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**AUTHORSHIP POSTURES AND THE POSTURAL
REFORMULATION DURING THE 1950s. THE CASE OF
WOMEN PROSE WRITERS: LUCIA DEMETRIUS,
IOANA POSTELNICU AND CELLA SERGHI**

In the wake of new definitions of the author formulated by Roland Barthes, the concept of authorship begins to be a more frequented theme in the theoretical discourse. The *death of the author* marks the volatilisation of the notion, in the sense of assigning it to a human subject and its substitution with the textual subject: “language knows a ‘subject’ not a ‘person’”¹. The postulate of the death of the author, according to Barthes, finds an even more radical version in Michel Foucault’s theoretical assumptions, and more precisely, through what he designates as the *author function*. Thus, the author function is subsumed to socio-institutional systems within which discourse is articulated². So, the main contribution of both theorists in reconsidering the concept of author lies precisely in circumscribing the notion in the order of a product of discourse, and of the extra-literary coordinates decisive for its articulation. Starting with Foucault though, the deterritorialization of the concept of author from the paradigms of its understanding as a creator increasingly becomes manifest, as is its placement (or rather, the placement of its functions) in the order of a social rhetoric. The process of demystification and sociological reification of the concept therefore leads to the development of a new theoretical frame through the figurative reformulations brought by theorists such as Nathalie Heinich, Gisèle Sapiro, Alain Viala or Jérôme Meizoz, who reconcile Foucauldian assumptions according to Bourdieu’s sociological terminology in reformulation and extension perspectives going beyond traditional notions of authorship.

Theoretical reflections on the rethinking of the concept of the author are subsumed to a relational scheme of defining the notion of the author. For instance, in the contemporary literary field of the commodification of symbolic goods and the insertion of the literary product in a distribution circuit regulated by market laws, the author’s identity inevitably begins to integrate into the transactional scheme as well, being mobilised around a macro-structure that includes both the ideological frames of the socio-political field, with a direct effect on the label under

¹ Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, London, Fontana Press, 1977, p. 145.

² Michel Foucault, *Ce este autorul? Studii și conferințe*, [*What Is an Author? Studies and Conferences*]. Translated by Bogdan Ghiu and Ciprian Mihali. Foreword by Bogdan Ghiu. Postface by Corneliu Bîlbă, Cluj-Napoca, Idea Design & Print, 2004, pp. 46-48.

which the literary goods with which they contribute to literary production are put into circulation on the market of cultural goods. So, in these new settings of the field, the role of the editor as the first shaper and curator of the texts put in the circuit is crucial. Furthermore, in this order, the author finds itself in the situation of constant maintenance of the relationship with the editor, which is determined by elective affinities³. Thus, starting from the conceptual frameworks mentioned above, the definition of authorship proposed by Jérôme Meizoz through the notion of *posture* places the image of authorship more within the limits of an extra-literary performative act than a solely textual one; the author's degree of representation and identification through discourse is diminished, as it mobilizes around a strategy of capitalizing on positions in the literary field. The author's assertion is subjected to an economy of images through many types of strategies of becoming a singular and culturally important figure in the field reliant on self-promoting tools such as social-media and multimedia forms, social discourses, public appearance and so on. Although the public assertion of authors is closely related to the extra-literary desideratum of either the market or a fraction to which author belongs, or the systemic, political and social desideratum; the latter occurs especially when the dynamics of the field are situated under an ideological will. Therefore, the authorial position, in Meizoz's terms, obliges to a definition of the author not only relying on the textual support, but especially including in his definition the evaluation of its extra-literary acts through which authors construct their position. Thus, if extra-literary acts contribute to this construction (that is to say, if the stake is the occupation of a certain position in the literary field), the postural processes are positioned all the more outside of the literary field, as the positions are forced to exist within their systemic convenience, and to fit a political agenda. Thus, the Romanian literary field during the Socialist Realist era illustrates exhaustively the way in which authorial positions are constructed not so much from the discretionary position of the writer, but mainly from a systemic will to which the interests of occupying certain positions in the field overlap.

The confusing changes that the literary field underwent together with the redefinition of literature, starting with 1948, when the literary discourses started to be operated as a tool for disseminating propagandistic contents, implicitly forced a reformulation of notions of writer and authorial function as well. Therefore, we will seek to nuance further the path of the postural configurations that were imposed during the first Communist decade, together with the reconsideration of the description of the writerly profession, which now stipulates a series of commitments and tasks that go beyond a mere profession of writing. The once-wide space of positions taken is replaced, concurrently with the imposition of the reorganization of cultural activities following the Soviet model, by a form of

³ Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writing Profession in France: Between Symbolic and Professional Recognition", *French Cultural Studies*, 30, 2019, 2, pp. 105-120.

unidirectional assertion that includes the devotional writer-party relationship. And from this point, the position designates not a strategy to distinguish the writer by constructing a singularizing figurative position, but a coercive form of simulating a discourse and an ideologically impregnated attitude, through which the writer confirms their commitment to the new aim of literature, imposed by the political regime. The tension marked by the capitalization of the authorial identity by official ideology and its assignation to the project of the acquisition of a propagandistic movement generates a radical and ambiguous mutation of the authorial portfolio. Therefore, the lack of discretionary positioning in a certain position, without it being regulated by the ideological authority and subject to systemic obligations, requires more nuances and reshaping of the established concepts by which the authorial position was discussed by Jérôme Meizoz. This way, the paper follows to nuance how the minor community of women prose writers adjust to the new scheme of positioning their writing.

Worth noting, according to Meizoz, the construction of postures is a direct effect of the logic of the field, of the market rules or of the critics and the reader's expectations to which the authors adjust or, conversely, contest such norms, being able to tackle many *personae* for more visibility. Unlike contemporary literary fields, the postural processes inside of totalitarian regimes are regulated by political power, the single pole that can assure the legitimacy and visibility of cultural agents. So, what is more particular in the postural strategies under local dictatorship is a contraction relation between postures and ideology, insofar as the constraints placed on the authors encouraging political subordination return to different ways of recognition (institutional, political, economic, social, cultural and so on). This furthermore leads to the emergence of two main patterns of postures that depict the formal and informal dimensions of the field. In other words, the imposed political ratification creates systemically desirable authors and politically inconvenient ones, in addition to their differing cultural relevance depending on their interests and intentions (in symbolic, politic, economic or institutional order).

Furthermore, adjusting Meizoz's theoretical frame and replacing the postural strategies (such as those authors who assure their visibility through media channels)⁴ – with a contextual function for the contemporary mediated literary field – to the structure of an ideologically subjected field, it can be seen how the mobilising of postural strategies is defined around political power, depicting the author's proximity toward it and their literary and extraliterary interests which in turn granted them certain types of relevancies in the field. Therefore, the aim of the present article is to analyse the postural strategies against the background of the impact of political intervention in the production and organization of cultural space, the cases of women prose writers – with special focus on the trajectories of

⁴ See Jérôme Meizoz, "L'Exposition médiatique des écrivains", *Courrier*, 16 June 2016, <https://goo.gl/bjtJG2>. Accessed on September 10, 2021.

Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi – who asserted themselves during the inter-war era, and now participate in doctrinal ratification, become more illustrative for the following of reshaping of posturing acts from two points of view: on the one hand, as agents who mobilise their beliefs in the proletarian class struggle as a strategy of repositioning, as well as a peripheral fraction, represented by women writers, and finally also according the scale of success in assertion under the new literary frame. Thus, their apparently-radical conversion to the Socialist Realist established aesthetics occurred, in turn, for women writers for two reasons: out of an interest of occupying a dominant position in the field in both literary and extra-literary terms (which is proved by their successive adoption of systemically convenient positions); and as minor figures, the ratification of the new imposed literary rules meant also trying to requalify their writing, the main reason for their authorship trajectories, from one stage to another of the literary field, involving a dimension of predestination to the detriment of an elective one, as far as during the first stage of Communism the aesthetically diminished concept of *women's writing* is replaced by a revolutionary spirit. In other words, the previously adopted positions are reformulated in the context of politicisation during the Communist years, the diminished contribution of the author in building his/her own position is emulated by the political will to impose the collective identity of the new writer in the service of a social art and satisfying the party's obsessions (class, socio-economic changes prompted by the regime and the belligerent reaction against anti-communist attitudes).

Putting in order the definitions that circumscribe the concept of posture proposed by Dominique Maingueneau and Alain Viala, Jérôme Meizoz extends the established conceptual limits, by overcoming the boundaries of the authorial ethos (the degree of authority and trust that the writer carries). So, as I previously emphasised, Meizoz inscribes under the umbrella not only a general way of being of the writer, but includes both the rhetorical dimension and the action, the posture relying on the binomial structure action-rhetoric/ text-context:

Mais *ethos* renvoie aussi à un concept précis de la rhétorique, et risque ainsi d'être source de confusion. Pour ma part, tout en reprenant l'essentiel de la féconde proposition de Viala, j'opte pour la notion de "posture" dans un sens englobant: la "posture" d'un auteur désigne alors ce que Viala nomme *ethos*. J'y inclus la dimension rhétorique (textuelle) et actionnelle (contextuelle)⁵.

Moreover, Meizoz nuances the importance of the space of postural constitution, identifying in its strategies not only the external performativity of the writers and the internal reverberations of their actions through their literary discourses, but, shows Meizoz, the constitution of the posture involves individual variations that overlap with a repertoire inculcated in the memory of literary practices: individual variation on a position, the posture is no less attached to a

⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraire. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007.

repertoire inculcated in the general conscience of the literary practices⁶. The interchangeability between posturing and the author's identity is only partial, insofar that the position as a literary identity is not constructed, but rather adapts to the set of symbolic materials inherent in literary practices based on which the authors model their position⁷. Thereby, the reshaping of Meizoz's postural scheme – undergoes in a literary field in which literary production and the writer's task are integrated into the general project of re-education ideology in the spirit of Soviet socialism – discloses the constraints and ideologically-focused manner in which authors should act; the narrow space of posturing offered being obviously determined by the excessive vigilance exercised over the literary field through repressive strategies of reducing the creative space and the postural act to a monovalent and uniformizing definition, the disparities subsuming to a collective endeavour of eulogising and to a partisan devotion claimed from above.

From the Antechamber of Bourgeois Literary Salons to the Factory Floor. Or How "Femininity" Dons the Proletarian Jumpsuit

In 1949 in the first issue of *Almanahul literar* [*The Literary Almanac*], Cornel Regman publishes an article entitled "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Romanian Culture", where he analyses critically the capitalisation of the Romanian culture by the bourgeois dominant intellectual fraction during the inter-war period. Among others, he denounces Lovinescu's literary fractions as an aesthetic-formalist and bourgeois guild, represented also by the female writers such as Cella Serghi or Ioana Postelnicu⁸, and less by Lucia Demetrius, and their status in the field during this period will be radically reversed once with implementation of Soviet cultural frame, as far as despite their endeavours, Serghi and Postelnicu remain in the shadows, unlike Demetrius, for instance. Letting us back to the position of these writers during the inter-war era, it is worth noting that women's writing was destined for a minor regime of manifestation, circulation, appreciation, and reception at that time. The marginalising of women's writing is not a particular case of exclusion that occurred only in the local literary field. As well as in Romania, in France the exclusion of women writers took place around the categories such as "femme auteur" or "bas bleu"⁹; moreover the strategies of women writer's exclusion for gender reasons is similar from a cultural space to

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 25: "variation individuelle sur une position, la posture ne se rattache pas moins à un répertoire présent dans la mémoire des pratiques littéraires".

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26: "l'auteur adapte et compose avec un imaginaire déjà présent, connu des lettrés de son temps".

⁸ Cornel Regman, "Naționalism și cosmopolitism în cultura română" ["Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Romanian Culture"], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare românești* [*Chronology of the Romanian Literary Life*], IV (1949–1950), București, Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, 2011, pp. 199-214.

⁹ See Christine Planté, *La Petite sœur de Balzac. Essai sur la femme-auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1989.

another, being rooted in a culturally embedded gender division of writing (women seen as only capable of tackling the weak themes, limited to private and domestic spaces, to the sentimental, emotional and intimate writing, unlike the manly one that represents *writing degree zero*). However, the emergence of women in a field where the dominant values and establishment are sexually marked¹⁰, the overcoming of the feminine aesthetic – by female authors such as Simone de Beauvoir in France or Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu in Romania, during the inter-war period – is conceived by the masculine dominant fraction as a virile writing appropriating them to the masculine doxa, as it happened in the case of both mentioned authors. For instance, in the case of de Beauvoir, Thierry Maulnier confirms the value of her work, *L'Invitée*, insofar as not having fallen victim to the “error” of the feminine style¹¹.

On the other hand, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu is subjected to a similar treatment, when her writing is received as a profound masculine and virile literary discourse by the literary authorities of that time mainly represented by Eugen Lovinescu. The circumscription of women’s literary production within the limits of a marginal phenomenon remains dependent on several factors that contributed to diminishing the endeavour of women writers and, moreover, created a facile ground for clichéd definitions and classifications of them: a) the editorial presence of women writers is still a recent fact during the inter-war period; b) the evolution of their writing occurs exclusively in relation to macho socio-cultural prejudices; c) both the critical authority (G. Călinescu) and the presidents of the literary salons (E. Lovinescu) overcome the limits themselves of the publicist observations, the female writers’ texts being received by them in a deeply dishonourable way. The reductionism operated in the classification of the female writing finds an amplitude in shaping the predestined positions for them, but also in the conceptual coverage of the slips practiced towards the texts and the position of women. Therefore, the marginalization of women’s creation will progress further under the umbrella of the *feminine* method of creation, that has proven its effectiveness in repudiating texts and in suspicion of the lack of competence, which is established in the context according to gender criteria and to the degree of virility that is homologous with between the literacy and with the aesthetic quota:

between a pigeon and a woman there are correspondences that brings them closer [...] the same strong instinct, which master and lead them [...]. If the pigeons had a literature, it would resemble to the literature of the greatest contemporary women writers [...]. Lacked any initiative in love and without the possibility of a clear

¹⁰ Delphine Naudier, “L’écriture-femme, une innovation esthétique emblématique”, *Sociétés contemporaines*, 2001, 44, pp. 57-73, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-societes-contemporaines-2001-4-page-57.htm>. Accessed on September 15, 2021.

¹¹ Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writer’s War: 1940–1953*. Translated by Vanessa Doriott Andersen and Dorrit Cohn, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2014, p. 290.

expression of her heartbeat, the woman has given us, naturally, a literature of shadows and whispers, of mystery and velvet saloons¹².

The relation of interchangeability between (feminine) gender and (feminine) creative method will be translated into the literary practice through the frequently using of certain plots, thematic directions and motives. Thus, the sentimental plots, the female characters whose psychological analysis is reduced to the exhibition of an inner life marked by the sentimental intrigues, that capitalise the creative space of the female writers. According to the projection of the literary authorities from that time, the female writers position constitutes a figural posture that is also reduced to superficiality, sentimentality and naivety that betrays, on the one hand, a limitation of the access of women to writing through their diminishing and objectification; and thus, rather a mimicry of the writing profession, on the other. The homology between female author – feminine paradigm, embedding entirely its arsenal (feminine mystery, sentimentality, lyricism and subjectivity) belongs not only to the correspondence naïve and weak writing – feminine gender, but also it is necessary to account that the critical prejudices are relied on a repertoire of symbolic materials, in full accordance with Meizoz's postulations regarding the inherited materials on which the authors create their strategies for the postural acts. It must be mentioned in the case of women writers, the symbolic materials depict not an own ground for the postural acts that could be reformulated or denied, but a material on which the literary doxa creates positions to them:

Worth noting the very early appearance of a female protagonist on the stage of the Romanian literature. The erotic plot, always connected by the presence of the feminine, can also be seen as an anaemic, but existent emancipatory phenomenon. Although, women were also introduced from a masculine, patriarchal perspective, their presence as protagonists where the prevailing scenario is erotic is a small gain in the era, but a significant one in the evolution of de-tabooing the female presence in the Romanian writing¹³.

¹² Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, *Studii de literatură feminină [Feminine Literature Studies]*, București, Paideia, 2004, pp. 7-9: “între o porumbiță și o femeie sunt corespondențe ce le apropie [...] aceleași instincte puternice, le stăpânesc și le conduc [...]. Dacă porumbițele ar avea o literatură, s-ar asemena cu literatura celor mai mari scriitoare contemporane [...]. Lipsită de orice inițiativă în dragoste și fără puțința expresiei clare a bătăii inimii sale, femeia ne-a dat în chip firesc, o literatură de umbre și șoapte, de mister și alcov capitonat”. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

¹³ Andrei Terian, Daiana Gârdan, Cosmin Borza, David Morariu, Dragoș Varga, “Genurile romanului românesc în secolul al XIX-lea. O analiză cantitativă” [“Genres of the Romanian Novel in the 19th Century. A Quantitative Analysis”], *Transilvania*, 2019, 10, p. 24: „Este de notat, însă, apariția foarte timpurie a unui protagonist feminin pe scena literaturii române. Trama erotică, conectată mereu de prezența femininului, poate fi privită și ca un anemic, dar existent fenomen emancipator. Cu toate că femeile sunt introduse tot dintr-o perspectivă masculină, patriarhală, prezența lor ca protagoniste acolo unde scenariul care prevalează este cel erotic reprezintă un câștig mic în epocă, dar unul însemnat în evoluția detabuizării prezenței feminine în scriitura românească”.

Furthermore, it must be nuanced that the literary production of women writers is not limited to the only formula of *feminine* writing received in the clichéd discourses by the literary criticism. Two axes of prose are articulated according to the degree of devotion to the commonplace of the feminine writing to which the authors are predestined: firstly, the practice of the established formula for female writing, which makes the texts convenient to the system of prejudices, and a writing which overcomes the established method. In this sense, the merit of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu – whose writing appears as an avant-garde in relation to the expectation and general practice – is to open a new direction and to establish a new posture through literary competence and refusal of the established method for women, and through unanimous recognition and authority gained on this way. In parallel, with the use of the bankrupt concept of female writing, it arises a “bengescian” tradition, as proof that her authority and her posture of “novelist of women”, starts honouring the inertia of her congeners.

Thus, the novels of Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi, three important female names in the prose of the inter-war era, illustrate the interference of these two position-takings. Located on the same wave of visibility, however, the types of their recognition and prestige are distributed according to proven literary skills, and to the relational capital held. Ioana Postelnicu continues to demonstrate her literary perseverance through sustained editorial activity marked by novels that reconcile the narrative complexity established by Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and sentimental slips. For instance, for the novel *Beznă* [*Gloom*] she is rewarded in 1943 with the prize of the Romanian Writers Society “I.A.I. Brătescu-Voinești”, for prose. While Cella Serghi’s text (*Pânza de păianjen* [*Spider Web*], 1938) does not exceed the limits of naïve confessions, but, nevertheless, her increased visibility serves as a proof of the fact that the insertion in an established group inside the prestige and symbolic capital are concentrated (Mihail Sebastian, Camil Petrescu, Mircea Eliade) becomes a viable strategy with a more direct lucrative effect in the accumulation of capital and visibility. In a context of cosmopolitanism, worldly relations come to replace actual competence, often being defining in establishing the degree of visibility and prestige contained in the author’s image, thus integrating into the postural acts these established comrades settled according to the criterion of the symbolic value of the group to which they aspire. However, the misogynistic character of the field is most evident at this degree, as the insertion of prose writers in the middle of these coteries with important characters is relied on a system of direct sympathies that often cover more than a literary competence, illustrative being the enthusiastic appreciations of E. Lovinescu addressed to Ticu Archip, an important figure among female writers during the inter-war era: “When he says about Ticu Archip that ‘she gradually ascended among us all the steps of

attention, appreciation, and great literary esteem' he probably gives the woman-writer the greatest compliment, including other valences, unable to confess"¹⁴.

Unlike the French literary field, where the position of women writers undergoes a significant evolution once with the phenomenon of *(re)naissance du feminisme*¹⁵ after the revolution of May '68, when the feminine style is reintegrated in the new revolutionary aesthetic formula, in the local literary field the evolution of women writing is hindered by the ideological domination of the field. Also, if in France during the post-war period, especially after 1968, the postures of female writers engage the struggle against masculine monopoly above literature and aesthetical canon¹⁶, and the major part of the female authors revolving around the avant-gardist fractions¹⁷ through their discourses opposite to the dominant masculine one; in Romania during the post-war era the avant-gardist position and postures are defined in a subversive relation with the political power, as well as all positions are defined through the relation with the regime and political party, that serving as a proof of the question of women authors' marginalisation and exclusion will be postponed for several more decades. The reinvention of prose writers after 1948 nuanced paradigmatic changes not only at the discursive level, but also gives rise to an attitudinal discrepancy and the postural contrasts from one epoch to another. So, the great reforms that are taking place are not limited to rhetorical transformations, but also to a reorganization of the literary community, the role, and the new author figures in accordance with its new political and social functions of literary discourses. Thus, the production of cultural goods is included in the structure of a centralized socio-economic organization, whereas the unification and supervision of creation are facilitated by the setting up of institutions (the establishment of the Writers' Union in 1949) and the insertion of the literary agents in the industry of wide production of the literary goods – on this way being opened several professional positions inside of publishing houses and literary magazines. The attracting within the system of the mass of writers meant to produce systemically convenable literature is also sustained by the establishment of a Literary Fund that makes the new system more attractive for writers by financially stimulating creative activity. Therefore, the occupation of writing becomes a lucrative profession, and is subjected to a transactional plan based on a benefit – remuneration scheme, the mechanisms of rewards functioning either in economic, political, and professional or symbolic order.

¹⁴ Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, *Studii de literatură*, p. 16: "Când el spune despre Ticu Archip că 'a urcat printre noi, încetul cu încetul, toate treptele atenției, ale prețuirii și ale marelui stime literare', probabil că îi face femeii-scriitor cel mai mare compliment, incluzând și alte valențe, nemărturisibile".

¹⁵ Delphine Naudier, "L'écriture-femme", p. 60.

¹⁶ Marcelle Marini, "D'une création minoritaire à une création universelle", *Les Cahiers du GRIF*, 1990, 45, pp. 51-66.

¹⁷ Delphine Naudier, "L'écriture-femme", p. 68.

The re-education of writers and the sculpting of their new position claimed by the party involves a complex process and an ambitious curriculum in the spirit of values imported from the Soviet cultural field. This is locally reified in training schools, with the intention of setting up an avant-garde generation of young writers, lacking the elitist statutory forms, and susceptible for assuming a progressive revolutionary attitude (a notable institution of this kind is the “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature and Literary Criticism). According to Nathalie Heinich, the visibility is a significant capital in the order of recognition inside of the mediated regime, thereby visibility works as a guarantor of success¹⁸, but naturally the same needs of visibility occurred also inside of all type of the cultural contexts, as well as in the domestic literary field during the 1950s, where the writers do not adjust to the cult of the social media or market, but to the narrow ideological system, so that visibility is guaranteed exclusively by political ratification. From this point on, as one of the most important stakes of writing is occupying a new vacant position in the literary field. Thus, I will emphasise further, by accounting the cases of the three female authors, the different types of posturing related with the aims of the writing profession and the type of accumulated capital (institutional, symbolic, social, economic, and so on) in that new cultural frame.

At the same time, the authors of the old system are not excluded from the Socialist Realist literary scene. On the contrary, their intense publishing activity and insertion in the field, as well as their desirability despite systemically inadequate social portfolios, indicate the crisis of legitimacy of the current regime, which seeks to solve its inconsistency by perverting their literary prestige into political capital¹⁹. The assumption of the Socialist Realist method, being imposed to be respected with an absurd fidelity – the main suspicion as it regards the devotional purity of writers being aroused by the suspicion of political authorities for a superficial takeover of the method, without a real ideological conviction – requires a careful training of writers, who must sharpen their understanding of the proletariat and of class struggle by attending to the workers’ activity in the factory, which started to serve as an indispensable research space for the creative process. Thus, the inter-war novels of Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi, built around sentimental intrigues and complex psychologies, placed in the dandyish and cosmopolitan world of the bourgeoisie are replaced by novels with an industrial theme, dedicated to the idealisation of progressive revolutionaries (*Cântecul uzinei*, [*The Song of Factory*], Cella Serghi, 1950) and the praise of the working heroines in the factories (*Pădurea Poienari* [*Poienari Forest*], Ioana Postelnicu, 1953).

¹⁸ Passim Nathalie Heinich, *De la vizibilitate: Excelență și singularitate în regim mediatizat*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012.

¹⁹ Ioana Macrea-Toma, *Privilegiul literar în comunismul românesc* [*Privilegientia. Literary Institution in Communist Romania*], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009, p. 105.

Furthermore, in the case of these authors, the conversion nuances the paradox and the inadequacies between the socio-literary portfolio of the candidates and the postulated desideratum of the new system. The assumption of the new position of the intellectual worker is revealed not only at the degree of the rhetorical mutations, but also in the practical demonstrations of the convictions towards the benefits brought by the regime. Lucia Demetrius's prose is subject to the detachment from the plots, hitherto frequented, placed on the background of a universe populated by patricians, here both inter-war novels of the author being illustrative: *Tinerețe* [Youth], 1936, and *Marea fugă* [The Great Flight], 1938; for praising the proletariat and degrading the bourgeois order. Thus, the ideologizing of writing occurs in the form of a spontaneous revelation insofar as at a decade and a half, the author will apologize by spontaneous obsession with her previous literary experiences, sculpting her position in the line of partisan's convenience:

It seems to me that any person in our country, writer or not, with or without documentary thoughts, should go there once, to enter in the halls where the metal is mastered, domesticated, forged, to see the lights that do not switch off from evening till morning, the flames rising into the depths of the air, it sounds their continual roar, the vibration of the great untiring machines, to see the workers dominating machines and waves of incandescent metal, stoves and furnaces, for understanding deeply, stunned, how strong we are, how strong is the human, how wonderful, to understand the dimensions that the socialist construction takes²⁰.

During the 1950s Lucia Demetrius public discourses are plenty engaged in proving her socialist and progressive beliefs, for instance asserting that the new ideology of literature helped her find out the true essence of literature, therefore she declares due to the new frame "I've figured out that most important is the **human** who tries to change and to know himself, who rises, who fights, not the human who gets lost within unnecessary contemplations"²¹. However, Lucia Demetrius is an isolated case among the female authors in the process of assuming the new identity. The race for legitimacy and validation from above is doubled by a tournament of testimonies meant to bring the authors closer to the ideology, in this order, many trying to prove their pre-communist socialist affiliation. Therefore, Demetrius will in turn be in the wake of the political affinities of her father, Vasile Demetrius, for confirming her ideological beliefs and socialist profile, operating, practically, a selective system of filtering biographical data easily adjustable to the socialist repertoire, and to the proletarian ethos: "Lucia Demetrius does not deny, oedipally,

²⁰ "Interviu cu Lucia Demetrius despre măiestria literară" ["Interview with Lucia Demetrius on Literary Mastery"], by Petru Vintilă, *Luceafărul*, 1962, 13, apud Paul Cernat, "Inițierea comunistă a femeii" ["Communist Initiation of Women"], in Paul Cernat, Ion Manolescu, Angelo Mitchievici, Ioan Stanomir (eds.), *Explorări în comunismul românesc* [Explorations of Romanian Communism], I, Iași, Polirom, 2004, p. 162.

²¹ Lucia Demetrius, "Ce am învățat de la dramaturgia sovietică" ["What We Have Learned from Soviet Dramaturgy"], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare*, V (1951–1953), p. 291.

her father, but claims him, posthumously, as an argument for adherence to the policy of the Father-Party”²². Thus, not coincidentally, in the 50’s her name will be one of the most visible. To the political prestige is added the professional prestige, as far as she is an important figure of the leading wing of the Writers’ Union, as a proof of the success in terms of gaining the trust of the political authorities. Demetrius also sought to be an awarded and conjecturally established author insofar as she is officially acknowledged among the most important writers of this period alongside Mihail Davidoglu, Maria Banuș, Zaharia Stancu, Aurel Baranga²³ and so on. Now, the suspicion of enthusiasm shown by a simple strategy of opportunism is quite naïve in this context, firstly because the reasons of accession are more complex than they could be covered and explained by such a moralizing analysis; and then, because, nevertheless, Lucia Demetrius is among the very few female authors who unequivocally sign the “Manifesto of Romanian Intellectuals” in 1945, through which progressive intellectuals express their ratification of PCR policies. In terms of a postural problematization, an essential aspect is circumscribed to the figurative representations of Lucia Demetrius. Reiterating here Meizoz’s hypothesis of partial overlaps between posture and author’s figure, we can see, in the case of most female authors, even a partial overlap in the inter-war context between the authorship and text, then a complete excommunication from the postulate acts of the author’s identity (even the gender identity) during the 1950s. In the case of Demetrius, however, if we are to fully credit the positions exposed by the author, paradoxically, the position of the author in the first period of creation develops from an ethos of solidarity with the general poetics of the context, containing them to a lesser extent the individual variations, or, once the systemic change is articulated an homology between the particular figure of the author and the authorial repertoire claimed by the party: “Lucia Demetrius’ pre-communist biography contains all the elements of a predestination, she is saved from the Inferno and the Party open to her new ways and unties her wings”²⁴.

The homology of the author’s action and its rhetoric becomes immanent to ideologically subsumed creative acts. Social practice and the conduct of writers must prove the same ideological purity as the texts that they sign. The reinvention of the female authors under the formula of postural reshaping in the context of cultural ideologisation contradicts the established manner of the articulating of posture, insofar as the act acquires meaning in relation to the author’s trajectory (social origin, education, literary performance, the position in front of the literary system, in general). This phenomenon is proved in the case of those three authors. For instance, Ioana Postelnicu or Cella Serghi not only prove to carry an

²² *Ibidem*, p. 163.

²³ See Pavel Țugui and S. Damian, “Despre unele probleme ale dramaturgiei noastre” [“On Certain Problems Faced by Our Dramaturgy”], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare*, V (1951–1953), p. 278.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

incompatible social portfolio (both have a higher education and training, are former members of an elite group of literati, etc.), but have never shown socialist affinities before, let alone Marxist ones, thus confirming a mimetic dimension of their practicing of the authorial actions claimed by the political field. Unlike Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu, like Cella Serghi, carve their new positions by short-circuiting the path of the individual-collective transition, the postural act being shifted into a social act, not so much of the individual, but of the regime²⁵. In the same order, the symbolic materials, integrated so far in the authorial profile, are not eluded from the postural reformulations, and that befalls at the rhetorical degree, even if it is systemically undesirable. For instance, Cella Serghi's first Socialist Realist novel – *Cad zidurile*, 1950 [*The Walls Are Falling*] fails in sterilizing the text of the inadequate narrative formulas to the new creative context. So, the plot of her works does not undergo substantial changes from one novel to another, permuting, instead, the social position of the protagonists, against the background of the same intrigues, ideological-literary conversion of Serghi resides in building a heroine of the revolutionary and progressive class.

From this point, the major paradox that overlaps to the doctrinal ratification acts consists precisely in the fact that the assumption of the new posture accompanied by the inherited symbolic repertoire destabilizes the consonance between the posture and ethos, as the author's action and rhetoric evade from its credibility and authority, resulting into a mimetic interface of the written exercise of the Realist Socialist method; and into an attitudinal ambiguity towards the ideological puritanism claimed above. If to some extent, Lucia Demetrius was an exception, Cella Serghi and Ioana Postelnicu remain illustrative cases of persuasive deficiencies, also that being the reason they do not even enjoy the same visibility in relation to their congener during the years of Stalinism in its essentialist version, at most the ratification assures to both of them the maintenance of their status as writers. As an effect of this, Cella Serghi's socialist realist novel, *Fetele lui Balotă* [*Balotă's Daughters*] is received with mistrust – for instance, Ion Lungu comments critically on her novel, asserting that “Cella Serghi has a combative attitude regarding the bourgeois moral and ideology, though she does not crystallise a central problem, the aim of the book is not sufficiently pithy and mobilising”²⁶. Nevertheless, doctrinal adherence marks the possibility of occupying new social and professional positions to which marginalized authors so far can candidate in the hope of restoring their status in the field. The publication of systemically convenient novels reveals two defining aspects for maintaining the author's state in the conditions of ideological purification of the literary discourse: a) the act of

²⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 27: “la posture constitue ainsi un espace transitionnel entre l'individuel et le collectif, corroborant la distinction de Gustave Lanson, pour qui l'écriture est un acte individuel, mais un acte social de l'individu”.

²⁶ See Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare românești*, VIII (1958–1959), București, Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, 2012, p. 150.

publication corresponding with the confirming of the author's identity – according to the scheme of Nathalie Heinich, that is contextually applied by Ioana Macrea-Toma in the analysis of the local field during Communism: self-perception (to be perceived as a writer), representation (to be exposed as such) and designation (to be recognized by others as a writer)²⁷ –, and the integration of the Socialist Realist method becomes immanent to the act of assertion, as the method remains the only viable currency in the system of cultural goods; b) highlighting the question of authorial responsibility, it is required a contextually understanding of responsibility. Once the laws for the functioning of the literary field are established and the role and tasks of the author are outlined in accordance with the desideratum of the ideology, the author's responsibility is redefined in terms of its politicization. Also worth noting is that the ethic and responsibilities, in the terms of Gisèle Sapiro, are defined against established morality and political conformism as a key of emergence in the autonomous literary field, contextually denying an independence from the political pole involve the risk of exclusion from writing profession field, at least. Therefore, the writers' systemic adherence confirms the observance of the responsibilities set by the regime, renouncing their ethics and responsibilities, through the ratification of the status quo:

writers defined their own ethics of responsibility against the values of conventional morality and political conformism through which their work was liable to condemnation [...]. Articulating these ethical principles affirmed the writer's independence from political and religious authorities and contributed to the emergence of an autonomous literary field²⁸.

Conclusions

Finally, removing the issue of authorship and postural acts from the dichotomy of post-war heteronomy versus inter-war autonomy, regarding the situation of the women prose writers who accumulate prestige inside of the old system and redefine their position in accordance with the rules of ideology, in this order some emphasis is required. Firstly, the postural definition in their case has not occurred into an autonomous framework of assertion in either stage. The introduction of these authors in literature by the leader of the Sburătorul group is equivalent to a postural predestination, rather than to the individual building of a singularized position with its own strategies. Most illustrative, in this sense of the assertion of women writers under identitarian constraints, are the pseudonyms that E. Lovinescu assigns to the female authors in a gesture of requisitioning their literary posture: Eugenia Banu ends up signing under the pseudonym Ioana Postelnicu, or

²⁷ See Ioana Macrea-Toma, *Privilighenja*, p. 70.

²⁸ Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre", *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 25, 2007, 1, pp. 2-3.

the authorial identity of Maria Ionescu-Aderca becomes Sanda Movilă. Then, the systemic changes of the late 1940s only marks a shift of the reins of control over the definition of postulation in the case of peripheral writers, concentrating the action and profile of the authors in a collective act of political glorification. If the reshaping of the position of women writers in France during the post-war period, especially after May '68, has occurred under the reshuffling of women's writing into an avant-garde movement whose aim was to deny the established men's monopoly; paradoxically, in Romania the women writers regroup into an avant-garde movement during the 50s (as far as Socialist Realism lays claim to constituting an avant-garde phenomenon that will replace the bourgeois inter-war cultural heritage), but not for defending their writing and their repositioning, but for consolidating the ideological establishment. Although, as for the legitimacy and validity of these positions (from the *feminine* figurative model to the posing as the heroines of the proletarian class) it would be reasonable to lean on the resistance and prestige over time of literary productions that embody these figurative representations, but about which can only be said that remained, more or less, lost bets in the economy of the evolution of the novel written by women during the last century.

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AUTHORSHIP POSTURES AND THE POSTURAL REFORMULATION
DURING THE 1950S. THE CASE OF WOMEN PROSE WRITERS: LUCIA
DEMETRIUS, IOANA POSTELNICU AND CELLA SERGHI

(Abstract)

Operating under a definition of authorial postures advanced by Jérôme Meizoz, the present study aims to identify the postures adopted by women prose writers who started asserting themselves in the interwar period and, later on, after 1948, partook in the doctrinal ratification process by publishing Socialist Realist novels. Thus, I have identified two overarching categories of postures that engaged literature written by women. In a first phase, I discuss a position that forcefully presses for the articulation of certain postures born of macho prejudice that have become established during the same period in the shape of such concepts as femininity and the feminine creative method, but which ultimately represent merely a strategy for the marginalization of the literary production of women. With the change of regime, which marked the capitalization of the creative space by the field of political power, the systemic adjustment of female prose writers is reified, at the rhetorical level, by revealing the social function of the text. The pretence of them being heroines of the proletarian class marks a radical change in behaviour and discourse from one epoch to the other. What we can conclude from this is that even at the level of an analysis of authorial postures, the minor community of women prose writers submits to predestined postural acts, rather than following the path of articulating an authorial posture, at least not as it was proposed by Meizoz.

Keywords: authorial postures, women prose writers, feminine creative method, Socialist realism, heroines of the proletarian class.

POSTURA AUCTORIALĂ ȘI NECESITATEA REFORMULĂRII ACTELOR
DE POSTURALITATE. CAZUL PROZATOARELOR: LUCIA DEMETRIUS,
IOANA POSTELNICU ȘI CELLA SERGHI
(Rezumat)

Articolul propune o analiză asupra strategiilor postulare mobilizate de scriitoarele Lucia Demetrius, Cella Serghi și Ioana Postelnicu în contextul literar al anilor '50. În sîajul reflecțiilor teoretice avansate de Jérôme Meizoz asupra noțiunii de postură ca proiecție figurală construită de agenții literari cu scopul ocupării anumitor poziții în câmp, analiza urmărește încercările de dislocare ale dispozițiilor literare consacrate scriitoarei, ca producătoare minoră, în cadrul sistemului literar redefinit în termenii heteronomizării prin dependența față de câmpul politic. Remanierile de după 1948 retrasează mizele competiției pentru legitimare, iar în această ordine, acțiunile postulare – suficiente pentru a-și menține statutul de scriitoare, dar nu și pentru ocuparea unor poziții favorabile – motivează intențiile de ascensiune în câmp prin ranforsarea gesturilor de ratificare sistemică. Subsumarea vieții literare la agenda partidului implică valorizarea unui capital politic existent în portofoliul Luciei Demetrius, bunăoară, și absent în cazul celorlalte. Capitalul politic și istoric (prin care în context se subînțeleg afilierea organice la valorile socialismului manifestate înainte de instaurare), devenite o valută centrală în raporturile de tranzacționare cu regimul, definesc jocurile postulare și determină credibilitatea și viabilitatea autoarelor în sistem. Acest lucru, de exemplu, justifică prestigiul conjunctural al Luciei Demetrius și eșecul Ioanei Postelnicu și al Cellei Serghi. Succesul temporal al Luciei Demetrius susținut de recunoașterile instituționale la care se adaugă prestigiul literar contracarează pozițiile ultimelor două. Traseul Ioanei Postelnicu și al Cellei Serghi în câmpul literar al anilor '50 relevă reproducerea de poziții și dispoziții printr-o evoluție mai degrabă inerțială pe marginea terenului de confruntări și prevestesc un model evolutiv falimentar pentru reabilitarea condiției scriitoarei care rămâne reprezentativ pentru destinul literar al femeilor în câmpul literar de-a lungul întregului interval postbelic.

Cuvinte-cheie: postură auctorială, proza scrisă de femei, metoda feminină de creație, realism socialist, eroinele clasei proletare.