

Translating Modernism Through Communism

William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez
As Cold War Writers

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Aesthetic Modernism As Ideological Subversion

THE PRIVILEGED status the two canonical writers of the Global South—William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez—in postwar Romanian literature has nowadays become a critical truism. In 1969, Sorin Alexandrescu published a monographic study on Faulkner,¹ which beyond all the meaningful methodological breakthroughs it made in the Romanian culture of literary criticism at the time,² also attests to the major role the American writer plays in rediscovering and—as I aim to show in the present article—in the local reinvention of modernism (in the aftermath of the monopoly of socialist realism). Similarly, magical realism, flourishing in Romania especially due to the Gabriel García Márquez “phenomenon,” became the main benchmark for acknowledging the great majority of iconic Romanian novelists of the 1960s and 1970s: Ștefan Bănulescu, D. R. Popescu, George Bălăiță, Sorin Titel, Fănuș Neagu.³ Not surprisingly, affinities with Faulkner’s narrative style and fiction are present with all the aforementioned writers,⁴ in the same way as, in the postwar era, Marin Preda, the Romanian writer with the best reception among both professional literary critics and the general public, was in his turn considered “Faulknerian.”⁵

Even more symptomatic for confirming the degree of emulation produced by the two writers within the Romanian culture during communism remains their constant presence in the *Chronological Dictionary of the Romanian Novel* (DCRR),⁶ the most suitable Romanian analytical tool granting access, in the local production, to what Margaret Cohen named and Franco Moretti theorized as “the great unread.”⁷ In the descriptions provided by the DCRR authors to the inventoried volumes—descriptions which usually represent a synthesis of their critical reception throughout time—references to Faulknerian or magical realism models are not limited only to the leading Romanian novelists of the postwar era, but also cover a significant number of authors considered to be second rank or that have been forgotten today: from Dana Dumitriu and Laurențiu Fulga, to Alice Botez,

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Tudor Dumitru Savu, Vasile Sălăjan, Horia Bădescu, Constantin Zărnescu, Alexandru Papilian, Octavian Popa, Ioan Dan Nicolescu, Ion Anghel Mănăstire, Nicolae Ioana, etc.

The critical reception of this influence, whose impact can be compared to the one Charles Baudelaire and Marcel Proust had on interwar Romanian literature (a phenomenon which allowed Andrei Terian to consider the two great French writers as “Romanian writers”⁸), also needs to be understood as utterly stable, if not absolutely classicized. The local critical cliché says that the catalyzing influence Faulkner and García Márquez exercised is so strong because their innovative style and their formal modernist experiments generated the most powerful subversive effect in relation to the dogma of socialist realism.

For example, Ana-Karina Schneider provides a revealing synthesis of this trend’s ample nature in her study, “William Faulkner and the Romanian ‘Criticism of Survival.’” As Schneider underlines, Romanian (post-)communist literary criticism conducted a “dramatic de-emphasizing” of Faulkner’s “political commitments” by hyperbolizing his “aestheticized” personas as a “linguistic experimentalist,” “eccentric aesthete,” “liberal humanist” or “mythopoetic pseudohistorian,” while that of “cryptosocialist,” considered marginal, was completely suspended.⁹ Similarly, by explicitly opposing Michael Denning’s analytical review that the roots of magical realism “lay in the left-wing writers’ movements,”¹⁰ Elena Crașovan reiterates the entire set of assertions which identifies García Márquez’s influence with aesthetic evasion and political subversion:

*The new Romanian realism of the 1960s represents instead an evasive reaction to the dominant discourse of socialist realism, alongside fantastic, allegorical and experimental-parabolic fiction. . . . Romanian magical realism acquired subversive accents as it evolved from the short fiction debuts to the novels of the 1970s. Unable to represent in the realistic code the horrors of totalitarianism, magical realism described the world obliquely, allusively twisting history.*¹¹

In the aesthetic manner of criticism typical for Romania after the 1960s,¹² which carries on well beyond the anticommunist revolution of 1989, William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez epitomize in the Romanian novel the break from socialist realism, in other words, a subversive, aesthetic modernism, capable of recreating the literary evolutionary ties (apparently non-ideological and antipolitical) with the interwar period.

Socialist Modernism As Ideological Negotiation

FAULKNER AND García Márquez could, as such, be considered “the forefathers” of Romanian neomodernism in prose. However, the local conceptualization of neomodernism¹³ itself delegitimizes, from the outset, such an interpretation. For highly predictable reasons, neither of the two writers can contribute to what, for example, Ion Bogdan Lefter and Nicolae Manolescu labelled as modernist “replay”¹⁴ and as modernist “remake,”¹⁵ respectively.

First of all, one aspect is obvious: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, “the first international bestseller from Latin America and perhaps the most influential novel of the last third of the twentieth century,”¹⁶ comes out only in 1967. All the more, in Romanian interwar literature, what marginally transpires is, at most, a “proto-magical realism,”¹⁷ since, as Ștefan Baghiu shows,

*Romania, which had had no precedent in renditions of novels originating in the Global South, translated for the first time, between 1948 and 1964, novels from Latin American countries such as Ecuador, Mexico and Brazil (starting from 1948), Argentina (1949), Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica (1956), Venezuela, Peru (1963), and even Guatemala (as early as 1960) . . . Those are just some examples inside the Global South translation scape, since between 1948 and 1989 more than 50 new countries from the Global South witness renditions in Romania.*¹⁸

Secondly, nor can Faulkner’s influence in the 1960s truly contribute to restoring the ties with the Romanian modernism of the 1930s because, as Nicolae Manolescu himself proves in his *History*,

*the psychology of our interwar novel has far more in common with the French-style ‘introspection’ (forged in the school of classics which gave Proust and Gide) than with the search of the depths of the human being as in the older-style Russian novel or with the metaphysical sensuality in the newer D. H. Lawrence novels; and it is even more engendered with the lucidity of the moralists or with Stendhal’s essentially utterly rational ‘wickedness,’ than with certain attempts of the time, such as Faulkner’s or Virginia Woolfs, which suggested the intense fluidity of the consciousness and the mysterious halo of impressions it is wrapped in, like a larva of the silkworm in her cocoon.*¹⁹

Not coincidentally, despite the fact that his first “canonization” occurred in France throughout the fourth decade of the 20th century,²⁰ and his first mention in the Romanian literary culture appears in 1932, being supremely laudatory,²¹ Faulkner enjoys a substantial reception only after 1960. In 1961, a first translation²² of a fragment is published, in 1962 the first full translation comes out—*Intruder in the Dust*.²³ Once *The Mansion*²⁴ is translated in feuilleton, the studies dedicated to his work are no longer incidental, and gain substantial frequency.²⁵

The situation is not much different from what was happening to translations of Faulkner’s work in the other East Central European languages. The only exceptions are the Czech editions published in 1935 (*Sanctuary*) and in 1936 (*Light in August*), as well as the Serbo-Croatian edition, initiated starting with 1941, through the short story “That Will Be Fine,” which continued in the 1950s with such an ample series which turned out to be incomparable to any similar literature in the region.²⁶ On the other hand, in the rest of the countries, the years when the first translations of Faulkner’s novels were published are very close to the Romanian timeline: Hungary (1961), Bulgaria (1963), Poland (1957).²⁷ In the Soviet Union as well, after *The Evening Sun* was

translated in 1934, the collections of short stories and novels had to wait for the Thaw epoch in order to be published.²⁸

Approached from this perspective, the reception and the series of translations from Faulkner and García Márquez stand for a necessary contextual understanding of Romanian neomodernism (i.e., not as an ideologically neutral phenomenon, but as being dependent on the cultural and political negotiations of post-Stalinism). In addition, they can vouch for the necessity—broadly argued by Andrei Terian—of imposing a new concept such as “socialist modernism,” in order to classify the metamorphosis experienced in Romanian literature from 1960 to 1980:

*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. . . . 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.*²⁹

As such, the major success the two writers of the “Global South” enjoyed in communist Romania cannot be perceived as a mere echo of the “organic” evolution of Romanian literature that was rebuilding the “natural” ties with interwar modernism. On the contrary, their entire local repertoire (influences, reception, translations) reveals the broadly unique features that the formulas and functions of modernism acquired during the totalitarian regime. In fact, many of these features become alienated even from the typological model Terian configured for socialist modernism by comparing it to a western “late modernism” from the 1945–1970 period, “a product of Cold War, but in all kinds of complicated ways”:³⁰ aesthetic autonomism (as opposed to the ideology of socialist realism); transcendence, myth, Hermeticism (in contrast to communist materialism); individualism as an alternative to institutionalized collectivity; the “classization” of high modernism; inaugural feeling; integration in the communist cultural system.³¹

Rural Modernism As Ideological Struggle

IN ORDER to underpin this understanding, and thus to offer material support to the new (socialist) modernism facilitated by Faulkner and García Márquez in postwar Romanian literature, it is necessary to bring into the discussion an issue just as easy to notice as it is to ignore: the overwhelming influence of the two writers is most intensely present in rural literature. “Faulknerianism” and “Márquezianism” in Romanian literature during communism are located in the countryside, confirming for the very first time in Romania’s cultural history that the rural world is a privileged space for experimenting and reflecting modernity’s challenges. This is exactly what Romanian interwar theories of modernity/modernism have obstinately refused to admit.³²

In fact, Romania’s particular case demonstrates that the famous evaluation Pascale Casanova gave in *The World Republic of Letters* to the global impact of Faulkner’s rural fiction was rather over-optimistic:

by offering the novelists of the poorest countries the possibility of giving acceptable literary form to the most repugnant realities of the margins of the world, Faulkner has been a formidable force for accelerating literary time. . . . Faulkner thus helped a primitive and rural world that until then had seemed to demand a codified and descriptive realism to achieve novelistic modernity: in his hands, a violent, tribal civilization, impressed with the mark of biblical mythologies, opposed in every respect to urban modernity . . . , became the privileged object of one of the most daring exercises in style of the century.³³

In order for “the Faulknerian revolution” (as Casanova titles one of the chapters) to be imported in the East Central European literary cultures, the positive critical acclamations in France didn’t seem to be enough, and the support of several political contexts and only secondarily of cultural ones was necessary.

On the one hand, a fundamental role was played by the major interest showed by the communist regime in collectivizing agriculture in order to be able to financially support a rapid industrialization in Romania. It comes as no surprise that the political propaganda equated the Party with an essential factor of emancipating/modernizing the countryside. Decisive in this respect was also the fact that, as Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery show, “Contrary to popular belief, collectivization in Romania did not involve a powerful Communist Party imposing its will on the countryside, for Party rule itself was in the process of being created.”³⁴ Consequently, a major function was placed on the cultural component of propaganda, which generated not only an above-average level of productivity in rural novels,³⁵ but also went beyond promoting the socialist realist literature of collectivization or of interwar East Central European ruralists (such as the literature of the Hungarian writer Zsigmond Móricz or of the Polish writer Leon Kruczkowsky). It generated endeavors to recover, through translations, the great models of this type of literature. For example, in 1960, Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, described by Raymond Williams as the cradle of the British modern rural novel,³⁶ is published for the first time in Romanian translation (almost 70 years after it first appeared in 1891). In 1962 it is followed by the first translation of Honoré de Balzac’s *The Peasants* (more than 110 years from the original edition—1844).³⁷

As previously demonstrated, the period 1960–1962—the final stage of collectivization, when the pressure and the fast-paced transfer of property from private owners to the state is more alert than ever—coincides with the period when the first pieces from Faulkner’s writings were published in Romania. This was possible because portraying peasantry as an avantgarde class in modernizing the country implies going beyond the dogma of socialist realism. As such, certain modernist literary forms and types became the norm simply because they were capable of both creating psychological complexities within rural representatives and of reflecting the diverse intertwining between countryside and modernity. Moreover, they were meant to highlight that capitalist alternatives are intrinsically perverted. Fully suggestive in this regard is the detailed analysis Mircea Ivănescu (an important future poet and translator of the novels *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!*) performs on Faulkner’s writings in 1962. In addition to the subtle narrative commentary, Ivănescu highlights the “moralist” feature exhibited by the author

of *The Hamlet* when seen in relation to “the dark sides of corruption and turmoil, lacking all positive meaning,” inherent in the American society.³⁸

On the other hand, a determining factor consisted also in the misfortunes and even tragedies suffered by the “proletarianized” peasants during the process of socialist modernization, inflicted by collectivization, which were revealed in the mid-1960s (at the start of the Thaw period in Romania) through the so-called novel of the “obsessive decade.”³⁹ The boldest in this respect prove to be those depicting rural themes, taking advantage of the fact that even the “political power readily accepts and certifies that the revolutionary momentum displays a slower pace in the rural environment.”⁴⁰ Also, Mircea Iorgulescu’s synthetic microstudy, written in the last decade of the communist regime, is worth mentioning here as it insists on the apparently surprising acknowledgment that

*for the postwar Romanian prose, village life represented—and still represents—an obsessive trope: never, in any of the previous stages of Romanian literature has there been written so much . . . the rural universe ceases to be an enclosed, isolated, self-sufficient space impervious to change. Great mobilizing forces act, especially upon young people, turning the rural universe into a sort of destination for increasingly more distant social and psychological travels.*⁴¹

Thus, from this vantage point, Faulkner becomes a protagonist, especially since, immediately after World War II, American literary critics team up massively to create a worldwide reputation for the Southern writer as the spokesman of a US modernist individualism, implacably hostile to Soviet totalitarianism.⁴² This represents Faulkner’s emergence as a Cold War writer and precisely this political role was exploited by Romanian rural novelists of the 1960s and 1970s. Nonetheless, for prominent Faulknerian writers such as D. R. Popescu and Sorin Titel, the subversive inserts or the critique of collectivization drama do not constitute the nucleus of their narrative projects. Instead, their work reflects at large the idea that—in Jay Watson’s words—“the rural may in some instances take developmental precedence over the urban as the matrix and laboratory of modernity.”⁴³

A political, ideological and cultural network, similar to what has already been described, also conditions the Romanian reterritorializing of Gabriel García Márquez. As mentioned before, quoting Ștefan Baghiu’s study on the connections between Eastern Europe and the Global South, the massive impact of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was anticipated by two decades of intense assimilation in Latin American literature, coordinated by the communist regime out of the desire to denounce the imperialism, colonialism or racism, which had become imprinted in the global capitalist system.⁴⁴ This also explains why the Romanian translation is published only four years after the original edition,⁴⁵ namely concomitantly or even earlier than in other countries in the Soviet bloc (USSR—1970, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia—1971, Yugoslavia—1973, Poland—1974). All the more, the interpretation imposed by *Scânteia*, the Party’s official newspaper, insists on the idea that

beyond the fairytale-veiled narrative, the intertwining of myth and reality, beyond the fantastic cover lies the core of the entire book—the brilliant and unique metaphor of an entire

*continent's epos, at war with the evil of the centuries, churned under time and under the oppression of underdevelopment, exploitation, absurdity.*⁴⁶

In fact, any minimally materialist interpretation (i.e., not limited to a formalist reading) of Márquez's masterpiece will feel justified to point out that this novel's magical realism "is employed . . . to re-create Colombian history in order to protest against the way capitalism dominated the socio-political and economic structure of the region."⁴⁷ Furthermore, in his *Modern Epic*, Franco Moretti defines *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as "the novel of uneven and combined development [of modernity],"⁴⁸ an idea on the basis of which the Warwick Research Collective (wrec) develops an entire analytical movement, meant to restructure transnational literary studies. García Márquez, thus, becomes the writer at the center of the theory that legitimizes the idea that

*Modernity is neither a chronological nor a geographical category. It is not something that happens—or even that happens first—in 'the west' and to which others can subsequently gain access; or that happens in cities rather than in the countryside . . . Capitalist modernisation entails development, yes—but this 'development' takes the forms also of the development of underdevelopment, of maldevelopment and dependent development. If urbanisation, for instance, is clearly part of the story, what happens in the countryside as a result is equally so.*⁴⁹

In addition, just like the Faulknerian model, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* encounters a preferential impact on Romanian rural literature,⁵⁰ a phenomenon similar to the one in post-Stalinist Soviet Russia.⁵¹ This demonstrates, once again, not only that an aesthetic perspective on the local reception of magical realism can be extremely limiting, but also that the new modernism facilitated by García Márquez does not evolve "organically" from interwar modernism. The communist regime in Romania's 1960s and 1970s, steadily more inclined to assert its independence from the USSR by reshaping nationalistic discourse, reaches the propagandistic achievement of identifying the peasantry not only with an avantgarde proletarian class, as a criticism against capitalism, but also with the sheer symbolic force of perpetuating nationalism beyond the challenges of modernization. Consequently, the mythical and allegorical scenarios, preferred by magical realism and present in the prose of Romanian writers (chiefly D. R. Popescu, Ștefan Bănulescu, or Fănuș Neagu) are just partially subversive in relation to the policies of the Party.⁵²

Conclusions

THE ROMANIAN timeline of translation, reception or literary influence exercised through the works of William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez is, therefore, dependent on the geopolitical context of the Cold War. The same feature is, to a large extent, typical for the modernism the two writers of the Global South facilitate and spread in Romania's postwar cultural field. The subversive ideological nature of Faulknerian and Márquezian fiction/forms (no doubt, real) does not surpass in magni-

tude the ideological, legitimizing nature retained by the communist regime. This reality is demonstrated par excellence by the fact that the rural literature of the time benefits particularly from the catalyzing impulse of the two narrative models of global expansion.

I don't believe that more conclusive local samples of Faulkner's and García Márquez's expansion and dominance as Cold War writers can be found other than the two symbolic moments of their reception in postcommunist Romania

The first features Sorin Alexandrescu as its protagonist, the savviest Romanian interpreter of Faulknerian narrative. In an afterword to the full translation of *Requiem for a Nun*, published in 1995, Alexandrescu revisits his own fascination, dating back to the 1960s, with Faulkner's "sublime literary work," and regards it not as the result of intellectual involvement, but as a sentimental journey:

This fascination was, at the time, the fascination with an organic world. Even the structuralism of the book published with 'Univers' and, even more so, the one in the book published in Paris, they were all a tribute paid in honor of this organicity. But, meanwhile, I came to understand something more: the organicity of the world south for the United States was, in a way, the organicity of the traditional Romanian world, the literary admiration for the former was the love in my flesh and bones for the latter.

Therefore, despite the fact that, after 1989, he had proven to be one of the most lucid and balanced Romanian intellectuals, Alexandrescu resorts to two mythologizations here, both typical for the Cold War rhetoric: not only is the Faulknerian South reinvented as a world in which inequality and discrimination could be blended in a unitary whole, but also the Romanian pre-communist rural universe is idealized, although, in fact, it held an illustrative place in the European top of exploitation and social schisms.⁵³

The second symbolic moment brings together several voices of the Romanian post-communism, which explicitly challenge García Márquez's "canonical" status, on account of his communist affinities. From labelling his works as being the result of a "limitless graphomania,"⁵⁴ to cynically contesting his "moral" competence to produce "masterpieces,"⁵⁵ such stands prove once more how influential the Cold War mindset was for modelling and receiving the Márquezian influence, since its rhetoric is still alive decades later, even after the historical reality has disappeared.

□

Notes

1. Sorin Alexandrescu, *William Faulkner* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969).
2. Adriana Stan, *Bastionul lingvistic: O istorie comparată a structuralismului în România*, foreword by Mircea Martin (Bucharest: Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2017), 185–204.
3. Ilinca Ilian, "Destinul literaturii latino-americane în România regimului comunist (1948–1989)," *Philologica Jassyensia* 15, 1 (2019): 165–176, and Elena Crașovan, "Magical Realism Avatars in the Romanian Novel," *Dacoromania litteraria* 7 (2020): 36–55.

4. Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române: 5 secole de literatură* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2008).
5. Starting with 1948, the literary critic Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu (at the time a supporter of socialist realism) attacks Marin Preda's debut volume, *Întâlnirea din pământuri* (Meeting from the lands), on account of promoting "a vision of degradation of the human being in an obtuse biologism" stemming from the absolutely "grotesque perspective of rural life" presented by the "American novelist Faulkner"—see Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, "Întâlnirea din pământuri (nuvele) de Marin Preda," *Contemporanul* (Bucharest), 23 April 1948, apud *Cronologia vieții literare românești: Perioada postbelică*, vol. 3, 1948, gen. ed. Eugen Simion (Bucharest: Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2010), 314. In addition, in 1961, the influential writer Eugen Barbu, who regards himself as a true Faulknerian, highlights the fact that Marin Preda "implanted" Faulkner's "literary school" in Romania—see the debate "Probleme actuale ale dezvoltării prozei," *Viața Românească* (Bucharest) 14, 10 (October 1961), apud *Cronologia vieții literare românești: Perioada postbelică*, vol. 9, 1960–1962, gen. ed. Eugen Simion (Bucharest: Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2012), 386.
6. See *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului românesc de la origini până la 1989* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2004).
7. See Margaret Cohen, *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 54–68.
8. Andrei Terian, "Writing Transnational Histories of 'National' Literatures: Baudelaire and Proust As Romanian Authors," conference paper presented in 2015 at the International Symposium "Literary Transnationalism(s)," Catholic University of Leuven.
9. See Ana-Karina Schneider, "William Faulkner and the Romanian 'Criticism of Survival,'" *The Faulkner Journal* 24, 1 (2008): 99–117. In this study, the author analyses an ample selection of Faulkner's critical reception in Romania, from Sorin Alexandrescu's monograph in 1969, Virgil Stanciu's studies (1977, 1997, 2004), to articles published by Nicolae Balotă (1972), Dinu Flămând (1972), Valentin Tașcu (1972), Ana Cartianu (1973) or Mircea Mihaieș (1990, 1999), all the way to Radu Lupan's and Ștefan Stoescu's forewords/afterwords in the translation volumes from Faulkner's writings (1964, 1967, 1973, 1997).
10. Michael Denning, "The Novelists International," in *The Novel*, vol. 1, *History, Geography and Culture*, edited by Franco Moretti (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 703–725. See also Mariano Siskind, "The Genres of World Literature: The Case of Magical Realism," in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, edited by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir (London–New York: Routledge, 2012), 345–355.
11. Crașovan, 40–41. See also Marcel Cornis-Pope, "From Alternative Forms of Realism to Post-Realism: Transitional Literature in the East-Central European Region in the 19th and 20th Century," *Serbian Studies Research* 3, 1 (2012): 41–58, and Cristina Șandru, *Worlds Apart? A Postcolonial Reading of post-1945 East-Central European Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).
12. Mircea Martin, "Despre estetismul socialist," *România literară* 37, 23 (2004): 18–19.
13. For a detailed analysis of the aporias of neomodernism theory see Adriana Stan, "Neomodernismul," *Vatra* 44, 1–2 (2014): 85–87.

14. Ion Bogdan Lefter, *Recapitularea modernității: Pentru o nouă istorie a literaturii române*, 2nd edition, with an epilogue about neomodernism (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2012).
15. Manolescu, 1000–1197.
16. Denning, 704.
17. Andrei Terian, “Neoextractivism, or the Birth of Magical Realism As World Literature,” *Textual Practice* 35, 3 (2021): 485–503.
18. Ștefan Baghiu, “Translating Hemispheres: Eastern Europe and the Global South Connection through Translationscapes of Poverty,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 56, 3 (2019): 500.
19. Manolescu, 670.
20. See Alexandrescu, 13–14: “The fourth decade of the twentieth century witnessed a rapid diffusion of Faulkner in France, through the prompt translation of all his masterpieces. It is not an overstatement to say that *Faulkner’s glory was first established in France, and only later in the United States*, where a low pressure excited by enthusiastic literary critics, beginning with O’Donnell, could create a trend only after 1950 (the Nobel Prize), when the American writer had long reached notoriety in Europe.”
21. See the article “Un mare scriitor american: William Faulkner,” *Facla nouă ilustrată* (Bucharest) 26, 4046 (1931): 1–2. Other articles published in the same period echo Faulkner’s reception in French magazines—see Ana-Maria Brezuleanu, Viorica Nișcov, Michaela Șchiopu, and Cornelia Ștefănescu, *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice (1919–1944)*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 1999), 228.
22. William Faulkner, “Vinovatul,” translated by Marius Măgureanu, *Gazeta literară* (Bucharest) 8, 16 (1961): 4 (fragment from *Nechemat in țărină* [Intruder in the Dust]).
23. William Faulkner, *Nechemat in țărină*, translated by Eugen Barbu and Andrei Ion Deleanu, foreword by Radu Lupan (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1964).
24. See William Faulkner, “Conacul,” translated by Fănuș Neagu and Aurora Leicand, *Secolul 20*, 8–11 (1962): 105–173; 113–170, 127–182; 4–95. The first complete edition will be published only in 1968 under a new title: William Faulkner *Casa cu coloane*, translated by Eugen Barbu and Andrei Ion Deleanu (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1968).
25. See *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului tradus în România de la origini până la 1989* [IX RT] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005).
26. Sanja Bahun, “Faulkner, Фолкнер, Folkner, Fokner: A Case Study of Slavic-Anglophone Translatability,” *The Faulkner Journal* 24, 1 (2008): 11–27.
27. David Welsh, “American Literature in Polish Translation,” *The Polish Review* 16, 4 (1971): 53–57.
28. Bahun.
29. Andrei Terian, “Socialist Modernism As Compromise: A Study of the Romanian Literary System,” *Primerjalna književnost* 42, 1 (2019): 140.
30. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London–New York: Verso, 2002), 165.
31. See Terian, “Socialist Modernism,” 143.
32. See Teodora Dumitru, “Conceptul lovinescian de ‘intelectualizare’ a literaturii față cu ipoteza postbelică a țăranului ‘intelectualizat,’” *Transilvania 2* (2021): 31–50. See also ead., “Social Class Difference and the Evolution of Romanian Literature from Lovinescu’s Perspective (1924–1929),” in *Ruralism and Literature in Romania*, edited by Ștefan Baghiu, Vlad Pojoga, and Maria Sass (Berlin etc.: Peter Lang, 2019), 205–218.

33. Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, translated by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA—London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 337.
34. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949–1962* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3.
35. During the agricultural collectivization years (1949–1962) the rural novel represents almost 20% of the total novelistic output, whereas the rural novelistic production before World War II never surpassed 10%—see Cosmin Borza, “How to Populate a Country: A Quantitative Analysis of the Rural Novel from Romania (1900–2000),” in *Ruralism and Literature in Romania*, 21–40.
36. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 182–214.
37. See DORT.
38. Mircea Ivănescu, “William Faulkner,” *Steaua* (Cluj) 13, 10 (1962): 89–111. See also Georgeta Horodincă, “Probleme ale prozei occidentale contemporane,” *Gazeta literară* 14, 2 April 1964 (text edited in the journal’s editorial office starting from a speech held at the Plenary Meeting of the Writers’ Union Leadership Committee), apud *Cronologia vieții literare românești: Perioada postbelică*, vol. 10, 1963–1964, gen. ed. Eugen Simion (Bucharest: Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2012), 516: “The case of a writer such as Faulkner, for example, requires a certain understanding and a nuanced rendition of his work, expressing a vast and profound protest against contemporaneous American society, because the writer sometimes still becomes the prisoner of the decadence he portrays, of the prejudice he rebels against.”
39. See Alex Goldiș, “Pentru o morfologie a romanului ‘obsedantului deceniu,’ *Caietele Sextil Pușcariu* 3 (2017): 494–502.
40. Sanda Cordoș, *Literatura între revoluție și reacțiune: Problema crizei în literatura română și rusă a secolului XX* (Cluj: Biblioteca Apostrof, n.d. [1999]), 195.
41. Mircea Iorgulescu, “Metamorfozele unei lumi,” *România literară* 17, 34 (1984): 10.
42. Lawrence H. Schwartz, *Creating Faulkner’s Reputation: The Politics of Modern Literary Criticism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988).
43. Jay Watson, *William Faulkner and the Faces of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 42.
44. See also Ilian.
45. Gabriel García Márquez, *Un veac de singurătate*, translated with a foreword by Mihnea Gheorghiu (Bucharest: Univers, 1971). An extensive fragment had already appeared in 1970.
46. Dan Munteanu, “Un veac de singurătate,” *Scânteia* (Bucharest), 9053, 9 February 1972, apud *Cronologia vieții literare românești: Perioada postbelică*, vol. 18A, 1972, gen. ed. Eugen Simion (Bucharest: Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2020), 202.
47. Abu Shahid Abdullah, “Rewriting Rural Community and Dictatorial History Through Magical Realism in Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*,” *Journal of Language and Cultural Education* 3, 2 (2015): 88–89. See also Mustanir Ahmad and Ayaz Afsar, “Magical Realism, Social Protest and Anti-Colonial Sentiments in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: An Instance of Historiographic Metafiction,” *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies* 27, 2 (2014): 1–26.
48. Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World-System from Goethe to García Márquez*, translated by Quintin Hoare (London—New York: Verso, 1996), 243.

49. WREC (Warwick Research Collective), *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 13.
50. See Costin Tuchilă, “Eposul țăranesc și spiritul realismului magic,” *Luceafărul* (Bucharest) 23, 40 (1980): 3.
51. Erika Haber, *The Myth of the Non-Russian: Iskander and Aitmatov’s Magical Universe* (Lanham–Boulder–New York–Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003). See especially the chapter “Russian and Soviet Realism,” where Haber underlines the close connection between the Village Prose that enjoyed “its greatest popularity” after Stalin’s death and the Latin American magical realism.
52. See Ștefan Baghiu, “Geocritique: Siting, Poverty, and the Global Southeast,” in *Theory in the “Post” Era: A Vocabulary for the Twenty-First-Century Conceptual Commons*, edited by Alexandru Matei, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (New York etc.: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 235–250.
53. Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa: Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500–2010)* (Iași: Polirom, 2010).
54. Sorin Lavric, “Tristetea grafomaniei fără orizont,” *Luceafărul de dimineață* 27 (2009): 11.
55. Vladimir Tismăneanu, “Celălalt Gabriel García Márquez: Complicele tiranului,” *La-Punkt*, April 2014, accessed 28 September 2021, <https://www.lapunkt.ro/2014/04/celalalt-gabriel-garcia-marquez-complicele-tiranului/>: “It appears that he wasn’t just a fellow traveler, a ‘road companion,’ such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, he was also a direct collaborator of the Cuban repression, an informer. I remember Monica Lovinescu trenchantly asserting that one cannot write masterpieces and denunciations with the same hand. We enter here an area of moral promiscuity which leaves me speechless. More precisely, it fills me with indignation. But also with a sad, irrepressible nausea.”

Abstract

Translating Modernism Through Communism: William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez As Cold War Writers

The aim of this article is to present the constant and sizeable interest in the translation of William Faulkner’s and Gabriel García Márquez’s novels as one of the most distinct phenomena of the literary cultures in the Soviet bloc. The present paper focuses on Romanian translations in order to undertake case studies about Faulkner’s and García Márquez’s baffling receptivity among the very incongruent cultural ideologies of the 1960s–1980s. The most important of these case studies will address the two Nobel laureates’ pursuit of alternative, non-metropolitan modernism, which could match both the propensity shown by the totalitarian regime towards non-Western forms of modernity and the subversive reterritorialization of modernist formulas in the rural world, a process typical of (semi-) peripheral East-Central European cultures. Consequently, this article analyses the selections, the timelines, the agents/promoters of translations from Faulkner and García Márquez’s works in attempting to substantiate the claim that the Romanian postwar modernism flourished not *against*, but *through* the direct and active contribution of the communist regime.

Keywords

Romanian literature, socialist modernism, rural modernism, William Faulkner, Gabriel García Márquez