

Socialist Modernism as Compromise: A Study of the Romanian Literary System

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This study advocates the analytical and historiographic usefulness of the concept of “socialist modernism” in denominating and describing the paradigm that prevailed in Romanian and other Eastern European literatures between 1960/1965 and 1980. In doing so, the article follows a three-pronged line of reasoning. Firstly, I provide a diachronic overview of this period unraveling the motives behind writers and communist politicians’ conviction that modernism was a trend whereby they could effectively express their interests following the fall of socialist realism. Secondly, I define the concept of “socialist modernism” and explain how its usefulness in characterizing this period supersedes that of well-established Romanian concepts such as “neomodernism” and “socialist aestheticism.” Finally, I aim to uncover whether socialist modernism can be successfully integrated in a transnational modernist network (if, for instance, it aligns with the so-called “late modernism”) or if, conversely, it is limited to a local or, at the most, regional level.

Keywords: Romanian literature / socialist modernism / neomodernism / socialist aestheticism / late modernism

The study of post-Stalinist literature produced in Eastern Europe under the communist regime is one of the primary challenges of contemporary cultural historiography.¹ This is due to the researchers’ tendency to overextend the neighboring trends to include this period as a means of compensating for the lack of terminology needed to plausibly chart this ambiguous period, no longer dominated by a unique “method of creation,” but not yet marked by total freedom of expression. In doing

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so, they either transfer onto late communism concepts that define a polycentric, relatively autonomous literary system—e.g. “counterculture,” “critique of ideology”—or continue to deploy the instruments previously devised to analyze Stalinism, which, given the new state of affairs, are deemed relatively soft—e.g. “socialist realism,” “party literature,” etc. The main issue with these approaches is that they draw on a simplistic understanding of the subject matter, which, in turn, renders them incapable of accounting for the peculiarities of this literary epoch. For late communism is not an ordinary intermediary stage, i.e. a blend between communism and capitalism and/or between totalitarianism and democracy, but rather a new cultural and political hybrid that requires an equally new critical framework.

In this essay, it is precisely this conceptual toolbox, hereinafter referred to as “socialist modernism,” that I aim to put forward for the literary paradigm prevailing in Romania—and most certainly other areas too—between 1960/1965 and 1980. In advancing this new concept, my argument follows a tripartite approach. Firstly, I provide a diachronic perspective of the period, at the end of which I explain why, in the aftermath of the fall of socialist realism, post-Stalinist Romanian writers and politicians regarded modernism as a cultural trend whereby they could successfully advance their interests. Then, I define the concept of “socialist modernism” and demonstrate in what ways its historiographic usefulness is superior to that of “neomodernism” and “socialist aestheticism,” two Romanian concepts commonly used thus far in reference to this period. Lastly, I focus on assessing whether socialist modernism can be integrated in a transnational scheme of modernism (for instance, if it aligns with the so-called “late modernism”) or if, on the contrary, it qualifies as a mere local or, at the most, regional phenomenon.

From socialist realism to socialist modernism

To adequately understand the role of socialist modernism in Romanian literature, a brief overview of the history of modernism in Romania is in order. Both the term “modernism” and the cultural phenomenon it designates were introduced to Romanian culture sometime around 1900, when traditionalist movements dominated the literary field (see Terian 18). Following a two-decade marginal position within the Romanian literary system, modernism went on to dominate the 1920s, mainly as a result of extensive advocacy on the part of

the then most prominent Romanian literary critic Eugen Lovinescu (1881–1943), who included it in a wider discussion on cultural interactions and transfers known as the theory of “synchronism” (Dumitru *passim*). Although modernism would come to pervade the Romanian literary thought for the next quarter of a century, its popularity had its limits in the sense that modernism was more readily accepted in poetry than prose and that it was attributed a formal rather than ideological dimension (Terian 20–27).

After 1948, following the imposition of communism, modernism was systematically rejected in Romania due to its association with the decadent bourgeois capitalism. Over the coming years, an increasing number of works produced by influential modernist writers were blacklisted and, in turn, socialist realism rose to become the dominant literary paradigm in Romania. Nonetheless, in 1964/1965, a significant shift in the policy of the Romanian communist regime, commonly labelled a “thaw” or “liberalization,” would be witnessed. This turn, apart from leading to an abrupt disappearance of socialist realism from the Romanian cultural scene, allowed for a revival—at least in part—of modernism. A cursory browsing through *Cronologia vieții literare românești* (*The Chronology of Romanian Literary Life*) is enough to trace this process: the entries for the 1960s feature a surprisingly large number of references to either “modernism” or “modernist”: 3 mentions in 1963; 5 in 1964; 13 in 1965; 41 in 1966; 71 in 1967; 56 in 1968; 40 in 1969 (Simion et al. vols. 10–15).

However, unlike socialist realism, whose content, function and value were (relatively) clear and (theoretically) indisputable—since the Party itself imposed them—, modernism fueled numerous contradictory debates in the latter part of the 1960s. It was often reiterated to saturation that “modern” and “modernity” must not be misinterpreted as referring to “modernism,” yet it was widely accepted that they share some similarities; that modernism was an obsolete literary movement, which had reached its climax in the interwar period, yet not a single critic went on to mention any other more recent trends; that the “modern” – “modernism” doublet is but a pole of the dichotomy at whose other extreme lies another such conceptual pair, “tradition” – “traditionalism,” etc. To avoid any confusions or exaggerations, several of the most notable works devoted to the modern(ist) novel and poetry were translated in the second half of 1960s, and Romanian theorists strove to draw a clearer distinction between “modern,” “modernism,” and “modernity” (Marino *passim*). However, rather than clarifying the terminology, these attempts promoted even more vivid discussions around

these concepts. This comes as no surprise, since in the early years of this debate, when the previous condemnation of the modernist movement was still fresh in the collective memory, hardly any Romanian critic dared to explicitly point out this paradigm shift, although their works appeared to reflect that all their peers acknowledged—if not even overtly supported—it.

Yet despite this conceptual fuzziness, modernism gradually rose to become not only a legitimate literary movement of the late 1960s, but also a criterion of novelty and value within the Romanian literary field. A telltale example in this regard is Nicolae Manolescu's 1968 *Metamorfozele poeziei* [*The Metamorphoses of Poetry*], an essay that served as a turning point in the canonization of Romanian postwar modernism. Manolescu's attempt to chart the "intrinsic ... history"² (5) of Romanian poetry rests on three implicit premises: (a) modern poetry is the only "valid" Romanian poetry; (b) all major trends in modern Romanian poetry are, in fact, variations of modernism; and (c) the poetry movements that halted the modernist evolution of Romanian poetry are mere anomalies. These three arguments were arranged along the following line of reasoning: firstly, the Romanian critic argues that the only poetry with a history is the poetry that exhibits a sense of "self-awareness" (13); and, since modern poetry is "self-aware and self-made" (15), the history of Romanian poetry cannot but coincide with that of modern Romanian poetry. The critic goes on to explain how, in the history of Romanian poetry, modernism only is a "sentiment" (26) and a "state of mind" (43), while the other "-isms" are "programmes" or "styles"—in other words, mere variants of modernism: "Modernism, which is elsewhere a negation of symbolism ..., carries here its own torch without interruption" (19); "traditionalism is but a form of modernism ... It is a trend of modern poetry" (26); "the modernist period also coincided with programmatic orientations; the avant-garde was one of them" (44). Manolescu continues by denouncing—admittedly in euphemistic terms—the "lapses" of Romanian poetry during socialist realism: "A decade—in which poetry appears to have forgotten, through a peculiar form of amnesia, its traditions, returning to forms of times past and attempting to curiously revive them, while ignoring what it had organically evolved into and pretending to be what it was not or what it could not be" (129). Thus, upon emerging from socialist realism, modernism was the only authentic and valid option for Romanian literature—or, at least, that is what transpires from Manolescu's historical overview.

² Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine.

But what exactly lured Romanian critics to modernism, when, in theory, they could have adopted and supported any of the movements and ideologies of the literary past? Why did they not promote a slightly less ideological “realism”? Or perhaps “classicism,” which still embodied the peak of literary art for many aestheticians of the last century? To answer these questions, we may be tempted to consider various circumstantial explanations: modernism was the dominant movement in Romania prior to the imposition of communism; modernism was still the leading trend in the Western artistic circles of the early 1960s; or, more evidently: given the virulence with which it was condemned a mere decade earlier, modernism appeared as the absolute antonym of socialist realism. However, such explanations fail to account for the core of the problem. For if we were to consider, along Fredric Jameson’s lines, that “the ideology of modernism as such ... is first and foremost that which posits the autonomy of the aesthetic” (161), then it would be evident that postwar modernism provided Romanian writers with precisely that which socialist realism denied to them: the superficial right of not subordinating aesthetics to ideology and, consequently, the promise of freedom (Goldiș 122–125). A simple promise that, despite being broken time and again in the decades to come, was nonetheless an incomparably better alternative to the non-negotiable state of servitude imposed by socialist realism.

Now, what about the communist regime? How did it benefit from this concession? According to Jameson, what accounts for—and also defines—the postwar revival of modernism is that, “in a situation in which modernisation, socialism, industrialisation, ... Prometheianism, and the ‘rape of nature’ generally, have been discredited, you can still suggest that the so-called underdeveloped countries might want to look forward to simple ‘modernity’ itself” (8). In other words, this resurgence of modernism provided Romanian communism with a new—and perhaps the last—chance to sustain the myth of progress, which World War II and the Stalinist years severely compromised. And an abstract benefit such as this would also bring along another, more practical bonus, since, as Ernst Robert Curtius and Hans Robert Jauss note, any duel between the “Ancients” and the “Moderns” is indicative of a conflict between generations.³ This appears to be the case with the

³ “The opposition between generations is one of the conflicts of all tempestuous periods, whether they are under the sign of a new spring flowering or of an autumnal decline. In the history of letters it appears as the battle of the ‘moderns’ against the ancients—until the moderns themselves have become old classics.” (Curtius 98) See also the definition given by Jauss: “[A] literary trope dating back to antiquity and returning repeatedly in the generational revolt of the young” (331).

first battle between the “Ancients” and the “Moderns,” which marked the twelfth century, as well as the famous *querelle* of the seventeenth century and the twentieth-century confrontations. In the context of the post-1965 Romanian communist regime, socialist modernism became a strategy for politically legitimizing the substitution of the “old school” with the “new guard” by invoking the superiority of the “new” art—socialist modernism—over the “old”—socialist realism. Nonetheless, since writers still celebrated the emancipation from the previous “-ism” and the Party held onto the previous decade’s belief that modernism was a fervent enemy of socialism, socialist modernism could not be theorized or promoted as such. In this context, the concept of “generation” proved an invaluable resource to both the political regime and literary criticism: thus, socialist modernism could target a wider audience under the metonymic expression the “generation of the 1960s,” and the evolution of the entire Romanian life during the communist period could be conceptualized in terms of sequences of generations, which camouflaged and minimized the otherwise thorny issue of movements and ideologies (the so-called “-isms”).

The content and limits of socialist modernism

Therefore, socialist modernism was the outcome of a mutually advantageous compromise between the writers’ elite—which gained the promise of aesthetic autonomy—and the new Party apparatus—which could attribute its rise to power to a progressive move occasioned by a passing of the torch between generations. Nonetheless, two questions persist: first, how modernist—and, implicitly, how socialist—is socialist modernism? Second, what precisely makes this concept superior to other concepts put forward to describe this paradigm?

A partial answer to the first question is that Romanian socialist modernism, in poetry and prose, involves first and foremost a programmatic divorce from “reality,” which in the socialist-realist sense of the word implies the immediate, recordable, and contingent actuality. In poetry, this imperative allowed for the smooth revival of the interwar modernism, yet—*pace* Ion Pop (19-20)—in a highly purified form. Thus, in socialist modernist poets’ imaginary universe, it is the generic “I,” the prototypical or archetypal exponent of human nature, located in an indefinite spatio-temporality, that articulates a prophetic and sapiential discourse of its own idiosyncratic language abounding in metaphors and symbols. As for the “socialist” dimension of the formula, it is par-

ticularly noticeable in the existence of taboo topics such as the social-political area—which the majority of poets avoided lest they should relapse to socialist realism—, the religious area—a by-product of the communist regime’s campaign for atheism—, and sexuality—considered incompatible with what was then labelled “socialist ethics.”

More difficult to chart typologically is prose fiction, whose very tradition and conventions revolve around immediate reality and the mundane. Yet here too, the “modernist” element of the discourse lies with the obstinate reluctance to tackle the topic and the genre which the representatives of the communist regime relentlessly pleaded for: the so-called “present-day novel.” As an alternative to this, the generation of the 1960s put forward, unlike in the case of poetry, not one but a cluster of formulae that share a common ground in their attempt to distort raw reality: the novel of the “obsessive decade”—which exposed the abuses committed by the 1950s communist regime—, the retro novel—which went further along the historical thread, to the interwar period—, the novel of “imaginary geographies,” the parabolic novel—in which reality is obscured by symbols and myths—, and the textualist novel—built on the more recent framework of the French *Nouveau Roman*. In fact, Eugen Negrici notes that this period was marked decisively by two opposing tendencies: “the quest for truth” and “the quest for literarity” (160). What the critic fails to note, however, is that these two quests are bound by a relation of reverse proportionality: the more a work strives to be “literary,” the less representative it is of its period and the more it distances itself from the norms of the regime.

At any rate, I believe that the peculiarities of Romanian literature under the communist regime discussed thus far are best subsumed under the concept of “socialist modernism.” Not only does the term successfully portray the ambivalence of the literature and period wherein it originates—“no longer tyranny, not yet freedom”—, but it also allows for the paradigm to be aligned with a trend that pervaded the arts around the same time, as the term was originally deployed in former Yugoslavia in reference to architecture (see Denegri, “Inside”; Šuvaković, “Remembering” and “Theories”) and has since come to be widely used in the music and film criticism of Soviet bloc countries as diverse as the German Democratic Republic (Westgate 18–58) and Kyrgyzstan (Tlostanova 92–96).

To be honest, the two other concepts used to denote Romanian post-Stalinist literature are equally well-represented in the international critical terminology. “Neo-modernism,” for instance, was introduced in the mid-1960s by Frank Kermode who opposed it to

“palaeo-modernism” (73) and defined it as a series of “marginal developments of older modernism” (88), primarily the neo-avant-garde, the cult of the arbitrary, the abolition of established forms, humor, and anarchist nihilism. In Romania, the term “neomodernism” was first circumstantially deployed by Nicolae Manolescu in 1987 (*Despre poezie* 227), and then systematically by Ion Bogdan Lefter in 1997 (*Postmodernism* 115–136). Surprisingly enough, neither of the two Romanian critics mentioned Kermode, although it is highly likely that at least the latter read it at some point. Even more curious is that, despite his use of the prefix “neo-,” Lefter did not attribute any sort of innovation to this paradigm; for him, it was but “a cultural replay” (*Recapitularea* 237) or an “anachronism” stemming from a “counter-evolutionary movement”: “They [writers] move forward by going backwards. The discoveries they make are nothing more than re-discoveries” (*Postmodernism* 118).

At least to some extent, Lefter’s stance is justifiable, since it is that of a postmodernist who revisits modernism. Yet, instead of deploring it unanimously, it is more constructive to note that neomodernism applies innovation *within an already existing paradigm*, employing “an arsenal of tried and true techniques” to this end (Jameson 166). In fact, Lefter’s successors have made the necessary emendations, pointing out that postwar modernist poets were not mere imitators of their interwar counterparts (Pop 26–27). However, the topic of discussion here are not the poets, but the paradigm, which apparently has not undergone any substantial changes. How legitimate is it, then, to attach a prefix synonymous with novelty in front of the name of a trend that, at most, aspires to restore the interwar *status quo*? On the other hand, the issue with the concept is not this prefix, but the absence of an identifiable determiner. If “socialist modernism” points vividly to its origins and circumstances of manifestation, “neomodernism” suggests that the paradigm emerged in a “neutral” cultural environment similar to that of Western Europe. Lefter appears to believe that this was actually the case, since he argues that neomodernism was “imposed ... not by the artificial propaganda of the political regime, but by the alleged ‘organic’ metabolism of our own national historical culture” (*Postmodernism* 118). Yet, as previously shown, socialist modernism is just as “(un) natural” as socialist realism. What helps distinguish between them is not *whether* the Party meddled in the two movements, but rather *how much* it interfered in their affairs. Therefore, to perpetuate the use of the ingenuous “neomodernism” in reference to this period would equate to a mystification of a large portion of postwar Romanian literature.

“Socialist aestheticism,” the other concept frequently deployed in relation to the Eastern European literatures of the 1960s and 1970s, was put forth in 1963 by Serbian critic and theorist Sveta Lukić to designate the “stage in the development of literatures of socialist countries when they liberate themselves from socialist realism” (xvi). Lukić also highlights the ambivalent nature of this paradigm, whereby, on the one hand, the writers are exempt from serving any longer as agents of the communist propaganda, and on the other, their access to socially relevant topics is thereby restricted. It is worth mentioning that Lukić attributes the advent of socialist aestheticism to a compromise, in that, unlike in the USSR, “in Yugoslavia, society, through its politicians, ideologues and official artists, reaches an agreement with creators on what not to do” (107). In Romania, the phrase “socialist aestheticism” was first used in 2004 by Mircea Martin, who makes no mention of the Serbian critic, yet deploys the term to describe this paradigm along much the same lines: he too perceives it to be a successor of socialist realism, he too credits the negotiations between the Party and the writers with its emergence, he too portrays it as a reversal of relations between aesthetics and ideology:

This is to say neither that the communist ideology was no longer dominant, nor that the ideological surveillance of the national culture and literature ceased. The thematic areas broadened, however, the majority of the blacklisted authors were re-published and—most importantly—the artistic stakes had gradually taken precedence over the ideological stakes (or conditions). From a tolerated, marginal benchmark, the aesthetic criterion evolved to become a central, primordial yardstick. (Martin 18)

In comparison to neomodernism, socialist aestheticism evidently evokes the specificity of the socio-political circumstances that led to the emergence, structure, and function of the new paradigm more effectively. And if this is the case, what does this term lack? The problem lies in the vagueness of the noun: it is clear that it is in no way related to *fin de siècle* aestheticism, and that, in fact, “aestheticism” here refers to any literary work that has an aesthetic/artistic/non-propagandistic end. Yet, as previously shown, the Romanian literary criticism of the 1960s and 1970s did not canonize *all* literary works, reserving this privilege for the works that followed the characteristic patterns of modernist poetics. Secondly, this is not only a matter of form, but also ideology: specifically, the ideology of progress and of the succession of generations that lies at the very heart of the definition of modernism, of which aestheticism makes no mention. Finally, the adoption of “socialist aestheti-

cism” is tantamount to equating the period between 1960 and 1989 with a relatively homogenous literary phase in the history of Romanian literature, which, as Cosmin Borza aptly notes (539), overlooks the main event of this period: the shift from modernism to postmodernism, which originated around 1980. Another noteworthy argument in this regard is that Serbian criticism and historiography, from which the concept of “socialist aestheticism” originated, has gradually replaced the term with “socialist modernism,” far more precise and adequate a descriptive tool.

Socialist modernism as late modernism

Yet, the dissociations made above leave the following question open: if socialist modernism cannot be reduced to Western postwar modernism, does this imply that the two trends do not share any similarity? In addressing this question, I compare, in what follows, socialist modernism with what came to be known in Western literary criticism as “late modernism.” And if thus far I sought to provide a detailed account of the former, what is in order now is a discussion of the latter.

It should first be noted that late modernism, in much the same fashion as socialist modernism, is riddled with contradictory interpretations, regarding not only the characteristics of the phenomenon, but also its range of influence. To avoid futile arguments, I shall make it clear from the very beginning that, by “late modernism,” I refer to the literary paradigm of the post-World War II era that spans the years between 1945 and 1965/1970 and in which originate authors such as Ezra Pound—with *The Pisan Cantos*—, William Carlos Williams—with *Paterson*—, Charles Olson, Paul Celan, J. W. Prynne, Samuel Beckett—with *Malone Dies*—, John Barth—with *The Floating Opera*—, Thomas Pynchon—with *V.*—, Alejo Carpentier—with his first novels— and most of the representatives of the French *Nouveau Roman*—Alain Robbe-Grillet, Michel Butor, Claude Simon, etc. In short, my understanding of the term “late modernism” is closer to that of Anthony Mellors, who limits it to the postwar period, rather than Tyrus Miller, who associates it with the interwar years.

Second, I find it fit to indicate the scope of my comparison: it does not, in any way, seek to provide artificial symmetrical oppositions the likes of West *vs.* East or First World *vs.* Second World. In fact, that would be an exercise in futility, as, unlike Kermode’s neomodernism, late modernism is not limited to what was then known as the First

World, being witnessed in Third World countries such as Brazil, too (Coutinho 762). On the other hand, it is also true that late modernism cannot be construed outside the three-world model: “Late modernism is a product of Cold War, but in all kinds of complicated ways” (Jameson 165). Consequently, what I hope to achieve through this comparison is to assess the extent to which socialist modernism qualifies not as an alternate model, but as a specific form of late modernism.

Lastly, it should be noted that my typological model draws mainly on Mellors’s set of characteristics, with a few additions from Jameson, Kermode, and Brian McHale. Thus, the relation between the two paradigms appears as follows:

Late modernism	Socialist modernism
1. Undertheorized	1. Undertheorized
2. Aesthetic autonomism (as opposed to the politics of high modernism)	2. Aesthetic autonomism (as opposed to the ideology of socialist realism)
3. Transcendence, myth, Hermeticism (in contrast to capitalist commodification)	3. Transcendence, myth, Hermeticism (in contrast to communist materialism)
4. Organic community as an alternative to institutionalized collectivity	4. Individualism as alternative to institutionalized collectivity
5. Neo-avant-garde	5. “Classicization” of high modernism
6. Obsolescence and exhaustion	6. Inaugural feeling
7. Critique of the capitalist establishment ⁴	7. Integrated in the communist cultural system

⁴ Being fully aware that an appropriate circumscription of late modernism exceeds the scope of a single article—not to mention a single footnote—, I will nevertheless try to preclude some of the confusions which might occur in the understanding of this concept: (1) As the successor of high, i.e. first, interwar modernism—illustrated by authors such as T. S. Eliot, Gottfried Benn, Paul Valéry, Federico García Lorca, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Bertold Brecht, Eugene O’Neill, etc.—, late modernism continues, at times, along the same lines, at other times, it turns radical, yet also departs from its precursor in many an aspect. My model of seven characteristics attempts to reflect this ambivalent character of the newer paradigm as compared to the older one. (2) As of high modernism, the characteristics of late modernism are more evident in poetry than in prose; therefore, I dwell solely on the latter here. (3) The characteristics of late modernism manifest in different ways at different levels of a literary work. There are, of course, significant differences between Carpentier’s man-

It is evident from the comparison above that, of the seven sets of characteristics whereby I aimed to describe the two paradigms, the first three (1–3) coincide almost perfectly, although they sometimes apply to different reference points. Yet, notwithstanding the extreme doctrine they oppose to or the attempt toward homogenization they strive to distance themselves from, both (non-socialist) late modernism and socialist modernism ultimately take *the same form*, although their *functions differ*. This also applies, to some extent, to criterion (4), where two *similar forms* fulfill *the same function*. However, it is equally arguable that feature (4) is closer to features (5–6), which take *different forms* to fulfill *the same function*—namely that of perpetuating the modernist rhetoric—, than to features (1–3), which deploy the same form to serve different functions. The most problematic characteristic is feature (7), which may appear as either an instance of absolute divergence—opposition to *vs.* incorporation within a system—or perfect correspondence—the critique of capitalism—, depending on the side of the debate one takes.

To clarify such ambiguities, the term of comparison must first be disambiguated. Where does the specificity of modernism lie: in its *form* or in its *function*—i.e. its ideology? Much to the dismay of many, my answer to this question is quite simple: in both or, to be precise, in neither of the two, since modernism is, at least in my Jamesonian understanding, a “*logic*,” an association, that is, between form and function, which in the case of late modernism connects the ideology of the aesthetic—and implicitly, the critique of capitalism—to a particular set of rhetorical devices. Yet capitalism is anything but a homogenous phenomenon and its famous “combined and uneven development” has compelled modernism to seek out various means of survival. It is for this reason that, in its attempt to adapt to certain conditions, modernism sometimes abandons forms and, at other times, functions. In all these cases, however, we do not deal with alternative forms of modernism: it is not modernism

ner of suggesting myth and transcendence as diffuse presences in his *real maravilloso*, Barth’s implicit plea for a necessary “beyond” through a *reductio ad absurdum* of nihilistic thought in *The Floating Opera*, and Pynchon’s Joycean perpetuation of the mythical quest pattern in his *V*. However, these are nothing more than “stylistic” differences coexisting within the framework of the same paradigm, and they do not challenge said writers’ adherence to late modernism. Even when considering the case of the French *nouveau romanciers*, who are seemingly poles apart from our model, we encounter an unquestionable fascination with myth—expressed through either the dissolution of narrative into a “mythical nebula” (De Toffoli 265), as is the case with Simon, or the articulation of the narrative itself according to a Lévi-Straussian dualist pattern of the “structure of myth” (Britton 71–75) such as in Robbe-Grillet’s *The Erasers*.

itself that changes, since it sacrifices *some of its forms and/or some of its functions precisely to save its "logic."* Thus, I believe that, as long as late modernism and socialist modernism share a common "logic" in spite of their understandable fluctuations in form and function, socialist modernism can be seen as a variant of late modernism.

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Socialistični modernizem kot kompromis: prispevek o romunskem literarnem sistemu

Ključne besede: romunska književnost / socialistični modernizem / neomodernizem / socialistični esteticizem / pozni modernizem

V članku obravnavam izraz »socialistični modernizem«, natančneje njegovo uporabnost za označevanje literarne paradigme, ki se je v letih med 1960/1965 in 1980 uveljavila v romunski in v drugih vzhodnoevropskih književnostih. Članek je zgrajen tridelno. Najprej podajam diahroni pregled navedenega obdobja, posebej pa raziskujem vzroke, spričo katerih so pisatelji in komunistični oblastniki modernizem pojmovali kot razvojno smer, s pomočjo katere so lahko uspešno izrazili svoja zanimanja v obdobju, ko se je pričel umikati socialistični realizem. V drugem delu prispevka opredeljujem idejo »socialističnega modernizma« in analiziram njeno uporabnost za označbo omenjenega obdobja, predvsem dokazujem, zakaj je pojem uporabnejši od drugih, podobnih izrazov, ki so bili doslej v uporabi v Romuniji, kot sta »neomodernizem« ali »socialistični esteticizem«. Slednjič raziskujem, ali je ideja socialističnega modernizma omejena na rabo v okviru nacionalne, v

najboljšem primeru regionalne ravni, ali pa jo je mogoče uspešno povezati v nadnacionalno mrežo modernizma, in sicer tako, da ga primerjamo s t.i. »poznim modernizmom«.

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