



UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ,  
FARMACIE, ȘTIINȚE ȘI TEHNOLOGIE  
„GEORGE EMIL PALADE”  
DIN TÂRGU MUREȘ

**UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ, FARMACIE, ȘTIINȚE ȘI  
TEHNOLOGIE „GEORGE EMIL PALADE” DIN TÂRGU MUREȘ**

**ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE LITERE, ȘTIINȚE UMANISTE ȘI APLICATE  
DOMENIUL: FILOLOGIE**

**TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT**

**DOCTORAND:**

**Ancuța-Loredana BUNA (PAȘCAN)**

**CONDUCĂTOR ȘTIINȚIFIC:  
Prof. univ. dr. Iulian BOLDEA**

**TÂRGU MUREȘ**

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**MIHAI SIN. STUDIU MONOGRAFIC  
Rezumat**

**Doctorand:  
Ancuța-Loredana BUNA (PAȘCAN)**

**Conducător științific:  
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## MIHAI SIN. MONOGRAPHIC STUDY

Mihai Sin is one of the most important prose writers of the post-war period, a prominent figure of the "1970s generation", a writer difficult to frame, in his case the critical references were not too generous, at least after 1990, when interest in his work declined significantly, unjustifiably. In this doctoral thesis, we set out to interpret the personality and work of Mihai Sin, from a monographic perspective, primarily to emphasize the value of the work, the techniques that are at the basis of the construction of narrative discourse, the subject, the characters, but also to frame the contour of writing in a literary orientation, valuing the creation of the prose writer in the context of literature and in the consciousness of literary criticism.

The choice of theme was also a challenge because it can be said that Mihai Sin's texts encountered some resistance on their way to the public, the comprehension being hampered by the discontinuity of narrative discourse, alternating epic plans, interrupting the flow of ideas, understanding works presupposing an initiation into the language and structure of the modern epic, in the nuances of the novel discourse. Our research is based on the preoccupation of discovering the work of an authentic prose writer, of a publicist attentive to the details of the real, but also of a nuanced moralist. Mihai Sin's work is integrated in the poetics of realism, of a psychological tinge, the writer cultivating a certain neutrality of expression, investigating the contour of mentalities, from the perspective of the evolution of socio-cultural groups, revealed especially by the insertion of essay passages, with social-political themes. Another aspect refers to the fact that post-war literature has endured the consequences of communist ideology, the literary works assuming the limits imposed by censorship or abusive communist doctrine, Mihai Sin's creation obviously reflecting all these ideological weathering on the aesthetic.

Of course, the monographic intention of our research involves the exploration of the entire work of Mihai Sin, in close connection with the most relevant biographical aspects, to which we added the study of responses to surveys, interviews, with the purpose of shaping a complex profile that highlights the breadth of Mihai Sin's personality, the architecture of the work, the trajectory of a sinuous destiny, starting from the premise that "the study of the life of our most deserving writers cannot be done without preliminary stages of actual documentation, in libraries, archives or on the ground"<sup>1</sup>. In order to value the writer's personality, careful reading of the work has an essential role, because it differentiates the reader's perception from the authority of critical reception, reflecting the feeling of life and history, the timeliness of the work must be permanently related to the being of the world, overcoming the immediate toward a projection into the future, because, Alfred Adler writes in *Sensul vieții (The Meaning of Life)*, the vision that integrates the world comes from the necessity of integrating the human being into the collective "which he supported materially and spiritually, through the division of labour and diligence and through the

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea Angheliescu, *Echilibrul între antiteze. Heliade – o biografie*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2001, p. 316.

sufficient reproduction of the species"<sup>2</sup>. During the doctoral thesis we aim to follow the way in which certain biographical experiences (editorial activity at the "Vatra" magazine) opened the way to the development of the epic vocation. We also aim to outline an overview of the political and literary climate, before and immediately after 1989, to inscribe in a particular context the literary journey of the writer Mihai Sin, highlighting the defining elements of his creation in the context of contemporary literature. The destiny of a writer is therefore highlighted in the "frame" of an epoch, in which Romanian literature has known a sinuous, troubled, fragmentary trajectory.

The structure of the doctoral thesis corresponds to the objectives of the investigation, the doctoral thesis being structured in an *Argument* with an introductory role, five chapters and a set of conclusions. Knowledge of a writer's biography can guide the approach of the work from a new perspective, even if certain limits should not be transgressed in exploring the architecture of the text. Therefore, we set out to record the stages of Mihai Sin's biographical becoming (childhood, adolescence, youth, family aspects), from the perspective of some dimensions of existence that are found, more or less transfigured, in his creation, from suffering to illusions or disappointments.

The first chapter, *Biography and literature*, despite its expository character, is necessary to highlight some biographical details that had a significant impact on the work: difficult childhood, premature disappearance of the father, work and studies, professional career (Romanian language teacher in Nazna and Târgu Mureș, editor of "Vatra" magazine), the windings of emotional or family life, etc. After his literary debut in *Steaua* magazine, the books that legitimated Mihai Sin are published (*Așteptând în liniște*, 1973; *Viața la o margine de șosea*, 1975; *Bate și ți se va deschide*, 1978; *Terasa*, 1979; *Ierarhii*, 1981; *Cestiuni secundare – chestiuni principale* 1983; *Schimbarea la față*, 1985; *Rame și destin*, 1989; *Quo vadis, Domine*, 1993, *Reședința*, 1996; *Marea miză*, 2003, București, 2008; *Ispita izbăvirii*, 2013). Mihai Sin's literary activity experienced great moments from the perspective of critical reception, but also some moments of eclipse of comprehension, especially after 1990. The young writers formed around "Vatra" magazine represented a cultural nucleus that is distinguished by the appeal to the aesthetic factor being introduced in an elective atmosphere, a space of cultural and moral performance. Mihai Sin's texts prove, subliminal or premeditated, responsibility for the act of writing and for the condition of the writer.

This chapter also refers to the writer's passion for literature, to the trajectory of creativity, to the literary awards and distinctions that reconfirmed his value, even though Mihai Sin's work was sometimes marginalized, the readers being those who appreciate a certain creation over time, the reactions of the critical reception being eloquent regarding the stature and importance of the books of the writer from Târgu Mureș. *Scurtă istorie a receptării critice* (A brief history of critical reception), an important chapter division, reveals the most important moments of critical reception, with the accidents that occurred, especially after 1990, when Sin's prose was marginalized, placed in a shadow cone. Important are, from this perspective, the interviews given by the writer, but also

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Adler, *Sensul vieții*, traducere, cuvânt înainte și note de dr. Leonard Gavrilu, Editura Iri, București, 1995, p. 20.

the dialogues with Mrs. Anca Sin, the writer's wife, university professor, dialogues that had the gift of projecting interest on some details and unique aspects of Mihai Sin's biography and work. Alongside Augustin Buzura, Gabriela Adameşteanu, Mircea Ciobanu or Eugen Uricaru, Mihai Sin made his debut on the Romanian literature scene through a strong and firm voice, his work having as foundation his own life experiences, and a strong emphasis of the existential actuality can be identified in these texts, of the daily life strongly captured by the observations and the epic description. Many of the characters have the status of "spokespersons" of the author, who thus exposes his point of view on the world and on the Romanian society of that time, in a mobile, available writing, consisting of a mixture of journalism and prose, by blunt observation and lucid reflection on the world.

The accents of social psychology, noted in the early stories, were an epic exercise for the novels that followed, which revolved around the concept of problematic literature, novels that are distinguished by the impersonal character of writing, by a certain austerity of expression, and through a particular perception of the characters, which develops its existence under the spectrum of artificial, but also under the auspices of a predetermined destiny, but is also distinguished through the narrative configuration of minor themes, devoid of heroic or emphatic resonances, Ion Simuţ noting as dominant of the work mediocrity, failure, apathy, loneliness, themes treated in a serious note, in a rigorous-reflective tone.

Representing in his books the immediate actuality, the writer assumes an analytical and eventful epic register, the emphasis being placed on the less spectacular side of human existence, the daily offering the prose writer experiences that materialize in themes subject to authentic lucid analysis, because sometimes the inner threat precipitates the existential game, generating painful revelations. In short prose and novels, the condition of fragile, depersonalized characters is illustrative, outlined in an expression of neutral realism, with subversive allusions to the alienating historical context, but also with some ideation or even ideological accents that exceed the limits of realistic discourse. Mihai Sin structured an epic attitude of his own, by revealing the atmosphere of domestic existence, of everyday life, grey, seemingly banal, his novels becoming, but also parables of power, or allegories of the lonely man, at the heart of an alienating history, so that it was possible to ascertain the existence of a certain metaphysics of the real, of some nostalgic reverberations, by trying to decipher the mechanisms of the human soul and of the Romanian society.

The second chapter, *Universul prozei scurte (The universe of short prose)*, refers to the complexity of the thematic universe of short prose, in the sequence of publishing the volumes that marked the evolution and creative path of Mihai Sin, through the interest for the universe of the "obsessive decade", through which the authenticity of the narration combines with the obvious moral atmosphere, the sequences of the epic having in subsidiary numerous representations of clear ethics, suggested with expressiveness of the writing. The promotion of short prose was a concern and a program consistently followed in the pages of "Vatra" magazine, Mihai Sin considering that short prose implies and imposes the need for actuality, for direct and immediate

approach to reality. The research into the short prose will highlight specific themes, motives and dominant characters, the analyses covering a well-defined route of the epic structure. The interpretation of the volume of stories *Așteptând în liniște* (*Waiting in silence*) will insist especially on the moral universe, each story revealing, through defining emphasize, the specifics of the destiny of certain characters who intend to expose themselves in a unique way in the realm of a disturbing real. An inner journey is materialized in the volume of short prose *Teresa*, which articulates, in precise forms, a whole world captured from the perspective of small gestures or events consisting of deep feelings, events with unique status or certain repetitive gestures. The volume, composed of fifteen stories, is a sum of journeys, each story describing a journey, in the real world or in the imaginary one, relevant being the emphasis placed on the feelings, on the inner states of the characters.

With a narrator represented as a discreet presence, a narrator who prefers not to disturb the waters of destiny and rather to capture their secret wave, the narratives distinguish through a logical chain, the writer generally rendering the essence of the order of things, highlighting the causes that disturb their contours, which activates their sensitivity to change. The volume *Rame și destin* (*Frames and destiny*) includes, in the six stories, written in a sober style, unflinching style, contemporary biographies, in which the destiny of errors is carefully recovered, even though the opacity of the heroes is barely suggested by the "nostalgic gleam" of thought. For the narrator, the dream can be nothing more than an endless nightmare, in the extension of a monotonous existence, which becomes incomplete, because the austerity of the authorial commentary goes beyond the abundant gestures of the characters. It can be appreciated that Mihai Sin's short prose volumes have as common denominator the complexity of the characters, through which reality is represented, the writer capitalizing on the technique of non-hero characters, which has as consequence, in terms of narrative architecture, a simplification of the story in the register of assumed honesty, while the human condition is surprised in its natural relations with the world.

I examined the volumes of short prose (short stories, stories, sketches), interpreting the preferred topics: illness, death, old age, insomnia, fatigue, psychological aggression, knowledge and transgress of one's limits, the feeling of abandonment, the state of revolt and the sense of failure. The characters of short prose are "ordinary people", people without (too many) qualities, the writer being attentive to the facts of everyday reality, from the need to catch up, the ambition to directly address the immediate realities, simply the perceivable.

Mihai Sin's short prose, contained in three volumes (*Așteptând în liniște*, *Teresa*, *Rame și destin*), legitimizes the prose writer's ability to set in his pages the natural, the authentic, the reality of daily life, in a writing of direct notations, whereby the simplicity of the expression is the result of the effort to mimetically represent the ordinary, the everyday, suggesting the symbolic character of minor events in the life of some ordinary people. Mihai Sin's vocation was, in fact, short prose, passionately cultivated, in a transparent, impersonal style, even "wilfully white" in which recurring themes are captured, caught in the fabric of small events, which summarize old age, fatigue, boredom, failure, fear, aggression, rebellion, fear of risk, death. In fact, Mihai Sin's characters

defend themselves from the vital, gregarious impertinence of those around them through an unusual way of perceiving existence, his prose denouncing the indifferent greed of habit that causes an indisputable moral restlessness. Mihai Sin remains devoted to realistic-objective prose, sensitive to the avatars of reality and to the revelations of destiny.

The transition from the analysis of short prose to the interpretations of novels is made from the perspective of the relationships, affiliations and convergences that are established between stories and short stories and novel creations. The novels, like some short stories, feature the theme of couples' loneliness. In the novel *Bate și ți se va deschide* (*Knock and it will be opened*) your personal history, the protagonist's destiny is represented by the symbolic image of a journey, a journey that gives him the sensation of escaping from the daily routine, through the lens of an indescribable nostalgia. As he moves away from everyday life, from the gestures of ordinary existence, the character deepens more and more in the inner time, in the depths of his own consciousness. The novel of the journey is intertwined with the novel of love for Natalia and with the repeated confrontations, the inner time being especially that of confession, Octavian Șteflea looking for his reason to survive, rather than legitimizing his own identity.

The stakes of Mihai Sin's books are represented by the truth with a psychological outline, the substance of these books being structured from an analytical perspective. The characters (Octavian Șteflea from *Bate și ți se va deschide*, Pavel Mamina from *Ierarhii*) are complex, authentic, distinguishing themselves through an existential conduct drawn with precision and attention to significant details, through a sum of epic procedures and modalities appropriate to the content. Placed under the exigencies of a writing bearing the investiture of the will to authenticity, "the character is not figured in a flat dimension, but is rather a multiform, centrifugal projection of his own past, absorbing in himself, with equal force, the torment of guilt and the bliss of expiation"<sup>3</sup>. The illusion of the search for truth places the character in the status of a witness, a witness situated between his own interiority with habits and obsessions and the detachment of the contemplative aspect.

As the critic Iulian Boldea observes, "the eloquence of the parable and the ritual of analysis are not the premises under the auspices of which Mihai Sin's characters regain their ontological contours, defining themselves at the level of the events that require them, but also from the perspective of their inner clarifications performed by themselves. Too little act and rather a cathartic oscilloscope of his own psychological doubts fuelled by the alluvium of the past, the character crystallizes in a tensed progression between deception and disillusionment, between retreat from affectivity and the perception aggression of the real"<sup>4</sup>. The character thus resorts to a pact of authenticity because Mihai Sin's books reunite the soul document, through a kind of mythology of the ego that can be identified here by deciphering the soul mechanisms of the heroes and by the mechanisms of psychological analysis and exploration in a new realist style of the

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<sup>3</sup> Iulian Boldea, *Scriitori români contemporani*, Editura Ardealul, Târgu Mureș, p.125.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 126.



contour of a confused reality. The characters, traumatized by the past, which no longer give them the foundation of an ordering sense or because of a present with a confusing trajectory, have a “deconstructed”, artificial aspect, from analytical excess or from demonstrative and introspective exaggerations. It could thus be said that the destinies of the characters seem to be, in a certain way, predetermined, insofar as the initial premises and springs of the heroes' gestures are in the past, their present initiatives being subordinated to scenarios from another age of theirs, so that the characters have a palimpsest structure, with present gestures that overlap with gestures from the past, in a suggestive ontological vehemence.

In this sense, the journey, equally symbolic and tragic, of Octavian Șteflea from *Bate și ți se va deschide* has, as the critic Anton Cosma observes a subjective component, by the withdrawal of the character in the past, but also an objective component, because the space path has the dynamics of an initiatory character, resembling the allure of a descent into the inferno of existence. Confession, a return to the past, and meditation on history, the world, and one's condition alternate with realistic observation, and the will for inner clarification is combined with the imperative of deciphering the signs and meanings of reality in a narrative discourse that puts at stake the effects of remembrance through confession and norms epistolary genre, analysis, and perception of the objective world through careful observation of significant details.

The protagonist of the novel *Schimbarea la față (The transfiguration)*, Iuliu Brendea lives in the sphere of a utopia of eros, "drawn with lucidity and sensitivity from the perspective of the unstable and relative relationship between adaptation and compromise", because "the epiphany of eros (Brendea's love for Valeria) represents no not only an commitment of a being in a regime of bliss and the mirage of devotion, but also a recourse to the entropy of reality, to the carnival spectacle of the world”<sup>5</sup>. The existential status of Iuliu Brendea, but also of other characters (Pavel Mamina, etc.) is based on the need for lucidity and the fascination of utopia, the temptation of a chimeric space in opposition to the expressiveness of the daily. It could be said that Mihai Sin's characters are to a certain extent lurking in the danger of "demonstration", of a certain thesis, which is mitigated by their complex status, by their "moved", unstable features, by the subtlety with which the voices of the characters and the voice of the narrator intersect, even though their author still had "the destiny of those who build thoroughly and unspectacularly, the destiny of the true"<sup>6</sup>.

The novel *Quo vadis, Domine?* proposes a double perspective, epic and ethical, the author representing, through deeds, gestures, characters and events, the image of an infernal universe, with thick, caricatured lines, also revealing the moral implications that these facts and characters assume, the epic emphasis being placed on the main character, Dominic Vanga, whose destiny, marked by the image of the infernal world in which he lives, is structured by psychological analysis, behavioural description or by strong recollections. Mihai Sin's novels feature, in an authentic register, parables of human power and solitude in the face of an alienating history, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Culcer, 1976: 225.

parable and the interrogation being the essential ethical strategies of these important novels of the 70s "generation". *Ierarhii (Hierarchies)* is another important novel, through which the narrator seems to seek the path of redemption, but of an individual redemption, the novel orienting itself in another dimension, that of a meditation on the contemporary world, by renewing writing, leaving the patterns or canons of the ordinary and the entry into another dimension, that of reflection on history. In this way, the novel values diverse socio-cultural categories and environments, exposing the typology of the lonely man, aware of his destiny, the weather, and the degradation of corporal.

Always in search of the self, the character, especially in *Schimbarea la față*, exposes the adventure of his existence, the theme of loneliness being the one that prevails in this novel, a solitude through which the prose writer eliminates everything that is not necessary for the narrative, to highlight a dense epic matter, with numerous events and interwoven behaviours. Throughout the novel we do not learn much about the character's biography, but one can notice that he is an individual receptive to what the other characters have to say, with a developed critical spirit. The novel *Quo vadis, Domine?* was received with difficulty by literary criticism, Mihai Sin being considered a prose writer in a descending stage of his literary career, the two volumes, especially the first, triggering some of the most unexpected reactions, some of an inexplicable aggressiveness, perhaps from the perspective of the events reported in the novel, of some scenes and characters that aroused animosities in the post-revolution period. The theme of redemption is, in Mihai Sin's novel, particularly relevant, having biblical connotations of salvation, the references to the biblical text revealing us another dimension of the writer, a writer who gives faith the chance of redemption, emphasizing the meanings of love as a way of being essential, as in the novel *Ispita izbăvirii (The temptation of redemption)*. In the last secondary chapter of the third chapter I will outline a typology of the characters in Mihai Sin's books, by grouping the main and secondary characters, but also by making correlations between them, seeking to reveal the proper place of each character in the whole ensemble of Mihai Sin's creation, but also some analogies, correspondences or convergences between the heroes of Mihai Sin and the characters of other well-known Romanian writers (Gavrilescu, from *La țigănci*, Ștefan Gheorghidiu, from *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*, but also some of the characters of Nicolae Breban).

The third chapter, *Structuri narative în romanele lui Mihai Sin (Narrative structures in Mihai Sin's novels)*, examines the novel universe, through careful analysis of these parables of human power and loneliness in the face of an alienating history, by revealing the scores of an authentic and serious epic memory. There is a tendency in Mihai Sin's novels towards a psychological realism, since the debut novel, *Viața la o margine de șosea (Life at a roadside)*, with a trivial subject and common characters, in which the objectivity of the vision meets the sobriety of writing, the writer's attention not being directed on external reality so much, but on the feelings, on the affections, on the inner architecture of the being, with interrogations, ecstasies and anguish, so that the violence, the tragic, the absurd, the everyday summarize the meanings of a prose of observation of social mentalities, with some expressionist accents.

Mihai Sin confessed his desire to configure the epic armour of novels with sociographic meanings or nuclei, inserting in the epic structure fragments of journalistic discourse, which sometimes refutes the logic of the narrative, through a somewhat confusing amalgam of epic and essayistic discourse. The novels *Bate și ți se va deschide* and *Schimbarea la față* represent the apogee of Mihai Sin's creation, the prose writer capitalizing on an essayistic type of prose, with a pronounced realistic fingerprint, but also with extremely relevant parable accents. Along with the novel *Quo vadis, Domine?*, Mihai Sin's prose seems to enter a shadowy cone of critical reception, even though the writer continued to believe in the destiny of his novel: "And I also believe that, one day, maybe even close, true motives for the 'campaign' of more than a decade ago will come to light, proving the nakedness, the lack of scruples and even the wickedness of some who, since the 1990s, have not ceased to call themselves opinion leaders, in fact belonging to a false "elite" that has spread, I think, a lot of havoc, confusion and huge amounts of defeatism in Romanian society and world"<sup>7</sup>.

*Ispita izbăvirii (The temptation of redemption)*, the last book, the one in which Mihai Sin reunited his searches, interrogations, turmoil, expectations and disappointments, is a novel of the human condition, with geographical extension and identity dilemmas, a social novel, but at the same time political novel of actuality and the continuous present, which unfolds before our eyes, with its immediate consequences or long-term impact, in which we are often characters and witnesses. Recovering biographical sequences, characters with fulfilled or failed destinies, diverted from a natural course of history, the novel suggests in its depth the possibility of redemption. In fact, Mihai Sin's novels expose, in fact, parables of the power and loneliness of the human being in front of a tragic history, Cornel Moraru underlining the importance of the world perception, "moral intransigence", but also the dynamics of involvement of the creative self in his own text, even when his attitude would seem detached, impersonal. That is why Mihai Sin captures, in his books, "the truth of the characters and the metamorphoses of the human condition in extreme situations, framed by a narrative flow dominated by referent and self-referent"<sup>8</sup>.

The substance of the writing encompasses, in the case of Mihai Sin, the quality of the observation of reality, with the essayistic and publicist exercise and the reflection on the avatars of history, in a style that imposed itself through sobriety, importance and nuance. All these dominants of Mihai Sin's prose style are analysed in the chapter *Dimensiuni stilistice (Stylistic dimensions)*, which demonstrates the idea that the writer tends towards a psychological realism, with sociological accents, especially in the debut novel, *Viața la o margine de șosea (Life at a Roadside)*, where the subject is banal, the hero is not distinguished by anything from other people, it is common, all these elements being represented epically in an objective, sober style, by a certain neutrality of vision. On the other hand, there are certain thematic dimensions of the work (violence,

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<sup>7</sup> Mihai Sin, *Quo vadis, Domine?*, vol. I, Editura Nemira, București, 2007, coperta IV.

<sup>8</sup> Iulian Boldea, *Destin și istorie: proza lui Mihai Sin*, în revista „Limba română”, nr. 4-5, 2020, p. 39.

the tragic, the absurd, the intensely focused contingent), through which Mihai Sin's prose tends towards expressionist amplitude of the observation of social mentalities.

It can be appreciated that both the volumes of stories and Mihai Sin's novels highlight a style that is characterized by conciseness, clarity and firmness, but also by an abundant, polychrome, diversified discourse. On the other hand, from the pages of testimonies and confessions, it is revealed that Mihai Sin fervently believes in his writing, in a manner involved and dedicated to a multifaceted reality. After 1990 we can speak of a marginalization of the writer, his two volumes, *Quo vadis, Domine?* triggering a series of negative, controversial reactions, Mihai Sin retiring for a period to Târgu Mureș, where he developed a university teaching career. The secondary chapter *Abordări stilistice (Stylistic approaches)* is dedicated to the approach of short prose books and novels from the perspective of stylistic comments and interpretations, in order to demonstrate the aesthetic value and expressiveness of these creations.

*Publicistica (The Journalism)* chapter is dedicated to a significant position of Mihai Sin's literary activity, that of publicist in "Vatra" magazine, essayist, noting also the activity of a politician of the writer, who was editor of "Vatra" magazine, where together with Romulus Guga and Dan Culcer laid the foundations of an important national and international culture magazine. After Romulus Guga's untimely death, Cornel Moraru will be in charge of the magazine "Vatra" for a long time, who kept the magazine at a high value by publishing important creations, belonging to writers with resonance in the Romanian literature. After 1989, Mihai Sin left for Bucharest, to the Albatros Publishing House, where he will hold the position of manager for a while, after which he was appointed cultural attaché at the Romanian Embassy in Tel Aviv, in 1992, and then returned to Târgu Mureș, where will pursue a university teaching career at the University of Arts. In many of his interviews, Mihai Sin talks about a change, a necessary recovery in the field of literature and in the field of journalism, or in politics.

In the journalistic volume *Cestiuni secundare. Chestiuni principale (Secondary Issues. Main issues)*, since 1983, Mihai Sin brings together reports, essays, articles and interviews published in *Vatra* magazine. In fact, journalism, newspaper articles, press quotes bring some of Sin's novels closer to what we call document novels, the essayist considering that alongside novels, the space of journalism is important both as a way of knowing the real and as an exercise in stylistic asceticism, by appealing to the objectification of the vision, to the fading of one's own emotion for the benefit of the adequate, impersonal treatment of the world, of the social, of the daily existence of people. Also important is the volume of essays *Marea miză (The great stake)*, in which relevant are about the same obsessions and dominant themes of the writer, Mihai Sin revealing, through this book, but also through *Cestiuni secundare. Chestiuni principale (Secondary issues. Main issues)* are the experiences that formed him as a writer, in a direct or more veiled expression, which denotes Mihai Sin's concern for building valuable literary works, through which to integrate into a tradition of Romanian prose for which aesthetics and ethics are closely correlated values. The set of conclusions at the end of the doctoral thesis summarizes the comments, interpretations and analyzes on the present text, demonstrating the writer's belonging to the generation of the 1970s,

the strongly individualized physiognomy of his prose, but also the presence of possible influences of previous prose, emphasizing of knowing such an epic model by highlighting the defining notes of an important writer of post-war Romanian prose.

Mihai Sin considers that journalism can be distinguished as a model for training for the young prose writer, the “school” of reportage, short prose, the novel representing stages of the formation of a prose writer. In the reports, the writer focuses on the detail, with remarkable expressive effects, because, starting from the real data, the prose writer is concerned with the deep meaning of the scenes, events, and characters. Concerned with the condition of the novel, Mihai Sin reveals in his book *Marea miză* (2003) some queries about this literary species, denouncing "mimetic lethargy" and subaltern dialogue with other cultures, dismantling the myth of the great novel, or the obsessions of its reception, because the novel and its readers are territories that must be conquered and recaptured, the novel being requested in order to identify the person's exit from the state of stillness, of lethargy. The volume of essays *Marea miză* exposes the obsessions of the contemporary Romanian novelist, but also the revelations of integration in a well-known tradition: "As the years have passed, after the fall of communism, much of the 'subversive' literature no longer seems so subversive, and as for the 'dissident' is concerned, authors and works can be even more severely questioned, if not by contestation"<sup>9</sup>.

The destiny of Mihai Sin's work is a sinuous one, his prodigious literary activity suggesting the profile of a distinct personality, of a publicist, prose writer, novelist, magazine editor, publishing manager, cultural attaché at the embassy, university professor, a numerously talented profile, of authentic value and creative force.

During this monographic research, I tried to explore and interpret the most relevant aspects of Mihai Sin's biography and work, capturing his creation both from the perspective of significant aesthetic and ethical valences, as well as from the perspective of the relationship between work and epoch, between text and context, a context specific to the period dominated by the communist dictatorship, in which culture, literature and implicitly the writers had to bear the pressure of the coercive and alienating ideological factor. Of course, the writers' reaction to ideological control was different, from acceptance and collaboration to discreet or less discreet evasion or even to some form of resistance, through which creators tried to evade the mechanisms of censorship. In this regard, Mihai Sin expressed, in his texts, an acute, firm awareness of the artistic condition, lucidly assuming his own destiny, developing current themes, anchored in the socio-political reality of the historical moment, considering that, in this complex perspective, the existence of a writer focuses on a relevant image, anchored at the intersection between a time of the present and one of the past.

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<sup>9</sup> Mihai Sin, *Marea miză*, p. 101.

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