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SUMMARY**

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**THE PAMPHLET IN ROMANIAN LITERATURE INTERWAR
PERIOD. SUBVERSIVE STRATEGIES, CHARACTERS,
DISCOURSE**

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THE PAMPHLET IN ROMANIAN LITERATURE INTERWAR PERIOD.

SUBVERSIVE STRATEGIES, CHARACTERS, DISCOURSE

Summary

This doctoral thesis aims to undertake an analysis of the most significant pamphlets in interwar Romanian literature. The subversive strategies, characters and discursive levels of some important pamphleteers of the interwar era are examined: Tudor Arghezi, N. D. Cocea, Camil Petrescu and Pamfil Șeicaru. I wanted to examine the particularities of the pamphlet texts, in order to research closely ways of artistic realization, aspects of writing, perspectives of the representation of the pamphlet imaginary.

The Romanian pamphlet is several centuries old, from the Wallachian chroniclers onwards, those who foreshadow the first pamphlet forms, this literary species being still a living presence in our contemporary journalism, the history of Romanian literature offering us numerous examples of highly talented writers who they cultivated the pamphlet.

Another motivation that guided me towards the analysis of pamphlets from the interwar period was the combination and careful dosing of a negatively connoted language in terms of a polychrome literary art, a language with accents of ugly aesthetics, rough and vulgar, with inflections of insult and curse. All these aggressions of the verb and of the thought, mixed with irony, sarcasm, playful, grotesque and parodic form an authentic, living, dynamic literary art.

The pamphlet stood out as a satirical literary species, through which facts, morals and characters are sanctioned, the pamphlet text can be considered as a hypersensitive document of an era, in so far as „reflects the rhythm of history, captures an event or a crucial stage of activity, in interprets, gives voice to emotions”¹.

The pamphlet represents, in literature, a true seismograph of an era, while, as a literary species, it imprints new tones and inflections on words, capitalizing on unusual and unique artistic processes, the pamphlet discourse being defined by the way it doses irony, invective and sarcasm in negative texts in which society's morals, morals and degrading representations of a declining world are severely sanctioned.

On the other hand, pamphleteering vehemence means revolt, breaking with conventions and norms, the pamphlet being situated in a literary space of interference and contact of several

¹ Cornel Munteanu, *Pamfletul ca discurs literar*, Editura Minerva, București, 1999, p. 49.

literary species and genres, from this coexistence of several types of discourse emerging new forms of expression and language.

The pamphlet has as object the emotions, the moral defects, the demagogy, the semantic inflation, the arivism, but also being characterized by its actuality, the real catch, the viability, as Tudor Arghezi himself remarks, in an article published in 1916, in "Chronicle": „First of all, the pamphlet lives by itself, like the novel, the epic or the satire. It's a literary genre, half current and half eternal. He's fast and alive. You wrote your pamphlet to depreciate an individual and, above all, to work on his immoral self-confidence.”. The most common expressive modalities in the pamphlet are irony, caricature, hyperbole, cursing, procedures that aim to diminish or even cancel through language the chosen target.

In the millennial history of the pamphlet, from the *Philippians* of Demosthenes to the pamphlets of the postmodern period, there were disseminations of the pamphlet discourse in different works and discursive structures, thus constituting certain defining invariants, procedures and rhetorical strategies distinct, taken over and journalistic. In Romanian culture, we find incipient elements of a pamphlet in the Wallachian chronicles, in Ion Heliade-Rădulescu's articles, pamphlet reflections being found in various genres and literary species (epic poem, short story, novel, drama, poetry, but also in literary criticism, for example in the critical sequences from *No*, by Eugen Ionescu). On the other hand, it can be said that through its very substance, the pamphlet is distinguished as an ideologized artistic structure, put in the service of a "program", of a point of view that it supports only through negation; it is built by virtue of an ideology of contestation, aiming at not antithetizing any opposition. Although it excludes dialogue, the pamphlet builds its strategy on the power relationship between the interlocutors, one being the author of the pamphlet, the other - the target of the pamphlet discourse."²

The pamphlet is also defined by the subversive ways and strategies that it capitalizes on, through style, attitude and theme in a wide spectrum of development, from everyday speech, to the media or to literature. As it is known, subversivity has a long tradition, since the epochs in which a certain form of political institutionalization has the ambition to subordinate its literature. That is why some literary species such as the pamphlet are gaining a reputation for trying to undermine political authority. Undoubtedly, political subversiveness can be combined with religious or aesthetic subversiveness, with writers in the universal literature who have been

² Ion Vasile Șerban, *Pamfletul între fond și formă*, în „Observator cultural”, nr. 50, 2001, p. 9.

accused of immorality, being incriminated and sometimes even convicted (Moliere, Voltaire, Madame de Stahl, Hugo, Flaubert, Zola, Thomas Hardy, etc.). In 1857, Gustave Flaubert's novel *Ms. Bovary* and the volume of poems *The Flowers of Evil* by Charles Baudelaire represent literary works incriminated by courts in France, such incriminations not missing from Romanian literature (B. P. Hasdeu, Mircea Eliade, Geo Bogza, etc.). The pamphlet is, in this respect, the literary species par excellence subversive, through its capacity to revolt against authority, through its anticanonical and innovative spirit.

In the textual construction of the pamphlet, the technique of subversivity is based on the strategies of metonymy, through which a fragment of reality is revealing for the whole social reality, thus configuring a wide connection of meanings and sub-meanings, of ironic and self-ironic allusions through which a certain state of affairs, a character, a moral defect. The oblique discourse of pamphleteering subversiveness also includes an allusive language, forms of parable and allegory, veiled transparencies, allusive metaphors, or a certain more or less attenuated aesopial dimension.

The courage, the devotion to the truth, the vehemence of the style represent attitudes that the pamphlets illustrated in their creations, through which they spared nothing, neither the pre-established values, nor the ephemeral ideals, the authenticity of the expression and the tonality being impressive.

The topics that the pamphleteers approached, "active" in the media today, apparently or in disguise, denote the topicality of the themes, demonstrate the resistance over time of the amended characters, caricatured from the political, academic and cultural world (institutions of state, journalists, corrupt clerics and priests, literati, etc.). All the prohibitions, licenses, exaggerations and changes of tone prove the pregnancy of the literary art, the expressiveness of the pamphlet discourse being beyond any doubt. It should also be noted that the pamphlet, with its distinct structures, can exist only in the conditions of freedom of expression, which allow and promote the exchange of ideas, ideological disputes, polemical spirit, being unimaginable in totalitarian societies. It is known that Lovinescu disregarded the pamphlet, balanced with the polemical spirit, the critic considering that while the controversy is "expression of the critical spirit", "intellectual act", the pamphlet is, on the contrary, "an emotional state, a vibration, an exaltation". Of course, the most talented pamphleteers manage to impose pamphleteering on literature, artistic expressiveness, beauty, because, as Arghezi says, "the pamphlet lives by itself,

like the novel, the epic or satire - and can be cultivated by its beauty." The author of pamphlets cultivates the most diverse procedures, strategies and ways (invective, insult, caricature), because, Arghezi also says, "cursing is a literary art as thorny as praise in akathists", the poet being, in fact, the most gifted pamphleteer of Romanian literature, a writer able to extract from ugliness, from insult, from degradation pure beauties, essences, musical resonances of the verb.

On the other hand, the pamphlet, it is known, is the result of a reaction to a lack of reality, it is a response, assuming the existence of an attitude of rejection, manifested by vehemence, invective, insult. At the same time, pamphleteering violence is somewhat justified by a sense of civic responsibility, because the pamphlet also has the purpose of correcting vices and morals, assuming in its deep structures a moral and aesthetic ideal.