *Patria mea A4 [My Paper Homeland]*, *Refluxul sensurilor [Reflux of Senses]*) have a paradoxical position: on the one hand, they are organically attached to the poet’s evolution and illustrate the same continuity of ethical and metaphysical sensitivity. On the other hand, the books move farther from the poetry prior to 1989 by some differences of tonality, of vision and of construction, with the most important ones being the less frequent choice of allegories and the weakening of the self-referential system. These differences may also be effects of censorship absence and of the shift in the perception of time. Therefore, the poetic discourse is oriented directly to the world, and poetic sequences – without being less significant with regard to the world they are approaching – are more frequent. The poetics of the fragment anchors the poetry in an “ordered” biography. The texts are not interested, however, in the authenticity of the illustrated world, but, on the contrary, in the symbolic load of the beheld slice of life. The falseness of the world, the unending ridiculousness are no longer denounced; the subject tries to understand them. At a different age, the writer is now aware of the too little time that remains – not biologically speaking, but from the angle of writing, hence the regret of self-waste. The reinstallation of the subject in the poetry occurs thus in a double temporal plane, which joins biological fatality and the hope of metempsychosis, while the text remains central to the illustrations of transmigration.

From all the volumes on the self as witness of history, the most recent volume signed by Ana Blandiana, *Fals tratat de manipulare [False Treatise of Manipulation]*, stands out from the beginning by its resistance to the formula. As an attempt to *comprehend* history, the book goes farther than the limits of an autobiography, toward autoscapy. The voice of the

writer of memoirs and the voice of the poet follow each other or merge in a discourse that does not aim to retrieve a truth known long before, but to understand this truth. At Ana Blandiana, the experience as such, the present of the event are given the consistence of a reference system only if they are recounted, re-experienced, reassessed by the retrieving gesture of reflection. Unlike the traditional mechanism of the memoirs, which focuses on *that which was*, the approach of *Fals tratat...* turns into a question the *that which was*, to obtain stratified coherence. For this reason, the interpretation of the book approaches both the textual practices, text literarity, and the adjustment of memory to history.

The section of conclusions emphasizes the gains and limitations of this investigation. I started from the observation that the blend of boredom caused by (re)confirmed expectations, and of exasperation caused by omnipresence and (re)confirmed insight relating to the writer's achievements seems to be the shared aspect in the accounts of alterity at the writer and the intellectual Ana Blandiana, with Ana Blandiana seemingly the prisoner of her own image.

This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that either the approaches of post-war literature are noncompliant with the association between the aesthetic chapter of the work and the writer's intellectual resources or they tend to absolutize one of them and reflect it on the other, which means the writer's intellectual portrait wavers among the poles of perfection, superficiality and invalidity. The contra-official ideology of the "resistance through culture" in the communist period, as well as a critical discourse that absolutizes the aesthetic as a reaction to the political, to which we add the Romanian intellectuals' disillusionment in the first post-communist decade peaked in a historic perspective that defies its own historicism.

For this reason, the dissociation between Ana Blandiana's quality of "writer" and her quality of "intellectual" allows a multifaceted approach of the writer's and the text's web of "commitments" in relation to the official ideology. Thus, the politicization *à rebours* of the writer's literature, in the 1980s, can be compared with that literature committed "for the purpose of" ideology – as put by Corina Croitoru – before the debut volume: while, with debuts, the *writer's* committed poetry sets the *intellectual's* mobility, we can see that with the poetry committed counter-politically the *writer's* commitment either constrains the *intellectual* or it substitutes a secret, hence de-politicized therapy. On the one hand, adherence, on the other hand, reaction or resistance. Furthermore, we note that the inverse proportionality of the weak encoding of ideology and the aesthetic value of the text works in both of the situations, but with fewer losses in the poetry of the '80s, owing to the high self-referentiality of the literary imaginary. Therefore, the aesthetic, the ethical and the ideological

should be the three concerted criteria that can regulate both the value of the text and the possibility of the writer's moral compromise.

One of the gains of *New Historicism* in research is given by the fact it allows a complex picture of the rhythmicity of the "screw tightening" applied by the former regime, as well as of how the writers related to the ideological changes. Such an approach supports the comparison of the textual "traces" with the literary memory or the emphasis of the limits of personal memory – especially when it speaks for history. Likewise, we can see that initially occasional texts, by rewriting or context-reduction in the economy of a volume, gain other implications and – depending on the primary or secondary context – they lend themselves to two, sometimes opposing, interpretations.

Moreover, the analysis of the communist age, with the help of CNSAS files, illustrates the Romanian intellectuals' different position in relation to those in the former communist bloc: in Romanian, the State Security's actions had a violently prognostic orientation, since the purpose of this vast operation of "prevention of undesirable actions" was not to keep the *calm* but rather to maintain the conditions of *silence*, a collective and auxiliary silence, which means the State Security's parallel ideology offers an explanation for the writers' almost unfeasible alignment in the dark 1980s.

On the other hand, *New Historicism* also has its limits: the writer's literary prolificacy entails a filtering of the analyzed texts, and the invalidation of the value differences of the discursive systems is both inoperative in literature and time-consuming by the endless proliferation of the discourses that should be researched. For this reason, the document had a significant value as to the disagreement with history, and politically tense moments, like the years 1964-1965, 1970-1972, 1989-1991, prevailed.

Last but not least, the use of *New Historicism* is productive in the case of any literature in totalitarianism, because totalitarian ideologies are signally logocentric.