

"GEORGE EMIL PALADE" UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE, PHARMACY, SCIENCES AND
TECHNOLOGY FROM TARGU MUREȘ

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LETTERS, HUMANITIES AND APPLIED SCIENCES
FIELD: PHILOLOGY

THESIS

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TÂRGU MUREȘ
2022

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AUGUSTIN BUZURA – PROSE AND LUCIDITY SUMMARY

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Augustin Buzura is an important prose writer of Romanian literature, about whom much has been written, the writer being considered a trailblazer in literature in a historical period subject to ideological restrictions and abuses. The themes and motives, the literary techniques that the prose writer frequently uses in his creation strengthen the status of originality of the literary work, whose message, of a special depth, emerges from the subtext being an expression of the novelist's conception of literature and life, a message bearer of truth, which emerges from a tangle of meanings, revealed in the substance of the narrative and beyond it, his novels, published both before and after the revolution, drawing the profile of a prose writer of a certain value, with some characteristics that give value to the work: the epic architecture, the fate of the characters, the ethical tension and the originality of the narrative style.

Augustin Buzura writes, in agreement with some trends of contemporary prose, a literature characterized by the subjectivity of the discourse, having the ego, the idea of individuality, at the center of the narrative structures, thus highlighting a prose that is distinguished by the multiplication and relativization of epic perspectives. There is no doubt that the preferred compositional techniques are the recourse to the sedimentation of memory, the stream of consciousness, the repudiation of omniscience, involuntary memory, the presence of the narrator-character, the authenticity of the utterance and the insertion of the character-reflector, all of which are circumscribed in a broad epic structure, in a composition which aims to go beyond laws, rules and aesthetic norms.

The doctoral thesis Augustin Buzura – prose and lucidity aims to provide an overall perspective on the prose of Augustin Buzura, fixing the place that the novelist occupies in the literary context of the 1970-2000 years, starting from the idea that his novels represent true radiographs of Romanian society. One of the most important writers of contemporary Romanian literature, Augustin Buzura is, above all, a seeker of the truth, an authentic novelist who approaches in his literature different epic ways, a writer who capitalizes on multiple strategies and narrative structures of a certain originality. Buzura's novels, starting with *Absences* (1970), *The Faces of Silence* (1974), *Pride* (1977), *Voices of the Night* (1980), *Refugees* (1984), *The Ash Road* (1988), then continuing with *Requiem for Fools and Beasts* (1999) or *Report on Loneliness* (2009) were published in large circulations in the country and abroad, being republished or translated into several languages.

Augustin Buzura is considered one of the most well-known and appreciated contemporary prose writers, books, studies and extensive articles have been dedicated to his work, some of which are reluctant towards some dimensions of the work, due to the social and political context in which the writer published novels. During the communist period, although his books suffered due to ideological censorship, Augustin Buzura was widely appreciated by the reading public. Capitalizing on the social aspect, the themes of his novels materialize in genuine internal debates of the human conscience marked by censorship, the humanist spirit or the avatars of the political world. The subjects of the novels of psychological analysis extract their substance mainly from the urban universe, Augustin Buzura revealing the inner turmoil of psychologically, socially or morally motivated consciences, in a true spectacle of writing that harmoniously combines psychological introspection, the description of the concrete, the essay and novel narrative formulas, elements that place Augustin Buzura among the personalities of contemporary Romanian literature.

In order to carry out the study we propose, the objectives of the research had in mind the highlighting of the actuality of Augustin Buzura's works (serious language, the social-historical preeminence of the themes, the condition of the intellectual, the theme of human inadequacy,

loneliness, survival or death), identifying the particularities prose (analytical resources and psychological dominance, inner conflicts, philosophical issues, the presence of some dilemmatic, inconsistent, indeterminate, atypical characters), the representation of the essential existential situations of modern man (death, alienation, existential failure, solitude, the absurd), but also the relief of the techniques and narrative procedures (unbalanced, seemingly chaotic construction, with discontinuities, overlaps, parallelisms, insertions of non-fictional documents, etc.).

Thus, we sought to apply an appropriate reading grid that clarifies the particularities of vision, attitude and writing of the prose writer, trying to expose some elements of originality in the angle of approaching Augustin Buzura's prose from the perspective of the concept of lucidity, knowing that the prose writer he built his work from the perspective of the ideas of truth, consciousness or the confrontation between the individual and history. We followed the realization of an analytical approach embodied in an interpretive examination attentive to details and to the whole of Augustin Buzura's prose, the research being extended also to the creations after 1989, in order to highlight the evolution of Augustin Buzura's prose. The essential objective of the doctoral thesis is represented by revealing the concept of lucidity in the prose of Augustin Buzura, but also other distinctive features of the creation, starting with the writings from the communist period, marked by the constraints of ideology and censorship and continuing with the novels published in the 2000s, establishing a natural continuity, a correspondence between the stages of creative evolution, through a contribution to the critical reception of the prose of an important writer of contemporary Romanian literature.

This doctoral thesis aims to interpret the work of Augustin Buzura in the spirit of a comprehensive perception of these literary works in which the emphasis is placed on the existential issue. In this sense, the literary texts were approached both as a product of some external factors and as a particular, intrinsic universe, highlighting at the same time the role played by Augustin Buzura in the evolution of contemporary Romanian prose. Thus, our interpretation aims at becoming creative, crossing several periods of literary creation, without omitting the influences and confluences, but also the restrictions imposed by the communist censorship.

In order to achieve the proposed objectives, I capitalized on the method of comparative analysis, structuring the doctoral thesis in five chapters, each consisting of several subchapters. The first chapter reveals some information about the writer's biography, the socio-cultural context in which his literary creations were published, following a general or theoretical opening, after which four chapters are configured with a predominantly applied, analytical character, the doctoral thesis thus following the general - particular trajectory, highlighting a deductive one, from the concept of lucidity to its analysis in texts considered representative for our objective.

The first chapter is an incursion into the existence of the writer Augustin Buzura, carried out with the aim of exploring some contextual elements and dimensions that generated the universe of his works, highlighting at the same time the place the novelist occupied in the Romanian literary landscape. This chapter, titled *Between text and context*, captures moments of the writer Augustin Buzura's biography and his literary activity. The memories from his childhood as a horticulturist in Ardeal, the scenes during collectivization, his parents and the people who influenced his life, the first school years spent in his native village, Berința, and in Copalnic-Mănăstur, the high school years from Baia Mare, then the interval between high school and college, a period that represented a rich experience for the writer, all these moments being true landmarks of his novels.

Augustin Buzura makes his debut during the student period in the magazine "Tribuna", a publication with which a good part of his literary and journalistic destiny is linked, after which he publishes two volumes of short prose, *Capul bunei speranțe* and *De ce zboară vulturul*. Once the

novels appeared *The Absentees*, *The Faces of Silence*, *The Pride*, *The Voices of the Night*, *The Refugees* and *The Ash Road*, the prose writer becomes one of the established writers of his generation, his novels bringing him an important and well-deserved success with the public. The novelist continues his creative activity even after the revolution, publishing the novel *Requiem for Fools and Beasts*, a book that captures with acuteness and attention to detail the Romanian society in transition from communism to democracy.

The writer carries out an important activity in the area of promoting culture, becoming, in 1992, a member of the Romanian Academy and coordinator of important cultural bodies, the Romanian Cultural Foundation and the Romanian Cultural Institute. The writer extends his concerns to other spheres of literature, provocative, journalistic or confessional, publishing books of essays, interviews and articles (*Notebook*, *Temptation of waste*, *Terror of illusion - conversations with Crisula Ștefănescu*, *To live, to write*). Illustrative are the efforts of the man of culture Augustin Buzura to impose on the international level the Romanian Cultural Foundation and the Romanian Cultural Institute, projects to which he dedicated a large part of his efforts in the last years of his life, institutions that have become active means of promoting Romanian culture abroad, the prose writer's books being well received by the reading public both before and after 1989, Augustin Buzura being part of the elite of our contemporary prose.

In this chapter I interpreted the epic formulas of Augustin Buzura's novels, starting with the novel *Absences* and ending with *Requiem for Fools and Beasts*, epic formulas that include the inner monologue of the individual in a continuous confrontation with his own self and with society. In this chapter I highlighted the role of the author who prints a projection of himself in the watermark of the text, at the same time creating a correlation between the narrator and the character. The modern narrative techniques used by the writer were highlighted (the flow of involuntary memory, the technique of storytelling in the frame, the monologue internalized in the confession, retrospection or anticipation, the alternation of past and future tenses or the use of metanarrative, the free indirect style that involves combining the marks of direct speech with those of indirect speech etc.). By means of the inner monologue, the novelist explores the level of psychological truth, managing to reproduce in detail the inner turmoil of the characters, the flow of thoughts and their authentic experiences, the technique of the inner monologue being defined narratologically as recording the flow of thoughts as they unfold in the plane of consciousness, through changes and mutations of the epic rhythm, through discontinuity and apparent narrative redundancy. The compositional techniques are subject to the stream of consciousness or involuntary memory, the introduction of the narrator-character or the character- reflector, the annulment of the idea of an omniscient narrator, characteristics of Augustin Buzura's prose that are complemented by subjectivity, self-orientation, first-person narration, multiplied and relativized perspective or the idea of permanently emphasized individuality.

An important representative of his generation, a novelist of undeniable narrative power, Augustin Buzura established himself through a meticulous elaboration of epic constructions, nuanced with rigor and accuracy in the literary text, so that the novel becomes an x-ray of society as a whole. Through these processes of successive epic processing, the modes and narrative strategies gain from a qualitative point of view, the subjects being selected mainly from the urban environment, so that, with the competition of psychological analysis, the writer probes the abysses of the restless consciousness, through the conjunction of specific techniques such as introspection, description or the essay, all of which harmoniously integrate into the epic fabric of the novels.

Like the other writers of this period, the novelist resorts to the inner monologue as a narratological pretext that has the role of exploring the inner universe of the characters, where the

imaginary is not subject to any control, the characters express themselves freely, directly, through speeches characterized by the simplicity of the syntax, all with the aim of creating the impression of the ordinary, of the common, through a constant appeal to the seemingly dull relief of everyday life. Based on allegory and parable, the language of the literary works is highly intellectualized, it is addressed to a cultured public, it being known that reading Augustin Buzura's novels is not easy. Having strong social connections, the themes of the novels turn into genuine inner debates of consciences dominated by a deep humanistic and ethical spirit, the moral issue being one of the favorite themes of the novelist's literary creations.

In accordance with contemporary trends, in the writings of Augustin Buzura, multiple narrative planes can be found, the past-present alternation creating a truthful picture of social history, through which the writer performs an in-depth analysis of the human soul and equally of individual or collective consciousness. The dramas of the characters are projected against the background of history, which becomes the pretext for the dramas of some people, and they are imposed by the depth of the feelings and the turmoil of the soul that they have to face. Moreover, in many of his writings, the narrator becomes an alter-ego of the protagonist, the narrative sequences being supervised by the evocative appearance of significant characters that give substance to the literary text.

The interweaving of the two epic instances, narrator and character, considers the fusion between the function of representation, interpretation and control, other recurrent narrative techniques being the story in the frame, the internalized monologue, found par excellence in the confessions of the characters, the alternation of past-future tenses or the free indirect style. Consequently, Augustin Buzura fully capitalized on the resources of the modern epic, using the imprecision of the narrative plans, the analysis within the analysis, the direct style or the free indirect style, the stereotypes of thought, the juxtaposed dialogues, through all these the prose writer suggests the authenticity of the flow of rapid thought and penetrating.

The second chapter, *Typologies of prose*, represents a space of analysis and interpretation, exploring Augustin Buzura's books, starting with the first novel, *Absenții* (1970), then continuing with *Fețele tacerii* (1974), *Orgolii* (1977), *Vocile nopții* (1980), *Refugii* (1984), *Drumul cenușii* (1988), *Recviem pentru nebuni și bestii* (1999) or *Raport asupra singurătății* (2009), really important novels, which capture favorite themes of history (the topos of destiny, the theme of alterity, the obsession with failure or alienation in front of the aggressive primal spirit, etc.). We thus highlighted the role of the first novel published in 1970, *Absenții*, which establishes Augustin Buzura as a thorough, penetrating analyst, representative of the literature of that era. Having a complex epic structure, the book represents the diaristic transcription of an experience, the action unfolding in a limited time - about two and a half hours - in the form of a true moral diary in which the author notes in detail the sensations of life caused by revolt and anguish. The narrative is discontinuous, it alternates with the confession, and the image of a traumatic childhood is transposed into the psyche, the past intertwining with the present in a pose close to the realm of the dream. *Absenții* thus becomes a modern prose approach to the existentialist novel, a lucid and coherent analysis of the main character, Mihai Bogdan, a suspicious and outraged young psychiatrist who seeks salvation in irony. The theme is the anguish of waiting, solitude blending harmoniously with representations of temporality. The protagonist is waiting for the solution that will tear him out of isolation, Mihai Bogdan pursuing the alignment of the inner, subjective plane with the outer, objective one, in order to find a common, adequate language with the world. The novelist manages to outline the inner restlessness of the character with the help of symbols from the material world: a broken clock, the old bed, the dirty water from the street, the thin walls or

the doorbell, objects that support the illusion of normality in a world that seems to have lost its landmarks .

The second novel, published in 1974, *Fețele tăcerii*, has as its starting point the theme of violence, alienation and culpability, all of which are subject to the history of two social destinies, two possible faces of the same reality in an opening to objective prose. The narrative is built around two destinies - that of the journalist Dan Toma and Carol Măgureanu, shaping at the same time a fresco of social life, an objective and realistic description of rural society in the era of cooperatives. Dan Toma becomes, against his will, the judge of some terrible events that take place in the village of Arini in the context of the expropriation of the peasants from the small rural community. The novel is, thus, a deep and penetrating x-ray of the destinies of the two protagonists transformed into victims or executioners, related to the circumstances of history, human postures and situations presented with descriptive accuracy and rigor, in a serious manner and with an objectivity nuanced by analytical touches .

Orgolii, considered by literary critics and the reading public to be the best-known novel of the prose writer, tells the fate of the surgeon Ion Cristian, a victim of corruption in the medical system. The novel captures the meanderings of Dr. Cristian's existence, by outlining a moral portrait made up of successive strokes, at the same time triggering the analysis of social phenomena of maximum intensity. Narrator and character identify, at the level of ideas and motivations, not at the level of destiny, for in order to create the illusion of objectivity, the narrator adopts a tone of detachment, multiplying points of view on the facts. The narrative voices belong to Dr. Ion Cristian, specialist, renowned oncological surgeon, obsessed with cancer therapy, to his son, Andrei, an eminent student, concerned with knowing his father's biography, but who is going through a crisis of adaptation and confidence, and also to Redman , former prosecutor and friend of Dr. Cristian, the fourth voice being that of the whistleblower whose diary surprises with the realism of the account in a rudimentary language.

The act of creation harmonizes with the prose writer's conception of life, shaped by the social and political, epic, philosophical or pedagogical reality, which he experiences in a situational and existential context, leading to the relief of a favorite theme of Augustin Buzura's prose - the problematic human freedom. By means of original narrative techniques, the writer probes the consciousness of the characters, highlighting the relationship between pride and honesty in their moral makeup. Augustin Buzura's heroes live, move on the scene of life, evolve in the course of their existence, being always challenged to confess, the story naturally placing itself in the cadence of the epic thread, contributing substantially to deepening the psychology of the protagonists. In Augustin Buzura's novel, the inner monologue technique and the stream of consciousness represent recurring epic processes, fully utilized in the novels. Within the monologue inside, the boundaries between inside and outside, subjective and objective blur, and the flow of memory, like a stream of consciousness, mirrors the clash between the depth of the soul and the outside universe. The inner world is probed through the mechanisms of introspection, being dominated by the darkness of an uncontrollable imaginary.

Vocile nopții, published in 1980, is a novel in which the world of the proletariat is represented, through the lens of the relations between various social categories in the post-war period, between different groups, with conflicting mentalities, psychologies and interests, which frequently clash, producing tensions or dramas. Augustin Buzura captures in his novel these new social categories in formation, with characters who live in a home that symbolically becomes a true topos, coagulating young people from all social backgrounds, some coming from their home villages, others from prison. In the middle of this motley world, the protagonist is Ștefan Pinteș,

the son of a miner, a young man forced to abandon his studies in a desperate attempt to find himself on the coordinates of a disintegrating world. A character with firm ethics, Ștefan Pinteș feels adrift, because he does not accept compromise, he fervently searches for the truth, resuming under different conditions, but with his existential data, the drama of doctor Mihai Bogdan, the drama of journalist Dan Toma or professor Cristian from previous novels.

Published in 1984, *Refugii* novel is the first in *Zidul morții* cycle, bringing to the fore the image of a woman who wakes up in a completely unknown place, in a psychiatric hospital. The novel is made up of a series of inner monologues in which are inserted letters with a confessional aspect of some dramatic experiences. In *Refuges*, the main character is Ioana Olaru, whose confession covers the entire space of the book, because depending on the heroine's trajectory, the other destinies are also defined. Love becomes, in this novel, one of the refuges that Augustin Buzura's characters obstinately seek, to retreat from an oppressive reality. In this unique context, Ioana Olaru relives her past, evoking events from her existence that she considers unlucky. An English translator in a company from the town of Râul Doamnei, the woman lives the drama of loneliness and fear as a victim of an aggression, the book thus becoming a veritable chronicle of Ioana Olaru's existence, presenting, in parallel, various other life events from the town of Măgura.

The novel *Drumul cenușii* appeared in 1988 and is the second volume (after *Refugii*, 1984) of the planned Wall of Death trilogy. It is a social novel whose central theme is that of "psychic death", a favorite theme of Augustin's entire literary creation Buzura, right from his 1970 debut novel *Absences*. The theme of psychic death, recurrent in the work of Augustin Buzura, runs like a red thread through the entire Romanian cycle, defining itself as the impossibility of the full existence of man. The novel *The Ash Road* impresses with its ability to preserve a glimmer of hope, the writer expressing his confidence in the chances of the common individual to fight against psychic death, to overcome his limits and the humiliation of being humiliated by destiny, emphasizing thus the desire of the worthy human being to live according to his own principles.

Recviem pentru nebuni și bestii, a novel published in 1999, recreates the same atmosphere dominated by epic tension, introspection and examination of conscience of the characters, the precipitation of events or reversals of situations that trigger lucid reflections on the theme of existence, an atmosphere also found in previous novels. A novel of cases of conscience, this narrative follows in equal measure the social, historical and political implications of the collective becoming, being a chronicle of life and the Romanian collective mind, especially in the last decade of communist dictatorship and in the first years of freedom.

The novel *Raport asupra singurătății*, published in 2009, is a "book about understanding life, from the perspective of death"¹, as the writer himself emphasized when the novel appeared, which he considered by far the closest and most representative. It is a book about history, about the passage of time, a book that lucidly debates the theme of death, reflecting the author's obsessions and way of thinking. The characters look at the world from the perspective of their inner feelings, engaging in a direct confrontation not with society, but with their obligations towards an existence subject to ephemerality, in the novel there is a noticeable change in attitude and theme, the emphasis being placed on the imminence of death, maintaining interest in the theme of psychic death, a fact due to a certain extent to Augustin Buzura's training as a psychiatrist.

The third chapter, *Beyond and beyond realism*, deals with the realism of the literary works written by Augustin Buzura, highlighting the social reality captured in the novels. The analysis we proposed aimed at choosing those elements that highlight the realistic character of the texts in question. This approach is intended to emphasize the artistic creed of the novelist in search of the

¹ Augustin Buzura, *Teroarea iluziei. Convorbiri cu Crisula Ștefănescu*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 117.

truth. The chapter carefully probes the details of the realism of Augustin Buzura's Romanian creations, highlighting the elegance and rigor of the discourse and the depth of the ideas. In the writer's opinion, realism implies an "open confrontation with taboos and prejudices"², so that the novelist's mastery consists in the art of painting the life of some characters in just a few lines, selecting experiences from the everyday life of ordinary people whose existence is analyzed with the thoroughness of a clinician.

Augustin Buzura chose to build his entire literary work around the concept of truth, that's why his novels represent, to an equal extent, genuine period documents, but also writings with an ethical character, the fight for truth being equivalent to survival in a political period subject to restrictions and abuses. What stands out from the first lines of each novel is the writer's insistence on assuming the arguments of an unprocessed artistic realism, the raw material of his writings being reality. In his works, the writer is concerned with capturing his own way of receiving multiple information from the environment, his conception of life, the act of literary creation representing the essence of a conception of life shaped by the social, political, philosophical, epic or pedagogical realities with which the writer is, at some point, in touch.

Moreover, Augustin Buzura proves to be a careful, serious and thorough observer of reality, a prose writer who perceives the world through the lenses of realism. Consequently, its protagonists, like their creator, are seekers of truth, ready to face fear, pain, loneliness, despair or even death, their artistic creed, amazing in its simplicity and depth, belonging to the prose writer himself, which can be summarized in the formula: "it's important to say what you think"³. By virtue of this ethical principle, the writer created novels that capture events and scenes representative of a certain historical context, outlining impressive and authentic destinies, the accents of psychological realism hovering over these creations, giving a new breath to contemporary Romanian literature.

In the fourth chapter, Under the sign of lucidity. Typologies of the characters we set out to carry out an analysis of the typologies of the literary characters from the works of Augustin Buzura. Establishing himself as one of the most representative novelists of the post-war period, Augustin Buzura reconstructs in his books testimonies of cases of conscience, also following the social, historical and political implications of the collective becoming. The writer undertakes, in his novels, an action of "rehabilitation" of the moral idea and the intellectual characters who become exponents of his artistic conception. The character, carefully selected from reality, travels a route of artistic metamorphosis and transfiguration, certain sides of his character being accentuated, others dimmed with premeditation. Thus, the character is subject to a slow process of elaboration, becoming an example of the way in which the writer assumes the rhythms and forms of reality.

Augustin Buzura's books are also true clinical diaries, with characters obsessed with truth and dignity, concerned with the development of their own conscience, with social or individual guilt, with violence and different forms of alienation, or with avatars of the academic world. They are restless people who sometimes seek salvation in irony, who suffer shocks, being drawn into violent acts, their first reactions being dramatization, retrospection or introspection, corresponding to various typologies: intellectuals psychologically traumatized by facts and events that overwhelm them, young proletarians searching for truths, people who live in a plane of their own imaginary, sharpened by their recent past, whose lucidity does not let them detach for a moment from the reality they experience in their own way. Once the fragile balance in which they consume their

² Augustin Buzura, *Teroarea iluziei. Convorbiri cu Crisula Ștefănescu*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 117.

³ Augustin Buzura, *Recviem pentru nebuni și bestii*, Editura Rao, București, 2013, p. 27.

existence is diminished or destroyed, the protagonists assume lucidity as a form of life, each life event becoming for them a drama of being.

The analysis captured in this chapter highlighted the way in which Augustin Buzura brings into focus the issue of the relationship of the intellectual with the world, of the scientist with the era, with his peers, the novelist creating a realistic, pathos-free portrait of the protagonists of his works. Augustin Buzura builds, at the same time, a universe of human degradation, in which there are figures with grotesque, evil dimensions, establishing themselves as unique characters in the landscape of literature from the socialist era, such as the anonymous molder, by profession - an essential reality of the system of police surveillance of all citizens, dubious, immoral characters who spy on their fellows from the shadows, a primitive individuality, a symbol of institutionalized treachery. Characters of this type scourge reality, investigate it insinuatingly, write hateful reports, resorting to an ungrammatical language that expresses the landmarks of a primitive dogmatism.

The heroes of Augustin Buzura's novels are obsessed with the image of their own identity, forcing them to confess to each other, to explain their decisions made once, using the technique of argumentative speech, and thus hoping to get rid of the burden of the past. By means of the inner monologue, Buzura manages to penetrate into the abysses of consciousness, the revolt of his heroes evolving from simple to complex, the radiography of the dilemmatic character being realized through an ingenious use of verbal tenses. The characters in the novels are fictional characters always thirsty for the truth, tense people, who find in irony a way to adapt to daily life, their portraits being built from successive touches that capture, in general, a single dominant feature, corresponding to the intellectual or the proletarian. These characters live with the acute impression of humanity in disguise, their existence subservient to a theatrical performance staged in a degraded and degrading ambience.

In the chapter *Avatars of critical reception* I demonstrated how, ever since Augustin Buzura's debut, literary criticism noticed the prose writer's ability to build an authentic literary universe, in which he outlined a drifting society, creating an epic of suffering in a totalitarian system, all this being done to the detriment of the character, a fact that attracted the criticism of the critics of the time. Monica Lovinescu, as well as other critics, wanted Buzura's novels to reflect the revolt against communism to a greater extent. On the other hand, there were also critics such as Cornel Regman who accused the inappropriate language used in the novel *Fețele tacerii*. The writer's obedience to the official ideology and the neglect of the aesthetic criterion in his picture were also lamented. Eugen Simion spoke about Augustin Buzura's training as a psychiatrist, because his novels are a lucid look at the mechanisms of society, and the characters give unity to the narrative universe, bringing to the surface deep and tense inner experiences, the psychoanalytic approach representing a possible and appropriate way of interpretation of Augustin Buzura's texts from the perspective of the abyss of psychic experiences.

The writer assumes a position defined with significance: that of an opponent of the communist regime, this aspect being evident in the six novels published in the period 1970-1988. They are literary works in which Augustin Buzura is interested in the ways in which the individual is forced to give up the traits that define him, to submit in order to integrate into a society whose fundamental landmarks are violence, censorship and fear. The main factor and the pretext that triggers the construction of Augustin Buzura's literary works are defined and determined by the political situation in Romania, a fact that is emblematic of the prose writer's forays into the inner life of the characters. What becomes unbearable in this whole context is the psychic pain, defined by the phrase "psychic death", by which we can understand the individual's impossibility to react, to manifest in full agreement with his own self. Severely restricted by the cultural policy of the

party, by ideology and censorship, the evolution of Romanian literature during the communist regime is dramatically affected, literature being transformed into a propaganda tool and widowed of its aesthetic values, its main task being to contribute to the re Formation the individual, the "new man". Any deviation from the rules was severely sanctioned, and those who had the courage to capture in their works aspects that the party preferred to keep silent, endangered not only their status, but also their freedom of expression. Censorship operated vigilantly, and every effort was made to prevent the publication of books considered to be against the regime or the values imposed by it. Therefore, the role assumed by Augustin Buzura as a writer during this period was not a comfortable one, his position in relation to the ideology of the era being sometimes viewed with suspicion by literary critics.

The writer's creations are also a proof of courage, by making an x-ray of the Romanian society during the communist regime, analyzing, however, in an objective way, the feelings of anger, despair, revolt, fear or nostalgia of his characters. Augustin Buzura is, rather, moderate in terms of the way to talk about the sensitive aspects of communist Romania, but he manages to outline in his literary works the impact of a totalitarian regime on the life of the individual and on the evolution of Romanian society.

In conclusion, through the predilected themes, through the outlined characters, through the social and political issues addressed in the novels under analysis, it can be affirmed with certainty that Augustin Buzura's prose occupies an important place in Romanian literature. Răzvan Voncu emphasizes the fact that Buzura's novels "played an important role in preserving, as much as possible, a correct image of the recent past, in a permanent underground confrontation with official ideology and historiography"⁴.

The favorite themes in the novels written both in the communist era and in the post-revolutionary period emphasize the inner conflicts caused by the discrepancy between the intellectual status of the characters and the challenges to which they are subjected by the social system. Man is caught in a permanent entanglement with history, and the past-present narrative planes constantly alternate, giving authenticity to the epic discourse. Captive in a concentration, claustrophobic society, the human being has to face the existential anguish, on top of which are superimposed the obsession with failure, mistrust, loneliness and the effort to preserve lucidity in the face of social and political pressures, but also the acceptance of compromises or the assumption of a state of revolt. Typologically, the characters that Augustin Buzura configures are, first of all, intellectuals caught in moments of existential crisis, and through the flow of memory, the novelist meticulously reproduces the thoughts, emotions, reactions and the way in which their behavior is influenced by the events with which the heroes They face: "Buzura's heroes refuse and refuse, not without the pride of self-flagellation. Boiling minds, doctors or researchers or students struggling with the impossible (...) they detest, with anger, with energy, with adolescent enthusiasm, the transactional spirit, the inert life, the inability to live sublimely"⁵. Thus, very often in the existence of these characters, they find themselves in seemingly hopeless situations, making a discordant note or not fitting into the social context, in a voluntary or involuntary effort to withdraw from a system of injustice and humiliation.

The protagonists live an adversarial but implacable history, despite the states of permanent rebellion that sometimes materialize through deeds, while their existential drama is accentuated by the futility of their own struggles against the abusive system: "Augustin Buzura's heroes are

⁴ Răzvan Voncu, *Turnanta Recviem pentru nebuni si bestii, o cheie a operei lui Augustin Buzura*, în revista „Cultura”, Nr. 20, septembrie, 2013.

⁵ Cornel Ungureanu, *Proza românească de azi*, ed. cit., p. 530.

tragic through the contradiction between grandiose aspiration, purified to the point of inhumanity by banality, and daily life. Living the paralyzing fundamental questions, they humble themselves and are humbled, strike and are struck."⁶ However, in moments of crisis, these heroes keep their lucidity and reason for being, their principles, even if they sometimes drastically complicate their existence, these principles include some general human values: truth, goodness, justice, freedom, beauty, ideals to which they aspire despite the restrictions imposed by a society that constantly opposes them. Being interrogative, judicial and uncompromising consciences, Augustin Buzura's heroes "are part, as a psychological and behavioral structure, of a noble spiritual family. Misfit, revolted intellectuals, doctors (Mihai Bogdan from *Absentii*, Ion Cristian from *Orgolii*), journalists (Dan Toma from *Fetele tacerii*, Adrian Coman from *Drumul cenusii*), professors (Iustin and Ioana Olaru from *Refugii*) introspect their failures, their dramas. Descending into the labyrinthine subterranean of the being, he digs tunnels towards the heart of the lived truth. When they turn to the outside reality, they expose cowardice, hypocrisy, upstarts, corruption, moral abjection, abuses of power"⁷. On the other hand, some of the characters in Augustin Buzura's novels are misfits who, "recapitulating their failures, refuse training, ingesting lies and go through seismic crises of conscience"⁸. Being analyzed with extraordinary attention to detail, the characters offer access to their interiority, so that "the probing of subjectivity outraged by the abuses of history constitutes the center of gravity of these problematic books. The lucid statements of the protagonists are cries of revolt, the screams of the being imprisoned in a concentrated universe. A universe devoured by guilt, anguish and despair. Augustin Buzura's novels represent an authentic process of communism, through which the masks are torn off the beautified face of ideology"⁹. In this way, the novelist presents people from different perspectives, their way of thinking, the events in their lives or the way they choose to relate to reality, without being a judge of the facts and without passing judgment.

The literary work of Augustin Buzura was received differently by literary critics. For example, the critic Gheorghe Glodeanu states in the study dedicated to Augustin Buzura from the volume *Măștile lui Proteu*, that the novels of the prose writer illustrate the image of a writer completely dedicated to the events of his time, and his artistic creation can be received in the form of a response to the serious social problems identified and treated in a realistic manner. At the same time, the prose writer militates through his writing for the right to individual freedom, for the right to free expression of thoughts and for the rediscovery of human values. Ion Simuț, for his part, emphasizes the role of Augustin Buzura's prose to reproduce, in different forms, the revolt of man defeated and humiliated by his own existence, his attempts to resist moral alienation and lack of freedom, but also the attempts to preserve lucidity despite the pressures to which he is subjected by a drifting society.

What Augustin Buzura creates through his novels is a prose that captures the human condition, in which psychological analysis has a decisive role in deciphering the message of literary texts. Against the background of history, one of the great themes addressed by Marin Preda in his novels is looming – the conflict between the individual and history, a favorite theme of Augustin Buzura through which he develops in his characters the psychology of fear, existential anguish, the obsession with failure or the permanent state of revolt of man, so that the writer appears to us," in a retrospective view, the aesthetic consciousness, responsibly anchored from a

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 533.

⁷ Viorica Gligor, *Fetele adevărului*, în revista „Nord Literar”, nr. 9 (124), septembrie 2013, p. 9.

⁸ Adrian Dinu Rachieru, *Augustin Buzura, editorialist*, în revista „Contemporanul”, nr. 6 (735), 2013, p. 21.

⁹ Viorica Gligor, *Fetele adevărului*, în revista „Nord Literar”, nr. 9 (124), 2013.

social, moral and political point of view in the most sensitive actuality of the human condition, of the greatest scope and of the greatest impact in the continuity of Marin Preda, in the aspiration to bear witness to a time, a space and an experience"¹⁰.

Thus, one can note the novelist's predisposition towards the thorough analysis of themes that explore the inner universe of human consciousness and thought, revealing the deepest fears that color the register of human experiences. The writer's novels represent deep testimonies of eras and experiences mirroring the tragic destiny of man subjected to anguish, failure and revolt during the communist era, a time in which the restriction of freedom, repression and control, the solitude of the outraged being or unfulfilled love represent so many privileged themes. Augustin Buzura, an important novelist of contemporary prose, is distinguished by the consistency he displays in his literary creation. His manifesto is directed towards the support of genuine ethical values, which is the reason why he does not abdicate his noble mission, but continues to write his literary works even after the Revolution of 1989, publishing the social fresco novel *Report on loneliness*.

Referring to the themes addressed by the novelist, Ioan Holban emphasizes the fact that "the value of Augustin Buzura's texts does not reside so much in their fable, the development of which is, in fact, a second plan of the narrative, as in the targeted issue. In the case of these novels, with a pronounced psychological component, the subject is not of interest, but the themes approached by the narrator through some dilemmatic characters whose thoughts, feelings, sensations, obsessions and convictions are exposed and analyzed at the moment of the memory. The fundamental themes that result from this moment of confronting the being with itself constitute the essential element that gives the unity of Buzura's writing, thus specifying the important place that analytical prose occupies in the space of the contemporary Romanian novel"¹¹. The mission of a writer engaged in the life of the city, as the novelist perceives it, is that of a perpetual seeker of general-human truths, Augustin Buzura putting, through his literary creation, above all the finding of the truth. Incidentally, this is essentially the artistic creed of the writer. His characters become hyperlucid heroes, whose priority is the search for truth, as emphasized by Eugen Simion, for whom Buzura is "an excellent moralistic prose writer, and his privileged themes are the truth and the roots of error. In this way, he approaches other contemporary prose writers, but he differentiates himself from them by the decision of the option and the determination to go to the end along the line of a ideas. Moreover, it is not difficult to observe that his novels, different in style, refer to the same social era and have, in general, the same moral problems in the study"¹². Emphasizing the relationship between the character, history, literary creation and the lines of force of the themes discussed by the writer, Vianu Mureșan states that the universe of Augustin Buzura's prose is "an experimental station of the regression to animality, precisely of the man of the multilaterally developed society, living in the best among the possible worlds. Exposed to total visibility through a kind of panoptic mechanism, bullied in his creeds, terrified of privacy, summoned to colonize, join the ranks or perish, the one who keeps his lucidity understands that there is no way to escape from the historical prison in who is captive"¹³.

Waging a permanent fight with censorship, Augustin Buzura did not stop writing quality literature, if we consider the way in which the public received his literary works, receiving them with enthusiasm, endowing them with the attribute of value. The writer perceived the book as a

¹⁰ Ion Simuț, *Romanul ieșirii din totalitarism*, prefață la romanul *Recviem pentru nebuni și bestii*, Editura Rao, București, 2013, p. 5.

¹¹ Ioan Holban, *Utopia omului perfectibil și antiutopia omului finit*, în revista „Convorbiri literare”, aprilie, 2013.

¹² Eugen Simion, *Scriitori români de azi*, vol. I, ed. cit., p. 496.

¹³ Vianu Mureșan, *Transcendența oarbă în opera lui Augustin Buzura*, în revista „Tribuna”, 16-30 noiembrie, 2008, p. 8.

way of escape or as a means by which the mistakes of the past could be avoided by reawakening the memory. Through his prose, the writer constantly aimed for the reader to connect to the inner vibration of the characters who act determined by the socio-political constraints of the communist regime, to understand the way of thinking of people from a certain historical context, providing a comprehensive picture of a complicated age and world, by opening up to the psychological springs of the human being. The realism of this writer identified those human models that he successfully exploited in his novels, creations of a prose writer persevering in the struggle to affirm truth, justice, dignity. The common note of the novelist's Romanian creations could be the tendency towards monumentality, the obstinacy to create something essential and lasting. Even if sometimes the phrase is meticulous and cumbersome, the message that emerges from the pages of Augustin Buzura's novels is full of meaning, having at its center the destiny of the man under the burden of history. Taking into account the fact that man is a social being, and the writer's concern is directed towards the truthful presentation of life, in every artistic work of value one can identify a social reality that cannot be ignored when the destiny of a man, a family or of a social stratum is configured. As history cannot be abstracted from, any historical phenomenon causing changes in the existence and architecture of the being. Devoted to his peers, Augustin Buzura is concerned with the social effects of the facts of history. He does not limit himself to recounting events or to outline the psychology of the characters, he surprises the shaping effect of reality on man and society. His creative strength lies in the amount of truth he invests in shaping society and the characters he creates out of the desire to render as faithful an image of reality as possible. Even 20 years away from the revolutionary events of 1989, despite the fact that censorship has disappeared, "the filth, the degradation, the political uproar accompany us daily, so that, in his harsh indictments, Buzura - stated N. Manolescu - "a remained as pessimistic today as yesterday". Stylistically the same in his post-December writings, offering Romanian expeditions in search of the truth (which "must and can be said"), he develops traumatic experiences oscillating between loneliness and fear, power and humiliation, rebellion and cowardice. And who take refuge in exhausting monologues (testing the patience of the reader), precisely to reach the savior of moral liberation"¹⁴.

Augustin Buzura stood out, through the published books and articles, as a writer of epic consistency, but also as a conscience attentive to the contradictory relief of the world in which he lived.

¹⁴ Adrian Dinu Rachieru, *O conștiință interogativă*, în revista „Vatra”, nr. 1-2, 2014, p. 37.