













Nicoleta IFRIM

Identitate culturală și integrare europeană

Perspective critice asupra discursului identitar românesc în perioada postdecembristă



Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române













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IDENTITATE CULTURALĂ ȘI INTEGRARE EUROPEANĂ PERSPECTIVE CRITICE ASUPRA DISCURSULUI IDENTITAR ROMÂNESC ÎN PERIOADA POSTDECEMBRISTĂ



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ADDENDA

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CULTURAL IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. CRITICAL APPROCHES ON THE ROMANIAN IDENTITY-FOCUSED DISCOURSE OF POST-DECEMBER PERIOD

The research project entitled Cultural identity and European integration. Critical approaches on the Romanian identity-focused discourse of post-December period aimed first and foremost to provide an objective overview of the polemics generated by the "battle for Europe" in the post-December critical setting so as to identify the organizing elements of a "creative marginality" viable within the framework of the European acknowledgement of Romanian cultural identity. Focusing on the metamorphoses of the contemporary literary / critical discourse (of the cultural journals, "books of ideas" and memorialistic volumes in the years after 1989), the research focused on the analysis of the critical judgements made, after 1989, on the integrating vocation of Romanian literature, with the purpose of legitimizing the opportunity of adopting the identity through culture from the Romanian literary space towards the European spiritual horizon. The reference to the contemporary theories on "identity" (Eurocentric and nationally-collective, postcolonial or individual – like the one mediated by the poetics of the autobiographic genres or the one configured with the aid of the sociology of literature) provided the conceptual backing necessary for such an investigation centred on the posttotalitarian critical / memorialistic / essayistic discourses focused on identity, so as to underline the areas of interference, sometimes functional by ricochet, with European spirituality for which identity as alterity becomes a reality with an increasingly strong impact on culture. In this context, the post-December debates on the identification and selection of identity markers (of cultural values representative for "creative Romanianness") became polemics on the issue of identity through culture, on the manner in which a literature markedly "regional, peripheral" can surpass the "isolationist" limitation imposed on its own profile. The selection of values, the mixture of the criteria for the identification of the internal models valid from an aesthetic viewpoint in the Euro-centric space, the periphery and marginality complexes, the "East-ethic demystifications", the memorialistic / autobiographic discourse as identity interface self-defining the post-December intellectual in textual dialogue with the West - they all represented points of interest in the current research. The conflict of ideas and attitudes between the "autonomist" defenders of an identity which can be converted into literary models already integrated in the Romanian canon and the "revisionists", supporters of "purging" literature from the great "collaborators" of the communist regime - which shaped the ideological division in the contemporary discussions caught in a dichotomous debate on the European integration of Romanian literature is monitored diachronically, following an "alternative" chronology of the post-December literary journals. Moreover, the selected corpus of memorialistic / autobiographic / essayistic texts aims, in the analysis, to bring face to face the options for the "confrontation" of the "ex-totalitarian captive" with the West, and it projects, in a mirror, two types of writing that function as an East-West identity interface: a "mythology" egographically grounded of the writer who goes through the experience of (post)exile, that he re-lives in a discourse "turned towards the self" where he dilemmatically confronts the "Great" and "little" history or that of the intellectual who confesses his identity dilemmas once with the post-December experiencing of the West and an "ideo-graphy" of the critic / essayist reflecting the personal-analytical "ideology" of relating the Romanian cultural space to the European dynamics.

The main purpose of the stay was documentation (at the Valeyre Library, Clignancourt Library, Buffon Public Library and the "Antoine de Saint Exupéry Pour La Jeunesse" Foundation) about the main theories on

the cultural adoption of identity, as it is legitimized in the inter-cultural context of the mixed European space, so as to later employ them in the analysis of the Romanian space. The stated intention for the active participation of the "periphery's literature" in the European dynamics of cultural productions entailed, necessarily, the use of the studies centred on the analysis of European interferences, as well as the consideration of theories oriented towards the post-totalitarian cultures that project a particular report of the dialectic memory - history, proposing strategies of "reconfirmation" for the identity profile now mediated by means of integrationist cultural strategies open to the Western inter-relating dynamics. The permanent cultural reconstruction through identification and re-conceptualization of the collective subject were the main coordinates for the theoretical configuration of the cultural-national stand: a smoother circulation over the geo-spatial frontiers by the emergence of the transnational cultural dialogue and the cultural diachronic structure specific to each South-Eastern collective functioned, within the project, fundamental elements in rendering the *cultural alterity*, in effect, an identity which is constantly dynamic and permanently inter-reflexive, which reinvents itself continuously within the European paradigm. Through such a theoretical filter, the research monitored the strategies of the post-December literary scene to guide, in points of ideology, the postulate of the "return to Europe" by the aesthetic adoption of or the East-ethic "departure" from the Romanian cultural-creative model (in the articles published in literary journals, from a diachronic perspective) or by the emergence of a mirror-writing where the individual or the critical meta-history function as mechanisms shaping memory.

Moving through the main stages proposed in the work plan of the project and reaching the objectives pertaining to them provides internal coherence to the project and the accomplishment of the fundamental objective: the legitimization of the aesthetic strategies for the re-validation of the Romanian literary cultural profile as "identity of alterity" in the globalizing European imaginary. Organized into 10 chapters, the work gives, in stages, a mirror demonstration of the (non)viability of revisionist and aesthetically-autonomist arguments in the reorganization the literary canon (as they were presented in the critical discourse from the literary

journals after 1989), but also the legitimization of a founding imaginary centred on identity in the memorialistic / essayistic writing of the intellectual confronted with the great History. The ideal of constructing a homogeneous identity profile for the "cultural Romanianness" to voice the impulse of representing difference, grounded in an iconic paradigm essentializing the specificity factors of a culture freed from the oppression of totalitarianisms, in other words, the imperative for an internal "reconstruction" of an identity-cultural offer with an impact on the dynamics of national-collective representations within Europe generates, in the post-December context, a wide display of contradictory attitudes and polemics, dually polarizing the selection and promotion of models central in the "negotiation" for an identity image of the South-East-European Romanian culture. Ideo-graphically imprinted in discourses centred on identity which (in)validate the pro-European profile of a literature already free of the canonic uniformization of totalitarianism, the retrieval / reactivation of the analytic vocation, now strongly delineated in the pages of post-December literary journals or in those of the authorial microideologies (in essayistic / memorialistic / autobiographic writing), is a valid premise for the value re-organization of a literature which, overcoming the moment of pressure from the politicizing ideology, finds itself in the position to affirm and reaffirm a personal voice to be heard in the context of inter-European dialogues.

Moreover, the authorial micro-ideologies debate, from different perspectives and argumentative constructions, the status of Romanian culture in the integrationist mirror, opting for motivations born either from the legitimization of a "philosophy of Romanianness" which still carries the stigma of periphery, or from the passage through the filter of ego-centric experience of the "interior Romanianness" in the position to self-validate its own pro-Western "competences of affirmation". Passed through the referential grid of a self that dually internalizes, on a philosophically-conceptual or existential level, its individual belonging to a community of East-European thought and tradition, projecting extensions of a personalizing "ideology" in the identity-focused re-fictionalization of the "treasury of collective Romanianness", the *books of ideas* (memorialistic or essayistic) transcribe a differentiating report which compares the singular

self and the collective self and their relations with History. "Captives" in an acutely sensed post-traumatic state, the authors place into dual perspective, sometimes in a clear dichotomy, the socio-cognitive relations, as well as the cultural relations of the East-West connection, on whose background they develop their discourse oscillating between adoration and iconoclasm. The "provincial thrown into the World" rediscovers, sometimes in seductive antinomies, the "fascination of the West". In relation to it, he makes a double selection: that of the values of "drifting Romanianness", obsessively overbidding the stigma of marginality and of the East-European "broken amplitude", tacitly balanced by imposing the desideratum of an egocentrality, of the mirror type, which functions in a compensating register. The ego-graphic fiction meets that of the stimulating "reintegration" in a world of differences, where the East-European marginal wants its voice of authority heard to conceptually (in)validate the cultural paradigm of origin.

The marginality complex, often artificially invoked, the selection of the national-literary values and their promotion on the scene of the Europeanizing inter-dialogue are real challenges in the development of the integrationist identity project, dynamic in its essence due to the internal motion of value affirmation/negation. The plea for a legitimizing non-partisan criticism, which would no longer operate in a Manicheist manner with the supra-typologies of the "tolerated evasionists" and of the "tainted collaborators", equally promoting illusive mystifying scenarios, becomes the purpose of the current overview of the post-December critical discourse recording the various metamorphoses of certain post-communist *ideographies | ego-graphies* in their attempt to reconstruct an appropriate value grid functioning as identity *representation*.

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