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– ABSTRACT –

BUJOR NEDELCOVICI'S WORK. MONOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

PhD Candidate:
Ligia Monica BANCIU

Scientific Coordinator:
Prof. Gheorghe GLODEANU, PhD

Dissertation Assessment Committee:

President: Prof. Oliviu FELECAN, PhD – Technical University of Cluj-Napoca;

Scientific Coordinator: Prof. Gheorghe GLODEANU, PhD - Technical University of Cluj-Napoca;

Committee members:

- Prof. Iulian BOLDEA, PhD – “George Emil Palade” University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences and Technology of Târgu-Mureș;
- Prof. Gheorghe MANOLACHE, PhD – “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu;
- Prof. Cornel MUNTEANU, PhD - Technical University of Cluj-Napoca.

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Abstract

We proposed that in the thesis *Bujor Nedelcovici's Work. Monographic Research* we would pursue the way in which History/Exile changes the method of composition of a writer who lived a good part of his life in a communist country, being marked by a tragic existence that was caused by the suffering of having a father imprisoned in communist prisons, "friends" who only wore the mask of friendship, because they were politically committed to an oppressive system.

The novelty in the approach of the doctoral thesis topic results from the originality of the work, the interdisciplinary connections (literature, religion, history, music etc.), the elements and essayistic structures that outline the profile of Bujor Nedelcovici's writings. The innovation and specificity of this monograph lies in the analytical research on the social-political context that has left its mark on the life and work of this writer, complemented by a research connected to the bibliography of both Nedelcovici's literary and non-literary work, and of his critical work, which is significant and up-to-date. The topicality of the theme stems from the need to highlight the spiritual and moral transfigurations that occurred in Bujor Nedelcovici's personality once he took up his inner and outer exile. We know that any form of exile brings with it a transformation of the exiled, but we are especially interested in the bookish transformations that occurred in the writing of the person under investigation.

The interest in this topic arose from the need to know the inner side of a man who has the vocation to speak the truth, at any cost, without any compromise, without any hindrance. We also intend to show that the total writer is not only concerned with the creative side, but also has a sacred duty to reveal the unknown faces of the past in the most authentic way, without relativism and annotations.

The aim of this thesis is to highlight, through qualitative research, the diachronic side of the history of Romanian literature before '89 and after '89, since we know that literature has always been subordinated to the social-political context of its time. Through his writings, Bujor Nedelcovici was an atypical writer, because, at a time when writers had their debut with short prose, he wrote novels, at a time when, in Romanian literature, writers used the simple narrative, without compositional artifice. He uses allegory, parody, negative utopia and metaphors at a time when writers hid their selves through literary creations, Bujor Nedelcovici uses literary creation to radiograph his self and understand the mysteries of life.

The objectives of the present research were to investigate how history can influence creation. As a whole, the paper aims to provide an insight into the life and work of Bujor Nedelcovici, who represents a bridge between worlds, civilisations and political regimes. In view of the interest Bujor Nedelcovici has aroused among French and Romanian readers, we thought that the chosen topic could be all the more interesting by highlighting the personal and literary events in his life. Our aim is to restore Bujor Nedelcovici's place in Romanian literature, "decanonising" a pre-established hierarchy and reconstructing a scale of values in which the writers of exile are no longer considered a separate chapter of Romanian literature, but an important part of it.

The starting point of the research is that history influences a writer's writing. The working sample was determined by the books reviewed by the author under investigation, as well as reviews by critics. The research methodology consisted of an analysis of the social-political context, combined with a literary analysis of the author's works and an analysis of the reviews.

The scientific and methodological support of the investigation consists of a new way of reading and interpreting the text and literary criticism. It is based on literary history studies, as well as critical studies by Sorin Alexandrescu, Eva Behring, Gheorghe Glodeanu, Florin Manolescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Ion Negoïtescu, Eugen Simion, Alex Ștefănescu, Cornel Ungureanu, etc. We also took into account the previous monographs dedicated to Bujor Nedelcovici: the doctoral thesis entitled *Bujor Nedelcovici – între atracția scriiturii și datoria mărturisirii* by Mrs. Maria-Mirabela Neagu (defended at the Doctoral School of the University of Bucharest, elaborated under the scientific supervision of prof. Ion Bogdan Lefter, PhD), which resulted in the book *Bujor Nedelcovici - între atracția scriiturii și datoria mărturisirii*, published by Tritonic

Publishing House in 2014 and the monograph *Bujor Nedelcovici. Conștiința de scriitor*, written by Anastasia Dumitru.

The paper is structured in four chapters, the first three chapters being divided into sub-chapters. The conclusions are followed by a selective bibliography of the works consulted, both writings in volumes and articles in journals and periodicals belonging to Bujor Nedelcovici, as well as critical references in the country and abroad.

Chapter 1, *History: Totalitarianism and the Romanian Exile: perspectives from within and from without*, aims at a theoretical presentation of the social-political context that has left its mark on the life and work of this writer. The research directions are: the exile and the stages of Romanian exile. The research aims to radiograph the socio-economic and political context, because Nedelcovici's creation draws its sap from the harsh reality of the communist period and, thus, we can decipher and understand all the avatars of Bujor Nedelcovici's work. Although he left the country in 1987, his training as a writer took place in the Socialist Republic of Romania, in a dark period of socialist realism, a period that involved countless compromises by writers in order to see their works come to life. Bujor Nedelcovici is incapable of moral compromise, he chooses voluntary seclusion, disobedience, resistance, rebellion, which is the reason for which, after an involuntary inner exile, he goes through a voluntary outer exile.

In chapter 2, *Bujor Nedelcovici's artistic credo*, we aim to investigate and reveal Bujor Nedelcovici's conception about the work and the universe, insisting on the language that characterizes him. We base our approach on the author's revelations from diaries, interviews in the press and from the book *Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? – interviu cu Sergiu Grigore* - a book of confession, but also of theorization of his own beliefs about the novel, creation itself, life, politics, society, etc. The chapter also reconstructs, on the basis of Bujor Nedelcovici's confessions, the image of an author who lives on literature and for literature, because he knows his purpose and subordinates his existence to the literary/non-literary text. His own works theorize a vision, which he also applies, reconstructing an entire axiological system. This chapter marks the writer's artistic credo, which, taking Alexandr Solzhenitsyn as a model, states the need to endow writing with ethical meanings and the duty to bear witness to the truth. The author also attaches great importance to the novel genre. Thus, we also consider the following ideas: the soteriological role of creation (salvation through voluntary sacrifice), the peculiarities of the author's fictional creations, novels and short stories, which reveal an original, complex type of writing, the aim of which is to highlight, beyond talent, a good knowledge of myths and symbols, the fictional material having a philosophical overlay that enhances the meaning of the texts.

In the subchapter *Jurnal infidel*, we investigate Bujor Nedelcovici's diary, the space of reflection of the diarist's experiences and thoughts. The book captures the author's search for self, who travels an initiatory path that involves the acquisition of knowledge, healing from exile and detachment from his native place. The volume is poetic art, a space of analysis, a creative laboratory and a writing exercise.

The theorist Bujor Nedelcovici appears in the autobiographical work *Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? Bujor Nedelcovici în dialog cu Sergiu Grigore*, an unpublished writing in the form of an interview with Sergiu Grigore. This subchapter of the book, which is included in the title, is a direct account, which is also an expression of the writer's detachment from the past and history.

The publicist Bujor Nedelcovici appears in the works *Aici și acum* and *Cochilia și melcul*. In this subchapter, we analyse the author's articles in the magazines of the time. These, published before and after his departure for Paris, reflect his protesting attitude and the consistency of his ethical position, capturing the author as a literary theorist.

The man of attitude Bujor Nedelcovici is mirrored in the works *Un tigru de hârtie - Eu, Nica și Securitatea*. The subchapter is dedicated to the author's transition from an attitude of indignation to active involvement, through various initiatives, in the problems of society.

Chapter 3, entitled *Bujor Nedelcovici's Novels* is dedicated to Nedelcovici's novels, literary creations that undertake a spiritual journey in search of lost time or in search of the lost self. The novels are

presented in an evolutionary perspective, identifying those "common elements" that build them in a work, but also the degree of innovation of each book. Our intention is to establish a taxonomy of novels based on the topics discussed, the relationship between the individual, Power and History (concerning the novels written up to 1987) and the stages of creation.

Chapter 4, *Dramaturgy between reality and fiction: Noaptea de solstițiu*, aims to demonstrate that Nedelcovici's dramaturgy reconstructs a past imbued with the avatars of history that triggers the theme of the "guilty without guilt".

The conclusions are followed by a selective bibliography of the works consulted, both writings in volumes and articles in journals and periodicals belonging to Bujor Nedelcovici, as well as critical references in the country and abroad.

The work aims to establish to what extent the outcast position was reflected in Bujor Nedelcovici's literary and non-literary writings and the way it marked the creative existence of a brilliant personality. Our research is also directed towards the search for the author's self, because each creation of Nedelcovici is a mysterious fragment of the interior of this modern *métèque*.

The results obtained

Bujor Nedelcovici's artistic credo is revealed through the works *Jurnal infidel*, *Cine sunteți*, *Bujor Nedelcovici?*, *Aici și acum*, *Cochilia și melcul* and *Un tigru de hârtie*. They are the means by which the writer-publicist confesses and reveals his inner substance in order to show himself to his readers as he essentially is: an author "stripped" of the rigidity of convention and the artificiality of expression. His artistic credo is dominated by the power to turn a defeat into a victory, the defeat being underlined by the assumed exile, which was a very difficult ordeal. Exile signifies combustion, purification, rebirth, the acquisition of a new literary dimension, but also the path to self-knowledge. There is a symbiosis between a writer's life and his literary creation, so that a correct analysis of his work (aesthetics) cannot be made without a profound knowledge of his existence (ethics). A writer is in ontological unity with his work, Bujor Nedelcovici does not accept the primacy of the aesthetic over the ethical, believing that the work cannot save a writer's life, but neither can life excuse the work.

The innovation of these poetic arts is established by the fact that they do not appear at the beginning of Bujor Nedelcovici's creation, so as to help the reader interpret correctly the universe of his work, but after the writer has gone through several stages of his artistic maturation, after he has asserted himself as a writer. Confessional creations, whether mediated or not, in direct connection with literary writings, possess the cipher that opens up Nedelcovici's artistic universe, strongly transfigured by the transformations of the writer's inner and outer reality. In the course of time, step by step, work by work, Bujor Nedelcovici analyses his self, the zenith between biography and bibliography, in order to be understood exactly by his readers. His confessional writings comprise various analyses of existence and the imaginary, from history, biography, autobiography, film script, epic sketches, inner time, outer time, chance, necessity, messianism, all of these being ways of searching for the author's hidden self and the mystery of life. Imagination in literature is a form of knowledge and understanding, but reality in confessional writing is the mirror reflecting the interior/mystery of artistic creation.

Jurnalul infidel radiographs the existential path of the author Bujor Nedelcovici between 1987 and 2001 (14 years in Parisian exile), totalling approximately 820 pages, contained in 13 notebooks. The diary comprises three books, divided as follows: the first volume is entitled *Pagini din exil - 1987-1992* (three notebooks), the second volume: *Ieșirea din exil - 1992-1997* (five notebooks), the third volume: *Calea și semnul - 1997-2001* (five notebooks). The notes are dated, mentioning the day, month and year in which they were written, and each notebook is accompanied by suggestive mottoes acting as ciphers of the writing meaning, configuring, in fact, a close link between the text and the subtext. As the author confesses in the *Preface* to the book, *Jurnalul infidel* sprang from a gnoseological need, representing "from the constant search for identity and the need to understand something about myself and others, to the stubbornness of

remaining in the 'real segment' and trying to be the microcosm, mirrored in the image of God."¹ The diarist also problematizes from the very beginning of his diary the principle of the sincerity of this species, questioning the authenticity of a diary whose purpose is the publication, as well as the sincerity and fidelity of daily entries. Bujor Nedelcovici's diary is not meant to be a classic/typical one (respecting the principle of *diarism* (of chronology or the so-called "Blanchot law"), *the simultaneity of the event with the writing, the sincerity and authenticity of the entries* and *the confidentiality of the writing*, as a derived element of the notions of intimacy and protection of personal secrecy, hence the phrase "intimate diary"), but, by its very title, the diarist lets us know that it is *unfaithful*, *i.e.* it is written for publication, it does not respect the principle of spontaneity and fidelity, the chronology is more or less preserved, absolute sincerity lacks, and the style is elaborate, a Flaubertian one.

The diaries of the Paris period were written at adulthood, as a process of self-supervision for self-education and self-discovery, thus a form of therapy. The diary is intended as a liberation of the author from everything that exile meant for him: obsessions, traumas, experiences, emotional and professional difficulties, intimate concerns, the focus being on the outside world, not the inside, which is why Nedelcovici also called it *Jurnal infidel* (in English: *Unfaithful Diary*).

The ante-mortem diary originated from the author's need to maintain a relationship with his own self, after an osmotic connection with literature, let us not forget that Bujor Nedelcovici first wrote fiction (literature) and, later, during the period of voluntary exile, he started writing diaries. Initially, the diary was not intended to be written, as the author did not have the necessary motivation to confess and express himself.

Nedelcovici was not prepared to write a diary without going back to his past sufferings, complexes and helplessness (memoirs camouflaged in the diary). The author is aware that an authentic diary requires a pertinent analysis of the moment and the past, a detachment from everything he has experienced in order to be able to carry out an objective analysis of his self and its relation to the outside world. Other reasons why he is not a supporter of the idea of keeping a diary are: the widespread FEAR during the communist period and the lack of maturity of wording.

The experience of the Parisian exile convinced him to start writing a diary, which is intended to be "a diary of ideas and meditation. And as little intimacy as possible that could fall into sentimentality and derision"². The author's metanoia is also achieved with the help of the diary, as it also has the role of reconciliation with oneself, with one's own childhood and understanding of one's own self.

The verb that characterizes him is *to break away*, the author resolves to break away and break "from everything that was there in order to take roots here, even if you're going to be a tree with roots in the sky. An overturned tree! An upside-down tree! A métèque looking for a place under the absent sun of Paris..."³. On closer examination of the diarist's thoughts, we note the opposition of the spatial deixis "here" (France, Paris - external exile) and "there" (Romania, Bucharest - internal exile). The rupture is also achieved at the morphological level, the two adverbs of place having the role of expressing the author's nearing/distancing to the two spaces. Also suggestive is the use of the metaphor of the overturned tree, with its roots in the sky, which essentialises the very condition of the diarist: a life (tree) that matters not through its origins (roots), but through what it is: the essence of a writer.

Nedelcovici's diary also interests us in terms of the insignificant details that connect the author to everyday reality. In his diary, the author notes the important events of his existential journey. Nedelcovici's diary is an *extimate* diary because, if we refer to Gustav René Hocke's categorization, it is written in a time of crisis (the crisis of the Parisian exile), which is why personal contexts cannot be separated from social-historical ones. Nedelcovici's diary from this period constitutes a cultural and historical evidence that confers authenticity and documentary value to his daily notes. Bujor Nedelcovici's diary is also surprising in terms of

¹ Bujor Nedelcovici, *Opere complete 5*, Editura Allfa, București, 2005, p. 15.

² *Idem*, *Opere complete 5, Ed. cit*, p. 34.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

its interference with the memoirs, as there are many memories reported from his childhood, adolescence and youth that are recorded in this infidel work. It is known that memoirs are written on the basis of the accuracy of recollection, the time of writing being after the facts. The fragments of the past (memoirs) combine with the notations of the present (diary) to highlight the author Bujor Nedelcovici's winding journey on the road of self-knowledge.

The writer Bujor Nedelcovici is doubled by the diarist Bujor Nedelcovici, because the diary is "a still viable road, a kind of watch road that goes along, watches over, and sometimes doubles the other road, the one whose endless purpose is to wander"⁴.

Nedelcovici's diary sprang from a need to save himself from loneliness, one not driven by writing, but by the outside world. What Nedelcovici notes in his diary belongs to the active present, to the moment, to the ephemeral, but through writing, a permutation, a transgression of time and space are already created, and the notation is eternalized. Creation is the result of a need to write, to examine a society, a time, a space, a culture, a mentality, which make up the appanage of a total picture whose indivisible fragments carry more or less painful truths.

Jurnalul infidel is an interlocutor (*alter ego*) of the author during his Parisian exile, signifying "an instrument of meditation on the novels I was writing and at the same time a 'photographic camera' that was directed outwards and in particular towards my son, Grégoire."⁵ *Jurnal infidel* can be considered a metaphysical diary insofar as it contains this obsessive search for the metaphysical, or as Maître Eckart put it, 'God and Man are One'.⁶

Based on the diarist's confessions, we can say that his unfaithful diary has a psychological function (since it insists on self-discovery and the revelation of the layers of self), being a work in which the testimony of external events is combined with the confession of one's own thoughts, pain, suffering, (un)happiness, but also the cathartic function being the panacea-diary, which calls for a spiritual exercise of dissociation and of detachment from all the oppressions of existence as a source of freedom and rebirth. Other facets of Bujor Nedelcovici's diary are: diary of ideas, travel diary, social-political diary, religious and philosophical diary, creative diary, reading and film-lover's diary, diary-memoirs, diary of exile, etc. All these images of the unfaithful diary converge towards one, which, from our point of view, would be the diary of self-discovery. In addition to the rule of authenticity, Bujor Nedelcovici strictly maintains the chronology clause, even if certain readings, events represent for the diarist a Proustian Madeleine, which takes him back to the years of childhood, of the "lost paradise".

Another of Bujor Nedelcovici's programmatic books, the key that opens the door to Bujor Nedelcovici's moral profile, is *Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? Bujor Nedelcovici în dialog cu Sergiu Grigore*, published in 2010. The work comprises three parts, suggestively entitled *Cărți* (*Cartea întâi*, *Cartea a doua* and *Cartea a treia*) in order to highlight both the identity (through the repetition of the noun "books", which conveys the idea of an ordered continuity of ideas in order to comprehend the Whole) and the otherness (through the different content expressed by the titles of the chapters).

The volume is built as a dialogical text, the discourse of both partners (Bujor Nedelcovici and Sergiu Grigore) being rendered in direct speech. From the title (which acts as a metatext), we are already aware of the form and purpose of the work: the dialogue (highlighted by the interrogative pronoun "who", followed by the copulative verb "are" and the noun in the vocative case "Bujor Nedelcovici") is structured in such a way as to highlight the existential and spiritual profile of Bujor Nedelcovici, the means of achieving this being the confession. The author Bujor Nedelcovici defines his work as "a confession and, at the same time, an indirect biography, because I would have been bored by a text starting with: 'I was born ...'.⁷

The topics discussed by Bujor Nedelcovici in this book of interviews are the following: history, novel, music, illness, photography, film, journalism, essay, diary, friends and friendship, exile, love, but also

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁵ *Idem, Opere complete 7, Ed. cit.*, p. 551.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 645.

⁷ *Idem, Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? Bujor Nedelcovici în dialog cu Sergiu Grigore*, Editura Allfa, București, 2010, p. 437.

the relationship between philosophy and theology, between faith and logos, between ethics and aesthetics, everything that could smooth the way to finding the inner self. If in his novels the author Bujor Nedelcovici uses masks-characters to express his thoughts and feelings, now, in this confessional book, the author directly presents his ideas, thoughts, his experiences in a sincere and authentic manner. The rigour of literary convention is replaced by the simplicity and naturalness of confession, although at times Bujor Nedelcovici seems to be a difficult interlocutor, who does not resonate with all the topics of discussion proposed by Sergiu Grigore (for example, Nedelcovici refuses to talk about the *primacy of the aesthetic* on the grounds that this theme was debated in the volumes *Un tigru de hârtie* and *Polemici*).

The autobiographical work *Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici?* has the merit of reflecting the image of a timeless and aspatial uprooted prose writer, of a stranger who feels at ease only among books, because only with their help can he rediscover his true identity and come to terms with his hidden self. The total fusion with the object of his creation gives Bujor Nedelcovici the true freedom he has been searching for, like a modern Ulysses: "I am one book among dozens or hundreds of books in which I put a few words or commas every day... I am irretrievably free! Irretrievably happy! ..." ⁸

Bujor Nedelcovici's revolutionary messianism is reflected in the author's articles in the magazines of the time. These, published before and after his departure for Paris, reflect his protesting attitude and the consistency of his ethical position, capturing the author as a literary theorist. Collected in the volumes *Aici și acum* and *Cochilia și melcul sau Fericirea interzisă*, the articles highlight three different aspects of the author, which are constantly intertwined: that of the missionary, that of the publicist attentive to the present-day Romanian society, which he views with a scrutinising eye, and that of the literary or film critic, which implies an affiliation with the sphere of the artist. The written expositions do not only show a spontaneous involvement and an immediate meditation of the writer, but a permanent preoccupation with realities and themes that acquire an ontological value - opportunism, exile, the intellectual - which reveals his philosophical predilection, being a seeker of meanings beyond the primary shell of reality.

The volume of journalism *Aici și acum* appeared as a proof of the fulfilment of Bujor Nedelcovici's God-given mission as a *tribune in the Agora*, i.e. "*Speaker of truth on behalf of those who do not have access to the publicly spoken word*" ⁹, but also as a testimony of the author's revolt against barbarism, lies, spiritual cruelty, amorality, mediocrity, fear and stupidity in public life.

Un tigru de hârtie is an essay-chronicle-documentary about the totalitarian era. Bujor Nedelcovici is concerned with memory and justice in relation to the immediate past, which is why he gives direct, unequivocal testimony to the martyrdom endured by the author during the dictatorial regime in Romania. The main objective of the book is to expose the horrors of communism. The book consists of two parts (suggestively entitled *Cărți*), structured in twelve chapters, followed by thirteen appendices, in which the author analyses his own Securitate Dossier. In the first book, *Prima carte*, the essayist starts from the individual, undertaking an existential odyssey into his own past in order to know and understand the obstacles that stood in the way of his reaching the Centre, and ends with the general, i.e. a diachronic presentation of history, of the origins of the Securitate, starting from Cain and Abel, to the Inquisition, the French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Revolution in Romania. In the second book, *Cartea a doua*, Bujor Nedelcovici relives his past through the notes in his Securitate Dossier, highlighting the traumas he experienced throughout the communist period as a result of misunderstandings with members of the Writers' Union, publishing houses and the Censorship, and the persecution he was subjected to, both through the opening of correspondence and eavesdropping and the recruitment of informers, collaborators, agents of influence and accomplices close to him.

The novel creations mirror the path of the writer's evolution, going from a critical view of the communist regime, passing through revolt to detachment, demonstrating an original fictional cover, imbued

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

⁹ *Idem, Opere complete* 6, Editura Allfa, București, 2008, p. 263.

with the use of myths, symbols and parables to convey a message in line with the writer's mission of '48 ideology.

The fiction spaces in Nedelcovici's novels (the shore in *Zile de nisip*, the forest in *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*, the island in *Al doilea mesager*, the room in *Dimineața unui miracol*, the house in *Ultimii*, the whole world in *Provocatorul*) are symbols of the need for escape, adventure, exploration or, on the contrary, they are associated with the sense of loss of identity and the search for security.

Most of Nedelcovici's novels contain characters devoid of the idea of rebellion, who eventually learn from the outside (from other characters) or from the inside (psychologically or religiously) to rebel and to really know themselves, without masks and barriers imposed by society, history, and by the social-political context. Bujor Nedelcovici's past is analysed literarily in novels, such as *Somnul vameșului*, or biographically in *Jurnal infidel*. The author discusses the novel in the articles *Romanul și istoria*, *Scriitorul și opera sa* and in the interview *Un adevărat scriitor exprimă pe alții prin propria lui conștiință* (published in the volume *Aici și acum*).

In all the novels written in the country until '87, the relationship between the individual, Power and History appears. There is a progression in the preoccupation with this theme, from the resignation of the hero, to resistance and to revolt. The evolution can also be seen in the style: from psychological realism (classical-modern), magical realism to parable and utopia. Bujor Nedelcovici was also concerned with the past: tradition, memory (mutilated memory), remembrance, critical analysis of the historical past (duty, obligation and the right not to forget), the period of mourning, the responsible ownership of our deeds, justice and respect for the law, law (debate in trials), forgiveness and, in the end, forgetting.

Also, in Bujor Nedelcovici's novels we can see the search for the past as a means of recovering inner freedom, but also the emergence of laughter that liberates, even if it also occurs in tense moments. The writer's favourite themes are: Faith, Sacrifice, Miracle and the Power of Love. Bujor Nedelcovici's novels cannot be reduced to mere epic history. There is always a myth (and therefore a mystery, whose code requires several levels of knowledge). The author's basic idea is that, without memory, there is no literature and, for a work to be accomplished, it must be visionary, it must send out warning signals. A writer's task is to restore memory, to warn his fellow human beings that, without memory, life cannot be conceived. "The Haunting decade" is not merely a literary theme, a gateway to restoring historical truth, but an attempt to recover, to endow one's own biography with meaning. The relationship between the Creator, Creation and the Creature is immutable, defining a perfect osmosis:

"I wrote a few novels and at the same time I wrote *myself*. Creation played the role of a shaper and founder for the Creator. I cannot analyse my existence separately from books. My life has been the novels, and I count my age according to the novels written and the years they were published in."¹⁰

Nedelcovici also evolves in terms of his choice of themes: stagnation would cause an inner imbalance and a spiritual death, which he does not want: "I cannot remain 'anchored' in the same literary themes, nor do I want to repeat myself. I get bored and it would become tiresome. [...]"¹¹.

The themes that Nedelcovici has taken up after escaping the obsession of History are: the search for truth, death, utopia, love, inner demonism, the sacred, humour. To these, he adds politics, theology, philosophy (death, eros), image. The theme of childhood and adolescence is missing from the author's literary creation, Bujor Nedelcovici's literary motivation being the following: "I could not write about my childhood because it was a mixture of bitterness and joy. But mostly... I refused literary fashion."¹²

Notable characters in Bujor Nedelcovici's literary creation are: Irina and Andrei Arghir from the novel *Somnul vameșului*, Mrs. Rujinski from the novel *Ultimii*, Theo, Albini, the Kid from the novel *Zile de nisip*, Danyel Raynal from the novel *Al doilea mesager*, Maria and Iosif from the novel *Dimineața unui*

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 404.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 405.

¹² *Idem*, *Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? Bujor Nedelcovici în dialog cu Sergiu Grigore*, Ed. cit., p. 108.

miracol, Vlad Antohie and Ana from the novel *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*, Guy and Céline from the novel *Provocatorul*, Pascal from the novel *Jurnalul unui cântăreț de jazz*. Each of these characters represents a strong voice of the author, who enriches his characters with his thoughts, fears and frustrations caused by the socio-economic context in which he lived. Bujor Nedelcovici's characters are exponential, each representing a biblical symbol, an idea, a theme. They can be classified into typologies, including: the lucid intellectual, the vigilante, the misfit, the instigator, le métèque, the rebel, *i.e.* angel-characters (biblical characters - Iosif and Maria from *Dimineața unui miracol*) and demon-characters.

In the novel *Ultimii*, the author examined the decadence of a world that had been destroyed by the merciless and barbaric whirlwind of history (communism). Mrs Rujinski (the representative of the bourgeoisie who lived her life according to her own principles, the symbol of a category of people that had almost disappeared) embodies the whole tragedy of a family that was forced to live in the basement of a house, but also in the basement of a society that had condemned them for the simple fact that they had been born into a class other than the one that was supposed – apparently – to lead the new society. Mrs Rujinski is also a survivor of the pre-communist world, and the fact that this world is forced - compelled - to disappear emerges from the whole atmosphere of the novel, steeped in death at the surface level and at the deepest level. Mrs Rujinski resigns herself because she is aware that she belongs to a "generation programmed to be killed" and that she can no longer resist and fight either physically or morally. The theme of the "guilty without guilt" (the culpable innocent) - "le bouc émissaire" represented by Job, *i.e.* Petran the Postman (the image of the uprooted peasant), appears in this novel. The novel *Ultimii* also portrays the world of the social outcasts living in the basement with a strange young man, Cristu, the maladjusted and introverted thirty-year-old undergraduate (he has the same biography as the author: his first-grade teacher told him to withdraw because he couldn't study, he was a church child, his father was arrested because of certain words, for which Cristu was thrown out of college, he got a job at the Electric Power Plant as a material purchaser, he read a lot of books) or the postman Petran, who was still announcing the "messenger" (the one who brings news, letters and who connects with the outside world) which will be taken up in the novel *Al doilea mesager*, "We're too tired! We are the *last ones* and we must understand this reality as we must believe we love our mice who are of our age."¹³ The connection between the novels and the author's existence is total, literature plays a redeeming role in his life, it is his guardian angel. The mystery of the character Petran is also found in Vlad Antohie, in the novel *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*, and in Ian in the opera *Cartea lui Ian Înțeleptul, apostolul din Golful Îndepărtat*.

The "murdered generation" is represented in the novel *Somnul vameșului* and by Iustin Arghir's father, but he, although punished for a fault of the generation, proposes to resist, not to collaborate with the power. In those days, protesting was tantamount to self-sacrifice, resisting was all that could be done. Iustin succeeds in this. Beyond Iustin Arghir's initiatory journey, one can find an entire epic dedicated to the Romanian petit bourgeoisie through the evocations of Iustin's relatives who recreate a true history and a portrait gallery; the old men are the most successful characters in the novel. Scenes from interwar life are evoked and it is a normal and even beautiful world in the warmth and love portrayed. By contrast, the "communist present" is hostile and even "strange" to those who have not known it. Relationships between people are cold, artificial, without joy and love. The "murdered generation" is the generation of Iustin Arghir's parents and relatives.

In addition to the theme of revolt, the theme that determines the structure of the book is that of moral legacy. Iustin Arghir is the bearer of the marks of his ancestors, and his duty is to restore the truth. Iustin Arghir's family tree is complex: on his mother's side, he comes from the Orleanu family, which consists of: Ștefan (father), Olimpia (mother), Bogdan, Emilia, Verona and Irina (children) and Liz (daughter only after the father), a family with different social origins: Ștefan comes from a family of horse breeders, owners of a stud farm in Dobrogea, while Olimpia is the daughter of a down-grade nobleman. It is Olimpia who has set the rules in the family. She brought into the Orleanu household the customs and manners that made them "no

¹³ *Idem, Opere complete 2*, Editura Allfa, București, 2005, p. 373.

longer resemble those from the family of a former farm implements salesman.”¹⁴ Emilia married Nicolae Hălăngeanu, a petroleum engineer with a PhD from Vienna, specialising in chemistry, Verona married the biology teacher Matei Rucăreanu, who had been a prisoner in Russia, Bogdan Orleanu was killed together with his father by legionaries, Bogdan's comrades, Irina, Iustin's mother, after her divorce from Andrei Arghir, remarried Ion Morțun (the wealthy peasant), who was arrested for selling his surplus grain at the market. On her father's side, she comes from the family of Lieutenant Ion Arghir. It consisted of: Ion and Teodora (parents), Andrei, George, Ana, Catinca, Maria, Elvira (children). Andrei and Irina had two children: Iustin and Alexandru. After their parents' divorce, Alexandru stayed with Andrei (father) and Iustin with Irina (mother). Catinca married the engineer Scriban, a strong politician, resident of Prut, resident of Bucegi and the Capital region, executed in '46. Ana remained unmarried, she was a nurse at the Red Cross, Maria, a painter, married the Physician Albert, and Elvira married Rășcanu. George, the communist, originally a teacher, was thrown out of the teaching system and became a librarian after returning from Russia. Iustin's father, Andrei, fought in the First World War at Oituz and Robănești, and was a career officer, a descendant of Colonel Ion Arghir. He was arrested for perturbation against the state, sentenced, sent to work in the Delta reed for two years in miserable conditions at the Colony of Political Prisoners, and died two years after his release from prison.

Mrs. Rujinski, from the novel *Ultimii*, is portrayed in the novel *Fără vâsle* by Ana, Ion Arghir's eldest daughter, who had to sacrifice her happiness for the joy and happiness of her relatives: “I pity Ana, she is the best, the most just and honest. She will perish...”¹⁵

The writer's theme of revolt is motivated by the presence of the non-conformist character, the misfit Iustin Arghir, who wants a true existence. His existential quest is governed by the idea of the correctness of his attitude, by the conclusion that in fact History is represented by each man who writes History and that no one has the right to tamper with the truth.

The character Iustin Arghir returns to the past because he wants to heal himself through knowledge. Iustin Arghir is in fact Bujor Nedelcovici, who goes on the same inner journey, reconstructing the past “because I want to *rethink* myself, *restructure* myself, *heal* myself through knowledge. *Man exists only to overcome himself...*”¹⁶ Iustin Arghir is also the character who unifies all planes, perspectives, times, an emblematic character in the Nedelcovici's constellation, the author's alter-ego, the character who plays the role of the “guilty without guilt”, having the “burden” of walking the path of rediscovering uniqueness as an individual. He had been dismissed from the Bar because his father, Andrei Arghir, had been arrested and convicted of commotion against the state, under Article 209 of the Criminal Code. Unable to work as a lawyer, he chose jobs below his level of training: driver on the building site, then employed at the Transport Base, property manager, worker at the buttons factory, etc. There are similarities between the author's biography and the *Somnul vameșului* trilogy, although Bujor Nedelcovici believes that his novels do not transfigure his own biography. However, similarities can be noted in relation to: paternal origins, the Arghir family, representing the petty bourgeoisie, and maternal origins, the Ștefan Orleanu-Fier family, representative of the tradespeople class, the divorce of the parents, the inheritance of the parental vineyard, the arrest and sentencing of the father, and his defence by the lawyer Nichifor. The first two novels present Iustin Arghir looking for arguments of his innocence in the past, while the third places him in the present as a judge and notary. His spiritual journey started in the past (knowing his family) to the present (knowing his being).

The novelty of the novel *Zile de nisip* is also unusual in that it creates the impression of a false diary, tracing, in *Book 1*, the events of August 27 (chapter 1), August 29, in the morning (chapter 2), August 29, in the afternoon (chapter 3), August 29, in the evening (chapter 4), August 30, in the morning (chapter 5), August 30, at noon (chapter 6), August 30, at 4 p.m. (chapters 7-15), in *Book 2*, the events of August 29, in

¹⁴ *Idem, Opere complete 4*, Editura Allfa, București, 2007, p. 103.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 210.

¹⁶ *Idem, Opere complete 5, Ed. cit.*, p. 108.

the morning (chapter 16), August 30, at night (chapter 17), August 30, at noon (chapter 18), August 30, in the afternoon (chapters 19-20) and, in *Book 3*, chapters 21-32 are presented at a glance. *Book 1* and *Book 2* are intended to detail the unfortunate event that Theodor Hristea and Cristina went through, and its aftermath, and *Book 3* - Theodor Hristea's transformation.

The young carpenter Vasile Mihăilescu (the Kid) - wrongly accused of stealing things from the beach - kills the abusive and unjust accuser, Theodor Hristea, who symbolically represented power. The novel is based on the idea of punishing the oppressor (Th. Hristea) who symbolises the abuse of power. The kid defends himself fiercely, but finally gives in and formally admits to the theft. He is arrested, then released, but Hristea continues to harass him and eventually the Kid kills him. Physician Hristea represents the Power, and the Kid - the one who must obey the Power: the relationship between oppressor and oppressed, master and subject, accuser and accused. The "theme of the innocent guilty" imbued with revolt appears in the novel.

The creation of *Dimineața unui miracol* makes connections with the novel *Cartea lui Ian Înțeleptul* (the concept of the book within the book), because the book written by Iosif Rabovski (who represents the writer), *Ilustrații pentru un roman neterminat*, and sent to Maria via Erasm Comet contains characters (e.g. Fairy grandmother, DS – Laslo, the Litterateur, Ian the Wise - Iosif the Prophet), lines and stories (from Floor 12, the discussion between Hélène and DS), mottoes¹⁷ that appear in the aforementioned novel. The spider's web connects the novels by means of an invisible narrative thread that serves to set up a total work. The novel of Iosif is dedicated to Maria by a writer totally devoted to his art: "He lives-by-writing or writes-by-living, but he never writes 'only' what he lives... he tries to discover some of the mysteries of the 'great mystery' of his life, perhaps of mine, of those around me and especially of the book."¹⁸ The main character in Iosif's novel is still Maria (the novel is the bridge between the two lovers through which Iosif conveys his mark to Maria), except that she is the type of rebellious, powerful woman, the antipode of Maria in *Dimineața unui miracol*. The technique Nedelcovici uses is novel within a novel, once we are introduced to the dramas of Maria in the novel *Dimineața unui miracol* we are also presented with the dramas of Maria in Iosif's novel. As Maria in the novel *Dimineața unui miracol* has more anxieties, Maria in Iosif's novel is shown to be much stronger because of her harrowing experiences. Maria interprets the sign in Iosif's book as a reference to her own person, to her self, which she alone must conquer. Thus, her whole journey in this novel is in fact an inner journey to free herself from the chained locks, to find grace, enlightenment, revelation, that is... the beginning. Like Ulysses who healed Telephus by sending him some rust dust from the spear with which Achilles wounded Telephus, Iosif also sends Maria a book to heal her, because the healing is brought by the person who inflicted the wound.

The novel is based on the myth of the Goddess Ishtar who descended into Hell, the Land of No Return, to rescue her lover, the God Tammuz, from the captivity of the Mistress of Hell, Ereshkigal. The same initiatory route, the descent into Hell, is also taken by Maria (when she went to Paris to find her lover and experienced mental death), not for the sake of saving her lover, but for the sake of saving their love, because the descent into Hell (and her punishment with the diseases of separation) is synonymous with death (which she experiences in the three years since she left Iosif), and the return to the surface (after voluntary seclusion from the hospital and the monastery) brings about rebirth, *i.e.* the reception of a new identity through the baptism of love and the opening of the locks of life, which belong to the body, the mind (at the hospital) and the soul (at the monastery of Ghighiu, at Mother Superior Epiharia, for almost five months). All these padlocks represent the illnesses that they need to overcome in order to find their way back. The journey through the inner labyrinth of memories, pain, questions and suffering is equivalent to passing through the seven gates of initiation, which the Goddess Ishtar/Maria is forced to overcome by surrendering her personal belongings. Following the concept that whatever does not bring her down strengthens her, so too Maria takes up the path, which, for her, is a cross she must bear alone in order to save herself. Maria can be likened to Job

¹⁷ „Je fus séduit et séducteur, trompé et trompeur” (Sfântul Augustin), p. 438, *Opere complete 1; Opere complete 3*, p. 431.

¹⁸ *Idem, Opere complete 1*, Editura Allfa, București, 2005, p. 306.

in the biblical myth, the suffering of the two is not a punishment, but a path to self-knowledge, wisdom and purification. Suffering is simply a way to discover the sacred within the character and the world around her.

The leitmotif of the novel *Al doilea mesager* is found in the pairing of memory (the equivalent of humanization and life) and oblivion (which results in dehumanization and loss of life). Initially, Danyel is the promoter of memory (having come from outside the island, he is the rebel who expects his other friends to fight in the name of memory), then, annihilated by forces outside himself, he will find himself in the realm of oblivion, engaged by ideotherapy.

The existential path of Bujor Nedelcovici can be seen as similar to that of Danyel Raynaud: the author was subjected to the same pressures: discussions at the Writers' Union and the obligation to resign from the positions he held, summonses to the party secretary of Bucharest municipality, summonses to the Securitate, he was followed on the street, his phone was tapped, his mail was opened, he had informers following him, he was forbidden to have a passport and to travel abroad, he was not allowed to publish his volume of short stories - *Oratoriu pentru imprudență*, he was deprived of the material resources necessary for existence (he had to sell his household goods). In short, pressure, prevarication, threats, attempts to destroy his inner peace and resilience capacity. The similarity between the destiny of the character in the novel and the destiny of the writer is striking, emerging again the idea of predestination through creation.

The novel *Al doilea mesager* is a confession whose purpose is to free the writer from all bitterness and anguish of soul.

The dehumanisation of Danyel R. (in the novel *Al doilea mesager*) is the result of a system that can destroy a man. Hannah Arendt (in her work *Originile totalitarismului*) believes that a "man has limited resistance". In this novel, the author's interest was to show the rebellion, but also the kneeling of a writer, how far he descends and whether he still has a chance. We could say that the protagonist's chance is represented by the young Grégoire, who has the opportunity (through liberation) to leave the island: "*You can leave this island.*" Thus, Danyel R. who has become a tame, a duplicitous (he wrote articles to the dictator) man, has not totally destroyed himself. The author's belief is that "if you have anything human in you, even a particle, if even a neuron remains intact, the whole rotten structure is restored."¹⁹

We can conclude that the author always remains an optimist in his works, salvation always comes from us, being in us. The door to salvation for each of Nedelcovici's characters comes from within, he must desire liberation, even if the outside resists. Grégoire is an extension of Danyel R., the symbol of the young man who has lived, seen, felt and known much and now has a chance to free himself through rebellion. Although Bujor Nedelcovici is a sceptical, pessimistic man, **in his literature he always leaves a loophole of escape, of salvation.**

The novel *Îmblânzitorul de lupi* is written with "gritted teeth". The mystery and surprise are maintained until the end, and it is perhaps the most daring novel written so far, cultivating the theme of unintentional Evil: the accident, the murder. The protagonist Vlad Antohie, the shepherd of souls, is the bearer of an unconscious, demonic negative force (Evil), but at the same time "redeems himself" by trying to acquire the Good by healing his son, Alex. Salvation is possible by passing through several initiation tests: the first test is that of physical and spiritual healing, then of seclusion and reclusion in the middle of the forest - the place of the reconstitution of the original matrix - and finally enlightenment and balance. The forest is also symbolic of Noah's Ark, the place where the exiles seek salvation and inner peace. The community indirectly formed by Vlad Antohie seeks its origins in this space-matrix in order to continue its existence responsibly in this world-storm.

The link between Bujor Nedelcovici's novels is *accomplished* simply through the characters, who share the same character traits: for example, both Guy in *Provocatorul* and Vlad in *Îmblânzitorul de lupi* like to laugh. Maria from *Dimineața unui miracol* and Vlad from *Îmblânzitorul de lupi* have gone through hell to be reborn from their own combustion. In this novel, too, the knife appears as a symbol, as a leitmotif for the possibility of a deliberate and conscious liberation achieved by one's own self.

¹⁹ *Idem, Opere complete 7, Ed. cit., p. 450.*

The novel *Îmblânzitorul de lupi* contains many levels of analysis, being a complex novel with symbols and mysteries. This work can be classified as an essay-novel or a metaphysical novel. The novel captures, step by step, the refugees' way of rebuilding their lost matrix of homeland, their house, language and church in a place in the forests of Switzerland. This call of the blood is all the more feverish the greater the suffering and sacrifice are, because identity and peace of mind are always found in the space you invariably call *home*. The mystery lies at the heart of the novel: our questions after a close reading are as follows: When did Ana come into Vlad's life?; What happened to Vlad's wife, Irene? (it is mentioned that she returned to the country because she could not bear the exile), did she die, did they divorce?; When did Vlad leave Ana?; Is his disappearance at the end of the novel, by sacrificing himself, the last offering to God for Irene's life?

Vlad Antohie is the most mysterious of all the characters in Bujor Nedelcovici's novels. Vlad sensed in himself a satanic force that had the power to kill, but without a premeditated criminal intent: a kind of involuntary revenge for all the humiliations and injustices he was forced to endure ("Evil is the animal part of the being that does not obey the will and the spirit" - St. Augustine), Vlad goes so far that he has the feeling that the illness of his child, Alex, is also because of him. And then Ana, his wife, tries to find an explanation: "Perhaps it is the evil power of the past that we unknowingly carry within us, a fatal, destructive and demonic action on the present."²⁰

The protagonist of *Cartea lui Ian Înțeleptul, apostolul din golful îndepărtat* has no clear identity, as the characters who come into contact with him have difficulty pronouncing his name. He is the prisoner released from the communist prisons, who returns like a modern Ulysses to the bosom of his family (refugees in France), after a lasting inner experience. His adjustment to family life is gradual, but difficult, because he has undergone a change of consciousness as a result of the traumas he endured in prison, in the camps and in the voluntary or involuntary loneliness that he experiences as an accepted fact.

The novel highlights Christ's myth, with the protagonist initially seen as the Messiah, a modern Christ, by those in the far-off gulf, who is said to have come on a donkey, only for the colonists to rebel against the one who guided them to a way of life centred on obedience and submission. The motif of the eel also appears in this novel (the leitmotif of Nedelcovici's creation), the protagonist identifying himself with this fish that travels thousands of kilometres to spawn in the Sargasso Sea and, because of the effort made along the way, it turns into a monster, spawns and dies. Our protagonist has the same path, he feels sick, tired, dehumanized after his detention in communist prisons, and the dominant feeling he has is the inability to adapt to the modern time and world, *i.e.* he feels mentally dead.

Nedelcovich's creation *Provocatorul* possesses a modern, ironic, detached and humorous vision, which aims at a critical and lucid analysis of the socio-political reality in France, in order to provide answers to the questions and puzzles of the individual or the general human enigma. The writing is a cry of revolt, a revenge of the author Bujor Nedelcovici who found his literary redemption in exile, found himself and began to feel at ease in a culture that has adopted him completely. Even more so, the characters he created took hold of their creator's thoughts so much that they guided his fingers to the computer keyboard to write their story. The absence of any boundaries both frees the author (from all the constraints that motivated him to write in the past, writing as a duty of his condition as a writer) and relaxes the characters.

Although Céline is the narrator-character, she is nevertheless in the background, the main plot having Guy as the protagonist. He is the first character in Bujor Nedelcovici's novels that knows how to laugh, to measure the events correctly, *i.e.* not to take anything - or almost anything - as tragic. Starting with this novel, the author's detachment from the past is noticeable. Nedelcovici tackles some serious themes that he did not dare to approach until many years later and after having written some books that initiated him to these themes: the ludic, love and death. This ludic novel can also be considered a total creation, as it aims to examine the world through play. Play is the only alternative to the bearability of life and destiny. Life is seen by the protagonist as play, music and sex. Guy is the nonconformist, the iconoclast, the instigator, the clown,

²⁰ *Idem, Opere complete 3, Editura Allfa, București, 2006, p. 111.*

the comic, the tumbler, the "actor on the world stage". The theme of love appeared in the novels *Dimineața unui miracol* and *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*. Death can be found in many of Bujor Nedelcovici's novels.

In the literary work *Provocatorul*, the action takes place in France, having French characters and a specific issue in the Parisian situation of the time. The love story between Guy and Céline knows no borders, it begins in Paris, in spring, with magnolias in bloom, continues in Montreal, San Francisco, Mexico and returns to Paris, in spring again, with the scent of the first snowdrops and cornflowers, suggesting the existential cycle. Guy is a grown man, a former journalist in the Algerian war, now an actor and jazz pianist. Art has saved him from manipulation, from vanity, and turned him into an acrobat, a clown playing with life, in the best sense of the word. Guy falls in love with Céline, a young woman who studied film in Los Angeles. A spiritual, especially erotic relationship is born between them, in the sense of discovering physical, sensual love. Céline is a screenwriter, and is preoccupied with writing a screenplay about her very partner, even though she realises she can't succeed. At the end, the book suggests that the female character succeeds through her own life in writing this scenario: banal, stupid, but sometimes life is so stupid that this "scenario" is realised unconsciously. Through the novel *Provocatorul*, Bujor Nedelcovici shows that he too is an instigator of writing, an author without prejudices, who uses the freedom to write without limits, he is no longer the exile, but the Instigator who enjoys total freedom.

Jurnalul unui cântăreț de jazz (2013) corresponds to the last stage of the novel's creation, which represents the author's detachment from history. The diary is atypical because it is not a diary in itself, in which the diarist's daily or almost daily events and concerns are recorded, but it is a form of highlighting the reminiscences of a character who, had he been a writer, would have produced a genuine memoir. The protagonist's confession based on the decision to write the diary reveals an inner confrontation between reason and feeling, denotes authenticity, irony and self-irony, sarcasm and parody of a self that reflects and self-reflects, writes and rewrites itself (features of postmodernism). Pascale is the type of the reserved, unassuming and silent man who has lacked pride, ambition and commanding appearance, a failed jazz singer hiding in the game of blindness and memory loss.

The close human-animal bond represented by Pascale-Bill, the cat, expresses yet another criticism of the contemporary, immoral, artificial, superficial world, which has deliberately forgotten its origins. Pascale's inability to socialise with the people around him shows his lack of faith in all that belongs to the human. Pascal is the type of man who is reserved, unsociable, taciturn, cautious, indrawn, fleeing the real world with the help of music, and yet rebellious, anarchist, active, indignant, vocal, experiencing the feeling that he is causing evil (like Vlad in *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*). This *coincidentia oppositorum* is symbolic of his destiny: in his youth - rebellious, caught up in history, only to see that later, in adulthood, he can use this state of detachment for his emotional comfort. His family history includes a wife whom he divorced and a son, Olivier, now an undergraduate at Sorbonne's Faculty of Law and Finance-Management, a father, initially revealed as a professor of history and philosophy, after which Pascal's memory reveals his profession as a physician (ambiguity is a characteristic of the Nedelcovici style), with a communist past, sent to positions of responsibility in Eastern Europe, who disappeared one day without being found by his family, and a mother, a piano teacher, who was always arguing with his father and who developed his son's musical taste. His medical history shows that he spent several months in a mental hospital and underwent a thoracoplasty operation, half of his left lung was cut out, after which he could no longer play the trumpet, his only musical instrument being the piano. His professional history is complex: he attended the Conservatory, abandoned symphonic music and studied jazz, was a member of the Radio Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Society of Authors and Composers, a trumpet and piano player with many international tours to his credit, and now a failed singer who is still helped by his friends to play in bars and shows.

Bujor Nedelcovici's swan song is the novel *Jurnalul unui cântăreț de jazz*, which examines the existence of a character caught in a period of assumed solitude. Calm, balance and order are found once the existential tests are passed: rebellion, detachment and understanding.

The theme of the play *Noaptea de solstițiu* is the individual's relationship with Revolution, History and Time. This theme is also materialised by the insertion of the three ballerinas (a stage direction), dressed

in colourful costumes, which reflect the three synthesis-ideas: Revolution, History and Time. The only one left alive is Theo, the playwright suggesting the idea that the guilty must live in order to feel the greater punishment.

Bujor Nedelcovici's work is not an indirect biography of their author, although he is in each of the book's characters. Literature plays a redeeming role in the life of the prose writer, and there is an interdependent (one might even say androgynous) relationship between his novels and the author's existence.

In lieu of conclusion, we would like to highlight the importance of Bujor Nedelcovici's work for the valorisation of the past, for the promotion of Romanian and universal culture, for the establishment of the connection between History-Creator and Creation. The purpose of the literary work and the daily records is beyond any ambiguity: to objectively record events, to facilitate their recollection, to photograph figures, events, histories, but also to synchronise Romanian culture with the universal one. History and Exile have changed Bujor Nedelcovici's way of writing. His entire work was born as a moral duty of the man of culture Bujor Nedelcovici, whose objective was to free Romanian literature from the canons of the totalitarian regime, to authentically examine the Romanian exile in order to objectively know the history of the Romanian people. History/reality conducts the writer's existence and work towards self-knowledge, a central element of the Nedelcovici universe. As we have seen, Bujor Nedelcovici was an unpleasant, iconoclastic writer for the communist regime, because he did not submit to the state apparatus and did not shape his creation according to the demands of the censorship. Out of a desire to be free, the author has taken on an inner exile through which he has formed himself as an authentic writer. His position as a witness in the service of history shaped his literary path. He is the writer who has also established himself in his adopted country, managing to make a secure place for himself in the culture of his host country as a French-language writer. His work is a veritable poem of freedom of expression, because the truth it reveals is in keeping with contemporary man's thirst for knowledge. The honesty with which the author has recorded his thoughts and the events he has experienced or witnessed expresses the way in which Bujor Nedelcovici aims to reach the souls of posterity so that it does not forget its past. Exile, as an experienced, analysed and assumed event, as a taste of Hell, a condition of initiation and knowledge of the world and of oneself, is one of the themes often addressed by Nedelcovici, precisely because it emerges from the writer's existence. Being perceived as a proof of resistance, a limit stage of the human being, on the path of becoming, of its spiritual formation, exile is approached both directly in articles and indirectly in the work of fiction. Exile has been Bujor Nedelcovici's great opportunity as a writer, being his permanent source of inspiration. Most of the Nedelcovici's novels develop this theme (entitled the theme of the "guilty without guilt"), with each character being a Ulysses who wants/may not want to return to Ithaca. Reality intertwines with fiction, Bujor Nedelcovici's double (the reality) is Vlad Antohie (from the novel *Îmblânzitorul de lupi*) who expresses the drama of exile and the outcast in search of his own identity. With each novel, Bujor Nedelcovici tells his life story, sufferings, disappointments, and his hopes. Fiction is his way of revealing himself, therapeutically expanding his awareness and understanding of his inner world in order to make sense of the events he has experienced. The writing with therapeutic value features Bujor Nedelcovici in the foreground, on a mission to reach the truth. And what could be more at hand for a writer than his own vocation, that of writing? Bujor Nedelcovici has armed himself with the patience of Job to carry out his moral obligation.

Bujor Nedelcovici is the prose writer, the playwright, the diarist, the theorist, the essayist, the publicist, the man of attitude, the scriptwriter, the photographer, *i.e.* the kaleidoscopic spirit who describes himself as

"out-of-date, timeless, inadequate, maladjusted, iconoclastic, introverted, an 'untamed heretic' ... a silent, a sullen, a taciturn ... I have many faults, very many, I have no certainties, except for a few pillars of mental and soul resistance, otherwise ... everything moves, everything is ephemeral and can collapse or rise from one day to the next."²¹

²¹ *Idem, Cine sunteți, Bujor Nedelcovici? Bujor Nedelcovici în dialog cu Sergiu Grigore, Ed. cit., p. 148.*

In conclusion, by highlighting these creative sides of Bujor Nedelcovici, we believe that each book, article, work bearing the signature of the author reveals the image of a writer engaged in the mission of revealing the horrors of the past. Exile has contributed to the perfection of the author's artistic credo and improved his creation, being, in fact, the asceticism that the writer needed in order to achieve a work of quality. His aim is to reveal the Pain, Suffering, Injustice, which the Romanian people went through during the communist period, but also the Superficiality and Untruth in the post-communist period. The total liberation of the writer from the traumas of the past occurred in exile along with the reinvention in another country, another world, another period. Coming out of the well is equivalent to coming out of exile, the moment when the writer realised that metanoia had occurred, and that alienation, limitation, and marginalisation were no longer perceived as factors of revolt, but as a blessing that brought him liberation and freedom of his being. The expression "Tell me what risk you have taken, so that I can tell you who you are" can be construed as follows: Bujor Nedelcovici risked everything in the name of truth in order to be reborn as a free man, with a deep knowledge of his self. The exile-cross he carried strengthened him and prepared him for his own salvation, which in time, he realised, was part of his inner self.

Analysing his work, we can say with certainty that, in the course of time, the author Bujor Nedelcovici has gone through all stages of creation and has not limited himself only to the fertile realm of literature. He represents the image of the complete writer who has not only dealt with the creative side, but has also assumed the sacred duty of revealing the unknown faces of the past in the most authentic way, without relativism and annotations, possessing the inner side of a man who has the vocation to speak the truth, at any cost, without any compromise, without any impediment. Through his books, the writer "wrote himself", which is why his work has become a sure way of knowing oneself, an initiation and a becoming. For Bujor Nedelcovici, "writing" was the way out of the profane time and into the sacred one ... "without time".