

UNIVERSITATEA DIN CRAIOVA
FACULTATEA DE LITERE

**LIMBAJUL METAFORIC
AL ROMANULUI ROMÂNESC AL ANILOR '80**

REZUMATUL TEZEI DE DOCTORAT

- în limba engleză -

CONDUCĂTOR ȘTIINȚIFIC:

Prof.univ.dr. OVIDIU GHIDIRMIC

DOCTORANDĂ:

ANA-MARIA UDRESCU

CRAIOVA

2010

THE METAPHORIC LANGUAGE OF THE ROMANIAN NOVEL FROM THE 80`S (Summary)

The redaction of this thesis on the metaphoric language has had as a starting point the ample definition given by Aristotle to the metaphor which covers the metonymy, the synecdoche, the irony – all of them representing slidings from the literal to the figurative meaning. As any investigation, our work has represented a long process which implied researches, repeated attempts, hypothesis and which had as a final objective to reach the goal proposed at the beginning of our thesis. The analysis of the novels written in the 80's can not be exhausted by studying works written by 20 novelists but we can emphasize the idea of reading, the polyvalency of the metaphoric language and the ontological condition of this popular and protean genre. Literary speaking, some novels can have their roots in the immediate reality in order to aspire at the essence of absolute time while other novels describe the history from an allusive point of view in order to depict the present time.

The analysis of the metaphorical language in the novels of the 80's has appeared from a confrontation with situations and issues which were not enough looked into by the exegetes and from the desire to investigate the stylistic structure of these novels which were less evaluated from the point of view of their internal organization. The research concerning the style of the writers who have published during the first decade of the communism has as a goal to rediscover and to redefine the expressive features and the originality of each of the works through approaches at different stylistic levels. Through a comparative and analytical investigation of a generation, one can identify the main characteristics, the common points in the evolution of a literary movement but also the differences which have been selected from the works belonging from the thematic and stylistic point of view to the general aesthetics of this movement.

Our analysis is motivated by the lack of a vast and systematic book about the metaphor of the prose language from the 80's. The anterior studies focused mainly on the narrative structures of the novels and they mentioned only in a brief way the expressive elements of the books published in this period. The analysis of elements which generate the metaphoric language has as a goal to clarify this concept related to the literary text. Thus, scientists have considered that the metaphor is the result of a transfer of meaning from denotative to

connotative and it can be related with the artistic image and the symbol. This amplitude distinguishes it from the other tropes because it is not just an immediate expression but it can become a vast textual figure through which the reader can understand the deep significations of the text. So, one of its functions is to extend the meaning from cognitive to affective. This research focuses on the main aspects which demonstrate the fact that the metaphor has a special place among the tropes, being not only just a means of knowledge but also a condition of its achievement.

The definition of *metaphoric language* is based on the concept of *artistic language*. Though this type of language derives from the common language, it is characterized by originality and by the capacity to select and to give other meanings to the words in order to become expressive. We took into account the opposition with the scientific language which has as main characteristics the clarity, the precision, the translatability, the transparence, the constancy in time, the objective significations, the use of daily language, the transitivity and the logical density. The metaphoric language is heterogeneous, reflexive, connotative, untranslatable, ambiguous, expressive, suggestive, ineffable, opaque and tends to evolve towards an emphatic symbolistics. It can be integrated in the semantical dynamics of the context because, in prose, the word is “developed” which means that it may affect a larger segment than the adjacent context. Taking into account that the figurative term rarely remains isolated in a micro-context, the figures which determine the metaphoric language have the function of structuring the speech and, implicitly, of orientating the reader.

We consider that this idea is unique in our approach: the evolution of the metaphor, the metonymy, the parabola, the allegory or the irony from the semantic to the textual level makes them become textual figures in the prose of the 80’s. The effects of this transformation oscillate between *ambiguity* (semantic depth, opening towards multiple interpretations) and *transparency* (presentation of connotative mechanisms). Under these circumstances, the interest will be focused on the textual interpreter as an element of metaphorical function of the language.

The reason which led us to choose this theme was the confrontation with an insufficiently treated subject in the studies dedicated to the prose, in general, and to the prose of the 80’s, in particular: the expressiveness of the language. Analysing this aspect of the novel, we have noticed its stylistic polyphony dominated by the metaphor, the metonymy, the

allegory, the irony or the parody. These are not just simple figures of speech. They are transformed in textual figures according to the novelists' will and options. Generally speaking, the exegetes were content only to enumerate the main figures of speech present in the novels without analyzing the motivation of their use. The elements which belong strictly to narration, themes, motives, characters have been debated for a long time and have proved a huge interest for the literary critics.

For a reader who is familiar with the realities of the Romanian communist system, the appearance of so many novels which condemn its horrors may be surprising and may raise a question: how was it possible for these novels to be approved by the censorship without essential changes? We find the answer if we analyze the novelists' skill in the use of the language expressive resources.

The objectives of the present thesis, which was conceived and structured from an interdisciplinary point of view, focused on the following aspects: to establish the sources which confer to the language its metaphoric character, to analyze the main characteristics of the novels from the 80's at the stylistic level, to identify the semantic compatibilities at the level of the figure which generates an indedited image, to identify the relationship of contiguity from word to context, to trace the evolution of the figures which belong to the metasemems field towards the metalogisms field, to outline the receptor's role in the decoding of the metaphoric language.

The first chapter which has as a title *Theoretical delimitations* presents globally the theme of the subsequent research. We analyzed the main factors which determine the appearance of the metaphoric language and also the ways in which it can become ambiguous. Generally speaking, in what concerns the novelists of the 80's we can discuss about the adjustment of the work at a new sensitivity, at a new report between the human being and the society, between the writer and the world. During the last years of the communism, the use of the metaphoric language was self-imposed, without big efforts, because, through the use of metaphors, parabolae, allegories or ironies, the Romanian writers succeeded in dodging the censorship which had reduced the Romanian novel to its proletcultist variant even from the 50's. Taking into account the fact that the metaphor is both ambiguous and appeals to the reader's sensitivity, the novels from the ninth decade use one after another (or altogether) the

metaphor of contempt, of threat, of irony or of humour according to the novelist's skill and to the message he / she wants to transmit to the reader.

The metaphorical structure of the novels from the 80's does not involve only a simple problem of language and does not interfere neither with the specific universe of a closed world who lives in an ardent way nor with the human type in whose soul burns the flame of self-destroying passions. The self reflexivity, the writing as a notation of the acts, the subjectiveness as a bookish reflex, bring again to the attention of the readers the question of combinative mutations of lyrism and realism

In the second chapter named *Myths of the 1980's fiction* we made an analysis of the metaphorical language taking into account the type of encoding (metaphorical, allegorical or parabolic). The analysis of the metaphorical language of the novels from the 80's supposes also an interdisciplinary approach. The space reserved to every fact of stylistic nature is directly proportional with the elements of narrative type which compose the novel. The expressiveness of the texts is determined to a great extent by the report between the narrative perspective and the voice because the variations of the first term, which acts on the same basis as the metaphor, produce stylistic effects. In the novels of the 80's, the history is both a metaphor of rescue from the censorship and of incertitude. To pass over these barriers means to supersede the barriers and the limits imposed by the totalitarian regime.

The metonymy is another figure frequently used in the novels from the ninth decade because it offered the writers the possibility to analyze profoundly the consequences that different social and political events had upon the mentality of the people. The novelists preferred to avoid the evocation of the causes, contenting to present their effects in what concerns the human relationships and the psychology of the individuals. The complexity of the human psyche offered the immediate possibility to explain the bizarre gestures of the heroes who live under the socialist regime, their unusual attitudes, the frequency of the low people's manifestation and psychic degradation, their absurd evolutions (sometimes monstrous ones). By the substitution of the cause to the effect, the novels didn't raise any suspicions to the censorship.

An essential stylistic characteristic of the novel, the polyphony, which we have studied in the third chapter (*The 1980's writers*), is the element which is different from the previous one (whose main characteristic is monophony because it designates not only a plurality of

voices but also one of conscience and ideological universes. The polyphony of the conscience is marked by a variety of styles and tonalities. The novel of the 80's has a plurivocal and a pluristylistic vocation which has been less analyzed at the moment of their appearance. This is the reason why we decided to analyze it in the present paper.

The irony is, together with the metaphor, another element which confers expressiveness to the novels of the 80's and which differentiates it from the previous ones. As a stylistic process specific to the postmodernism of the 80's, the irony is used in order to re-establish the omniscience of the traditional narrator. In the realistic novel, the omniscience is characterized by invisibility while during the 80's the method takes act of itself, announces its presence, reveals the means of accessing the information, accentuates the inconceivable powers but also recognizes its failures. Even if the omniscience becomes visible it doesn't mean that it stops functioning; on the contrary, it is more and more played, imitated, there is an *ironical* subtext of this resuscitation which is not spared of the ambiguity of the fall in nostalgia. Despite all these changes which are accentuated by the imperatives of authenticity, the old method of the writer's omniscience is not removed from the stylistic processes of the novels from the 80's. The novelists from this period make changes not only in what concerns the model of omniscient narration but also in the way of thinking the historical novel and in the way of ironizing the history.

We have analyzed in the final chapter of our thesis – *Preliminaries to a rediscover of the receptor's function* – the position of the literary critics towards the language of the novels from the 80's and we have noticed that it has been contradictory especially towards the “young writers” of the generation and this fact may have explanations which go beyond the literary circumstances. We have, on one side, the “realistic” (Cristian Teodorescu is recognized by all the exegetes) and, on the other side, the “radicals” (Mircea Nedelciu, Gheorghe Crăciun) who are different from the rest through their unique style.

For Crăciun, for instance, writing means knowing, liberating and being aware of the body which becomes in this way a productive metaphor in his prose. For the novelist, the instance which generates and orders the text may be found neither at the level of the text nor at the one of textual practice; the text is not written, it's the body which writes. Crăciun's position is very original due to the fact that the textualism is saved from sterility and changed into an exploitation instrument – of himself and of the world around him.

Without pretending to be an exhaustive study, the present research is unique due to the special focus on the style of the novels from the 80's whose analysis concerned the exegetes less. Thus, we revealed the implicit expressiveness of the lists, of the epistles, of the gliding between the different registries of the language and between the different types of speech (direct, indirect, free indirect) insisting upon the fact that the themes and the motives used by the novelists are nothing but pretexts in order to valorize the potential of the Romanian language – that of gathering the world in a text. The novel becomes a “second game”, more pure and more dynamic.