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DOCTORAL THESIS

**The power of storytelling in
Tudor Dumitru Savu's writing.
Monographic study**

ABSTRACT

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Key words: Tudor Dumitru Savu, the prose of the 80s generation, literary postmodernism, magical realism, political myths, literature in Communism, literary geography, the inquiry novel, storytellers in Cluj, the writer's posture.

Abstract

Tudor Dumitru Savu (1st of February, 1954, Râmnicu Vâlcea – 19th of October, 2000, Cluj-Napoca) was one of the first prose writers in the 80s generation. Our interest for this author comes from the singularity of his writings: a magical realist prose, with textualist characteristics, mythological themes and – in general – with a predilection for mythical figurality, with memorable characters – hybrid identities – who live in a tensioned, border space.

Our doctoral thesis is a monographic study of this writer's work: his novels and articles, and the documents from his archive as well, to which we had access thanks to the author's family. We intend to prove the value of Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature, by focusing on its innovative aspects, and to construct a critical reflection on the author's position in the Romanian prose of the 80s.

Tudor Dumitru Savu published his first book in 1981, titled *Marginea Imperiului* [*The Edge of the Empire*]¹, which was shortly followed by *Treizecișitrei* [*Thirtythree*]² (1982). If we accept that one of the first features of the literature of the 80s, regarding the prose, is the writers' choice for short stories, we will see it immediately in this two volumes: both are composed by short stories, which can be read independently as well, but together they outline an isolated universe, having specific characteristics. With a hybrid form, these books can be considered short story collections as well as novels. Being the first books from a “veritable marine and Danubian saga”³, they set the tone for what will be the atmosphere of the writer's entire work. A lot of the stories contained in these two volumes have epical lines, characters and themes which will be repeated, in different registers or rhythms of the storytelling, in the books published afterwards,

¹ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Marginea Imperiului* [*The Edge of the Empire*], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1981.

² Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Treizecișitrei* [*Thirtythree*], București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1982.

³ „o veritabilă saga maritimă și dunăreană”, in Mircea Muthu, *Meșterul de oglinzi* [*The master of mirrors*], in „Viața Românească”, nr. 5, 1989.

and thus all of the writer's novels have an obvious metatextual character. *De-a lungul fluviului* [*Alongside the River*]⁴ (1985) is, in our opinion, the most representative of his writings for the way the 80s prose illustrates and reflects (critically) the historical and political context. Power being its main subject, the prose deconstructs the figure of the dictator, and proves the impermanence of his ruling. The novel *Fortul* [*The Fort*]⁵ (1988) is built on a series of contradictions, based on the confusion between reality and fiction which is maintained by the narrative as a tension of making sense. The prose has an accentuated textualist feature, because the main character finds out, at the end of the novel, that he is only a paper character and doesn't exist in reality. *Cantacuzina*⁶, first published in 1995 and republished after the death of the author, in 2009, was the writer's most appreciated book by the critics. The novel ties together old and new stories, creating a special narrative rhythm of the text, a true stylistic signature of Tudor Dumitru Savu. The words "The Danube is hatching" are the chorus of the novel, the narrative voice being that of the river in the whole book; the writing is epic, but it combines the epic with the lyric as well. The novel published posthumously, *Eclipsa generalului* [*The Eclipse of the General*]⁷, a book about getting old, death and endings finishes the Danubian cycle of the author and his work, as well, by the will of an unjust destiny. The characteristics of the writing, identified by our analysis (textualism, hybridization of forms, the logic of "and... and..." etc.) has offered us arguments to place it in the postmodernist current.

Tudor Dumitru Savu has created a fictional universe which is seen during its birth, evolution and its death, which takes its sap from its own cinder and revives every time, like a Phoenix bird. Although it is about an isolated world, enough on its own, it is, in the same time, a reflection in the mirror of the historical reality in which the author has lived, and of the human destiny, in general, as well, because Tudor Dumitru Savu is not afraid to write about the major subjects of literature: nature, love, death, honesty, treason etc., having faith in the absolute power of storytelling. This work's interpretative lines are so diverse that the reader, no matter his/her context, will recognize himself/herself in the author's stories. In this study, we chose to get through

⁴ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *De-a lungul fluviului* [*Alongside the River*], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1985.

⁵ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Fortul* [*The Fort*], București, Editura Militară, 1988.

⁶ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Cantacuzina*, 2nd edition, Târgu Lăpuș, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, 2009.

⁷ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Eclipsa generalului* [*The Eclipse of the General*], București, Editura Viitorul românesc, 2001.

the interpretative perspectives which we have found the most relevant for the work of the author and his historical and cultural background.

In the first chapter of the thesis, *Political Myths in Tudor Dumitru Savu's Prose*, we have attained a mythical and mythological reading of the author's prose. We have defined the myth/the political myth by the main features of the concept: its narrative, explanatory and saving character. By analysing the communist mythology, we have highlighted the paradoxical features of Tudor Dumitru Savu's epoch, which represents, without doubt, a source of inspiration for his literature. The novels tell the story of the birth and the death of a world, which is controlled by the word of the storyteller. He is, in fact, the sole owner of the truth of this universe, the only one capable to control the world. Therefore, the theme of power becomes the major subject of the literature written by Tudor Dumitru Savu. Its analysis highlights the complex relationship of the studied work of art with its hystorical background, because the writer's novels reinvent critically two of the major myths of the communist mythology, the myth of the Ruler and the conspiracy myth. A central character of the prose is the dictator, a figure with multiple faces, the only purpose of whom being to rule, no matter the means, over the place, its inhabitants, their memory, and the dreams of the people. Gheorghe Combatantul, General Klamm and Ion Leopold Margea become the rulers of the territory by making false promises, by threatening the people, by building a personality cult, and they strengthen their power through terror and fear. In fact, their power is a false one, because the only character who can control the world at the Edge of the Empire is the storyteller. Alongside the rewriting of the myth of the Ruler, whose power turns out to be delusive, Tudor Dumitru Savu reinterprets the conspiracy myth as well. We argued that in the novel *De-a lungul fluviului* [Alongside the River], the conspiracy myth is seen in a mirror: General Ion Leopold Margea loses his power exactly through the strategy of conspiracy, set up by some circus artists. In communist mythology, the conspiracy myth is associated with the image of evil, because the dictator is ruling the people through lies and cheating. Although, in Tudor Dumitru Savu's writing, conspiracy is the mean through which people find salvation: the characters conspire against the dictator, becoming thus free. In addition, in communist mythology, the conspiracy's bestiary includes animals coupled with the ugly, the impure, and sickness, while, in Tudor Dumitru Savu's work, these animals bring salvation and healing: Dafnula would have died if her body had not been covered by leech; Petru Agap's nephew gets his eyesight back with the help of some lenses made

from the eyes of a flatfish. The ironic attitude of the author against the central myths of the communist ideology represents, in our opinion, a means to oppose it.

Another reading to which we believe Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature invites, alongside the mythic and mythological one, is that of literary geography. By building a border space, the author creates, in fact, a world without certainties, in which everything is possible, a universe driven only by the laws of the storytelling. This means that, in spite of the fact that the existence of this world is threatened for an uncounted times, when its story is told, it revives. In the chapter called *The Space of The Border in Tudor Dumitru Savu's Writing* we have analysed the fictional territory created in the writer's novels, as well as its relationship with the real space it mirrors. The Romanian space is one of borders from a geographical point of view („the border state of Europe”⁸), and also from a historical point of view, Romania being, not once in history, at the border of a big empire. Being characterised by a „South-East European spirit”⁹, Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature can be defined by a “coexistence of contradictory states”¹⁰, a situation specific, in general, to Balkan literature.

By using a strategy of interpolation, the writer is constructing a new space inside a familiar one, the shore of the Danube. To review the territory in Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature, we applied Bertrand Westphal's classification, according to which space represents a mobile zone, one of freedom, and place is a fixed territory¹¹. The most important spaces in Savu's novels are the plain, the road, the forest, the river and the Delta, all of them appearing like mobile, labyrinthine territories, dominated by stories, myths, and superstitions. The plain is seen, most of the time, shrouded in fog, which amplifies its mystery. The characters are lost here, the plain being considered by them an evil space, sometimes a space of death. The road is also a mobile space, defined by instability, but it is familiar to the main character of the books, the story trader. He is the only one who knows the roads of the territory, being their master. Unlike the plain, a space dominated by a tensioned silence, the road generates storytelling, because its crossing induces to the characters a hallucinatory state. This dreamy state of being is at its peak in the linden or the

⁸ „țară de frontieră a Europei”, in Lucian Boia, *România, țară de frontieră a Europei* [Romania, a border state of Europe], București, Editura Humanitas, 2015.

⁹ „spirit sud-est european”, in Mircea Muthu, *Balkanismul literar românesc* [Romanian Literary Balkanism], vol. 3, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 2002, p. 11.

¹⁰ „coexistența unor stări contrastante”, in Mircea Muthu, *Balkanismul literar românesc* [Romanian Literary Balkanism], Vol. I., ed. cit. p. 68.

¹¹ Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism. Real and Fictional Spaces*, translated by Robert T. Tally Jr., New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.p. 5.

willow forest, genuine labyrinths from which the characters barely can escape. The Danube is a mobile space, a story generator, like the road. The river, its flora and fauna, are impossible to master, not even by the local fishermen. The places, also border ones, filled with mystery, are the city, the house, and the fort. Edge of the Empire, Vama, Mila 33, and Cantacuzina are, in fact, huge villages, which are put forward almost every time in their process of destruction, and while being saved by the story trader. The house is presented by Tudor Dumitru Savu as a pension, a mill, a brickyard or a construction with special architecture. It can be a mysterious place, where time is working differently, as is Gramatopol's house, or a place of storytelling, where all of the events lived by the characters are concentrated, as is the triangle shaped house. The fort is an unusual place as well, being perfect and indestructible, an utopian place, which is proved to be, at the end, only a project of major Tauss. Every one of this places can become sometimes large spaces, because they are places of storytelling and thus creation. In Tudor Dumitru Savu's prose, the places are similar to Borges' *aleph*, because they are able to contain the entire fictional universe. To map this space is either impossible, or incomplete, because in one place – as is the triangle shaped house – the writer can put, like a piece of puzzle, the entire Delta, its past and present, the stories which flow through it to the sea, all real or imagined events.

This strange territory, without borders, is populated by hybrid characters, with fluid identities. We reviewed these beings in the chapter called *Hybrid identities*, considering that the most adequate concept to define these characters is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of *becoming-animal*¹². Tudor Dumitru Savu's world is populated by monstrous beings, which cannot be framed in one species, neither human, nor animal, for they have characteristics which belong to both. The first example of such a being is Crysis, a character in *The Edge of the Empire [Marginea Imperiului]*, a humpback who feeds with earth and lingers desperately in a concrete labyrinth, looking for food. Regarding the historical context of this story, the narrative can be associated with the people's uneasiness regarding the numerous constructions which were built in the communist era. Without earth, Crysis will eat himself, because the only place he can still find clean earth is his own hump, and thus death sets free the character from the maze which had kept him prisoner. Tudor Dumitru Savu's most interesting characters, in our opinion, are Teona and Efrem, Siamese twins who are born conjoined back-to-back, and who will kill each other (and thus

¹² Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Pentru o literatură minoră [Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature]*, translation and preface by Bogdan Ghiu, București, Editura Art, 2007.

commit suicide) at the end of the stories in which they appear. Their drama is captivity as well, because unable to free themselves from each other, their destiny is death. One of the brothers' decision to kill the other means implicitly choosing his own death, the only way to gain freedom. Another character in *The Edge of the Empire [Marginea Imperiului]*, Gramatopol, is becoming a dog, to protect his own house, but paradoxically, his efforts to remember the construction project of the city lead to the place's disintegration. Gramatopol's story has no ending, and he remains forever in this intermediate state of human-animal. On the head of a character in *The Eclipse of the General [Eclipsa generalului]*, Halichia, a dog ear grows, with the help of which he is hearing everything that is happening in the region. By narrating what he is hearing, he succeeds to save the city from General Klamm's invasion. Another exceptional character of the same novel is Harem, the dead dog from whose perspective one of the novel's chapters is narrated and who is heard by Halichia, thanks to his new ear. With it, Halichia is becoming a miraculous being, as is Petru Agap's nephew in *Alongside the River [De-a lungul fluviului]*, who, with the help of the lenses made from flatfish eyes, manages to overlook the city and to fight against Ion Leopold Margea, the invader in this book. The influence of folklore on Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature can be seen in the creation of the characters which have fantastic powers. In the same time, we have observed the influence of Vasile Voiculescu's fantastic prose, who has created hybrid characters as well. Becoming-fish, illustrated in Tudor Dumitru Savu's literature, by Anastasatu and Sia Ferekide Belgun, symbolizes obtaining freedom, for these characters cannot get rid of their lives' dramas unless they accept a new identity, that of a fish. Anastasatu is the only one who is not concerned with the dictatorship instituted in Cantacuzina by Ion Leopold Margea, because his only truth, the only one in which he believes and lives, is the story of Wanda Wilhelmina, the pike which is followed by the fisherman day and night, until his death. Anastasatu's becoming-fish brings to mind the fisherman Amin's destiny in Vasile Voiculescu's prose¹³, as Sia Ferekide Belgun's story resembles the short story *The Huchen [Lostrita]* written by the same author. The woman is illustrated by both writers as a mysterious, savage, unbreakable being. Sia Ferekide Belgun refuses to give birth, because her child could be the proof of the crime she may have committed by killing her uncle who had raped her. The huchen in Vasile Voiculescu's story, as well as Sia Ferekide Belgun, in the novel *Cantacuzina*, are built through the stories told about them

¹³ Vasile Voiculescu, *Capul de zimbru [The Wisent Head]*, preface by Marin Beșteliu, Craiova, Editura Scrisul Românesc, 1988.

by other characters. The truth of the events will be mantled in mystery, for these women have no voice, the stories of their lives being constituted by the sometimes contradictory events told by other characters.

In our opinion, the most important literary influence of Tudor Dumitru Savu's writing is the one of Dumitru Radu Popescu's prose. We have analysed comparatively the literature of the two authors in the chapter called *Dumitru Radu Popescu's Influence on Tudor Dumitru Savu's Prose*. The common features of the two writings are multiple: we noticed a similar structure of the novels, a labyrinthine one; the preferred themes of the authors are the same: truth, justice, freedom, the circus, power; folklore is an important influence on both of the works, the proses having an oral character and being spangled with superstitions, while the lives of the characters (that have supernatural powers, most of the times) are dominated by the laws of nature; the intrigue of the writers' proses represents, a lot of the times, a drama (the death or disappearance of a character or of a city, a natural disaster, the war), and the tragic is combined with the comic in these writings. We have compared Teona and Efreem's story in Tudor Dumitru Savu's books with Dumitru Radu Popescu's novel, *Cei doi din dreptul Țebeii sau Cu fața la pădure* [*The two in front of Țeba or Facing the Forest*]¹⁴ and concluded that both texts are built on the idea of conflict between two men, a conflict between brothers in the first case, and an interethnic one in the second. The final image in Dumitru Radu Popescu's novel, the one with the two characters tied back to back, who fight continuously until they kill each other has been for sure an inspiration for the twins' story in Tudor Dumitru Savu's novels. The question discussed in both stories is the one of justice (Who is guilty? Who is right?), the texts taking the form of an inquiry. The characters tell stories to find the truth in both writers' proses, but, in Tudor Dumitru Savu's novel *Fortul* [*The Fort*] there is also an obsession of writing: the character Dierna writes (a memorial and a diary) to find his own truth, to make justice for himself and, in the same time, to construct himself as a character. The universe built by both authors is a world of crisis, an upside-down universe and the only one thing that can make order from chaos here is storytelling. We believe though that Tudor Dumitru Savu has distanced himself from his literary master's horizon both regarding the aesthetic value of the writing, and its authenticity, because, in the context of a communist world, magical realist prose

¹⁴ Dumitru Radu Popescu, *Cei doi din dreptul Țebeii sau Cu fața la pădure* [*The two in front of Țeba or Facing the Forest*], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1973.

represents not only an aesthetically viable formula, but also one capable to speak honestly about reality.

Tudor Dumitru Savu's writing is interesting not only because of its themes, but also since the critical approaches it instigates. Studying it has revealed a new face of Romanian postmodernism, which was explored in the chapter called *Tudor Dumitru Savu, and the 80s Generation*. Like any postmodernist novel, Tudor Dumitru Savu's tries to "realise a precarious balance between the process of 'construction' of a meaning, in one hand, and one of its 'deconstruction', in the other", "to assume its function of 'establishing' a meaning."¹⁵ As well as the writers from the 80s generation, for whom the text itself represents the "sense" (the text as existence, *texistance*, in Mircea Cărtărescu's terms¹⁶), Tudor Dumitru Savu illustrates through his novels the process of storytelling, but, most of the times, this is not about the written text, but the oral storytelling. The connection between the narrative and its context is more accentuated: the details of the same stories shift when the background shifts. Tudor Dumitru Savu represents the creation of the stories, their mythical dimension, because, for this author, to name the world means to create it, and the process of creation belongs not only to the storytellers, but also to the listeners. In other words, "as opposed to the majority of his colleagues from his generation, attracted by the immediate quotidian [...], Tudor Dumitru Savu finds inexhaustible resources in the old, traditional ceremony of storytelling"¹⁷. One of the formal characteristics of Tudor Dumitru Savu's books is autoreferentiality, so we have decided for this chapter to interpret the author's proses as metafiction. The first story in *Marginea Imperiului* [*The Edge of the Empire*] is about finding a lost text, the prose itself being one of its versions, the one told by the lawyer. Another story from the same volume, narrated by the attorney, presents the events which has led to the destruction, and the salvation, of the city: being invaded by ants, it is saved by Patache through the story he is telling. The idea of the story's power of salvation is present in the novel *Treizecișitrei* [*Thirtythree*] as well, which tells the story of the Delta being threatened by a natural disaster. The text has proved to be a metanovel, because telling the whole story again by Agachi Gherasim – the solution for the fictional universe's salvation – constitutes Tudor Dumitru Savu's novel itself. The narrative

¹⁵ Liviu Petrescu, *Poetica postmodernismului* [*The Poetics of Postmodernism*], Pitești, Editura Paralela 45, 2011, p. 202.

¹⁶ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Postmodernismul românesc* [*Romanian Postmodernism*], 2nd edition, București, Editura Humanitas, 2010, p. 428.

¹⁷ Irina Petraș, *Negustor de povești* [*Story Trader*], in „Contemporanul”, nr. 25, 2002.

technique is similar to the one in *De-a lungul fluviului* [*Alongside the River*] in which the saving story is taking the form of a circus' representation capable to expose reality to people. The novel demonstrates the fact that fiction is more powerful (more "true") than the fake reality imposed by the political power. With the novel *Fortul* [*The Fort*], Tudor Dumitru Savu proves, again, the absolute power of a story, by building a paper character, Dierna, whose experience reveals that he himself, and his life, are nothing but fiction, and that this is the only "reality". The stories in the novel *Cantacuzina* aim at reconstituting Sia Ferekide Belgun's life, after her death. Every character in the triangle shaped house is telling his own version, which is then commented upon by other characters. Thus, Sia Ferekide Belgun's destiny is built on a polyphony of voices which compound a fragmentary discourse. There is the same polyphonic structure of the text in the novel *Eclipsa generalului* [*The Eclipse of the General*], which is constructed on many characters' stories regarding general Klamm's invasion. The novel has an open ending, the reader thus having the possibility to participate to the process of creation and to build his own sense of the events.

On the basis of these analytical demonstrations we have concluded that Tudor Dumitru Savu is a postmodernist writer, his proses illustrating the major characteristics of this literary current (autoreferentiality, the polyphony of the discourse, hybridization of forms, the carnivalesque, marginality and fragmentarity, the monstrous, the performance and participation), the objectivation of which has constituted one of our close reading's interest. In the same time, the writer distinguishes himself from his generation through the complexity of his fictional world, through the orality of expression and the interfusion of magical realism with textualism.

In the next chapter, *Singularities in Comparison: Ștefan Agopian, Ioan Groșan and Tudor Dumitru Savu*, we have proposed a comparative reading of the 80s generation's writers who opt for the narrative formula of magical realism. Although the authors are considered singular in the context of the 80s prose, Ștefan Agopian having written historiographic metafiction, Ioan Groșan a textualist prose, while Tudor Dumitru Savu a mythical and parabolic literature, their prose have common features as well. Firstly, we have demonstrated that in these proses contradictory categories, like reality and fiction, or truth and lies, mingle. While for Ștefan Agopian and Ioan Groșan, history is fiction on the basis of which one can invent, in Tudor Dumitru Savu's literary world, fiction has the value of truth. Interlacing truth and fiction is present in all of these writings, the function of the characters being, most of the times, to tell the story, to solve the mysteries, and to witness. In addition, the three writers' proses are characterized by polyphony of expression, for

the narratives are born from the communication between the storyteller and the listener, the writer and the reader, the author and the character, whose roles are often indistinct. This happens because the literary beliefs of all three writers implies the theory of the death of the Author, which is put in narrative by them. The omniscient figure of the author being absent, the fictional universes are intercepted in the time of their destruction and recreation. Memory isn't working anymore, the truth is not singular, and the only one capable to talk honestly about reality is the storyteller. In this context, the three authors are embracing the solution given by magical realism, that of accepting the confusion between real and magic, and building the narrative on the basis of this confusion. We have reviewed the specific features of magical realism in the writings of these authors: the intermingling of reality and magic, the presence of supernatural beings and objects, the theme of the carnivalesque and the dictator, the subversion of their proses, and laughing as a solution for surviving.

In the chapter *Tudor Dumitru Savu and the Storytellers in Cluj* we have continued the comparative study by analysing the resemblances and differences between Tudor Dumitru Savu's writing and that of the following writers from Cluj: Marcel Constantin Runcanu, Eugen Uricaru, Alexandru Vlad, and Tudor Vlad. These prose writers have interacted in the same literary community forming, informally, a literary group. All of them have written about the subject of freedom, the power of the story, truth, and looking for a meaning. What distinguishes Tudor Dumitru Savu from these writers is his option for magical realism, with the help of which the author is creating, ironically, an upside-down world. The other writers opt for a literature of the quotidian that has the role to show, ironically as well, exactly the fact that one cannot talk freely about the truth. Having written about the irrelevant details of reality, they wrote, in fact, about the lack of freedom. In Tudor Dumitru Savu's work, the details have the role to accentuate the imaginary character of the world. If the other authors are emphasizing in their books the characters' ability of (self) reflection, Tudor Dumitru Savu is creating minds capable of mirroring an alternative reality, through the told story. A lot of the times, the events are becoming fantastic in nature when they are filtrated by a consciousness: Petru Agap's nephew is seeing in the past and into the depths of the see; Halichia is able to hear Harem, the dead dog's voice; Anastasatu can listen to the stories told by the pickerel Wanda Wilhelmina. The storytellers from Cluj are trusting the saving power of the story, no matter if it's about the salvation of an exterior world, or an interior one. Tudor Dumitru Savu, Eugen Uricaru and Tudor Vlad have invented some isolated worlds,

mysterious ones, that cannot be known entirely and, because of this, they are becoming some universes of absolute freedom, for anything can happen here, and sovereign is only the imagination. Consequently, the characters who are able to dominate their listeners and to rule them with the stories they are telling are emblematic for these worlds. Through creating some isolated universes as sanctuaries, through illustrating the ephemerality of power and through the way they talk about freedom, the authors have expressed indirectly, in their literature, an oppositional attitude towards the communist regime.

A monography dedicated to Tudor Dumitru Savu would not have been complete without analysing his articles. In the chapter *Tudor Dumitru Savu as a Political Analyst* we have analysed the author's public posture, created by him through his articles published in the "Tribuna" magazine and "Mesagerul transilvan" newspaper. In the first part of the chapter we have studied the writer's reportages written in the communist era, and we have observed that, although they align to the communist ideology, the author is not using the arid language specific to this epoch's propagandistic press. As a matter of fact, these articles are allowing the author to create an atmosphere and a space which is recalling his prose, exemplary being the reportages written about the Danube and its Delta¹⁸. If, before 1989, Tudor Dumitru Savu had never written explicitly about the communist power, after the Revolution, he has become a fervent political analyst. In the public posture he creates, the major values are speaking the truth and embracing freedom. To fight in order to defend these values, the author uses, not once, the violent word. In his articles, the writer dispraises the imposture, illiteracy, shiftiness, corruptibility, mediocrity, unprofessionalism of the politicians and political analysts. His pamphlets can be characterised by a rhetoric based on the forms of the laughsome: irony, sarcasm and humour. As in his literature, laughing is a way of surviving: this time, in the new world's uncertainty and hate, which seems to take the place of fear, after the fall of the communist regime.

Tudor Dumitru Savu is an important author of his generation, in which he is singular through the interfusion of magical realism with textualism, rewriting the political myths and creating a complex space, capable of mirroring the communist world. Although this author cannot be considered a dissident, his critical attitude against the dictatorial regime is expressed indirectly in his prose.

¹⁸ Tudor Dumitru Savu, *La Dunăre, la Dunăre [To the Danube, to the Danube]*, I și II, in „Tribuna”, nr. 26-27, 1984.

Tudor Dumitru Savu had seen reality inseparable from stories; this is a major literary – and, in our opinion, existential – principle which overreaches the aesthetic sphere. As his characters, important storytellers, the author had lived in and through stories. For Tudor Dumitru Savu, the world exists when it is put into a narrative, and, if it is threatened in any way, the stories are the only ones capable to save it. The only true and eternal power is the power of storytelling: “By telling the story of the world, of life and death, birth and love and honesty and betraying, the word becomes the incontestable authority of the world and it can define the order of it whenever a storm produced by gunpowder appears to move the poles from their place and to break in half the Ecuador.”¹⁹

¹⁹ „Povestind lumea, adică viața și moartea și nașterea și dragostea și cinstea și trădarea, cuvântul se face stăpânul incontestabil al lumii și poate stabili ordinea acestei lumi ori de câte ori vântoase stârnite de praf de pușcă se năzar vrând să mute polii din loc și să rupă în două ecuatorul.”, in Tudor Dumitru Savu, *Gramatica istoriei* [*History's Grammar*] in „Tribuna”, nr. 19, 1985.