

# Globalizing Mentalities in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Romania

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## Abstract

*The article analyses a few texts from Romanian textbooks, which seem not to have adapted at all even to the simple fact that Romania has become part of the European Union. Romanian history, unlike other European ones, gave birth to a certain type of patriotic discourse with a certain degree of chauvinism, which was practiced even by a few Romanian writers, otherwise well-reputed and part of the literary canon. This discourse, in spite of being significantly changed after the Revolution, is still fighting against its ghosts haunting sometimes pupils' textbooks and therefore influencing their future mentalities. Twenty years after '89, we wonder whether our children can understand plurality, cultural diversity and European values as long as we still teach them how proud they should be of their unique and wonderful country, how hospitable and without fault their people are. In his "Faith and Knowledge: the Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone", in a very different context, Derrida coined the term of globalatinization. I would dare transform it into globalromanianization, which I will define in my article, referring to a few instances of what we teach our children who are supposed to become 21st century European citizens.*

**Keywords:** *globalromanianization, patriotism, country, pride, Romanians*

## On Pride

We might say that pride is not necessarily a negative emotion: we do not have to underestimate ourselves, we need to have a high sense of our status, of our language, of our countries etc. Yet pride can have negative meanings as well, since, in St Augustine's words, it wears "the mask of high-spiritedness" [1, VI, 13]. Condemned by the church itself (since pride is synonymous with vanity, the adulation of one's self and thus one of the capital sins), pride may make us think that we are superior to others, it may make us look down on others without any logical criterion. Manifested as a high opinion of one's national status or of one's ethnic belonging, pride may give birth to chauvinism, racism, xenophobia. Examples of nationalism leading to ethnic cleansing and genocide are many, among which the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, the deportation of Chechens and Crimean Tartars under Stalin, the expulsion of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia at the end the second World War or the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s.

National pride is basically the lesson I have been taught many times in communist Romania. We, Romanians, were supposed to be a blessed nation. I was told by my teachers that we were always friendly and peaceful, but history had been cruel to us: other countries had invaded us- we stood here against the Turks, against the Austro-Hungarians, against the "bad influence" of the Iron Curtain. The myth of the country exposed to dangers because of foreign intervention was the coin of trade in any communist dealing. Subsidiary, its purpose was to

prepare the propagandistic success of the myth of the Saviour in the person of Nicolae Ceaușescu, as Eugen Negrici observes in his outstanding account on literature in communist Romania: "To all those sensitive to the image of the mild and hunted Romanian from the history books of all generations – an image which is inspired by the myth coming from prehistory of the bad foreigner (who occupies our caves and steals our women) - to all the defeated and the humiliated, to all those who suffered during the Stalinist regime, to history teachers, priests, primary school teachers, to the active or discharged soldiers, to the new graduates of the Party activists and Security workers, to the ones who fell pray of the sentimental blackmail, those allusions to 'our shortened rivers' from the contemporary bards' poems created flushes of enchantment, shivers of pleasure and a sort of confused hope, the hope of the persecuted servant, taken into account and released through the verbal condemnation of the merciless ruler"<sup>1</sup> [7, 52-53]. Strongly believing that we were possessors of the most wonderful language in the world and that we are unique for our wonderful forms of relief made us scorn foreigners. We were taught that no other country in the world has mountains, hills, plains, seaside and delta. No other country is as rich as ours, since we have all minerals, gold, salt, iron, coal, forests, we have basically everything. These are words and sentences I heard so many times in my childhood, then later, over and over again. I was taught pride. Unique in the world we were. The textbooks I used to have in that "golden era" (*epoca de aur*- a Romanian phrase coined by Ceaușescu to describe the wonderful times we were living thanks to him and the Party) were polluted and infested by such examples of communist propaganda. Children were taught how to think for the party and for its great leader.

The Romanian textbooks in the communist times were centred upon the great times we were living in communism. In order to make us believe such lies, the communist propaganda made use of feeding us with our special place among the other nations. As Eugen Negrici rightly pointed out, we were taught that "they, the Romanians, are different from other nations and superior on account of our *ancient roots* (on this territory there was the very cradle of Indo-Europeans), on account of *tolerance* (they offered, through Antonescu, a human treatment to the Jews) and on account of incomparable *historical intuitions*: they united ever since Burebista's time (having the vocation of uniting around their leader); they anticipated the French revolution, through Horia, Cloșca and Crișan's *revolution*, they invented, through Mihai Viteazul, the national state" [7, 61]. As Eugen Negrici mentions, the real purpose of this apparent recovery of the past was a "huge manipulation", that of "legitimizing" Ceaușescu, the last of the wonderful series of Romanian leaders. The "shameless national demagogy", to make further use of Negrici's terms, put the portrait of the very leader in books of history in a series of portraits of leaders from the past, but slightly bigger in format. Bit by bit, whether children were learning Physics, or Romanian language, Mathematics or foreign languages (and what a great privilege they had that they could learn foreign languages, since they were taught that their own language was the most beautiful in the world), textbooks displayed on their first page a finely touched up picture of Ceaușescu and some of his words of wisdom from one of his famous congresses. As one would easily infer, the most infused with lessons of patriotism were the Romanian and history books. The Romanian books were supposed to enlighten us on the qualities of our language and literature and the most anthologized texts were the ones on our national heroes who nevertheless were all shadowed by far by the main national hero and saviour, Nicolae Ceaușescu. The History books were teaching on how we were never wrong, how smart we were to change our position in the second world war, since our second option brought us the most and the best, the alliance with the former Soviet Union on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944, which replaced our former national day and became our most important day as a nation.

This would be the story of any former communist country as we learned from George Orwell's *1984*. I do not wish to claim that my account would bring anything new in the picture of an age that many others like me lived and felt and experienced in different ways.

<sup>1</sup> All translations in the article are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

In 1989, Romanians successfully fought for their liberty; the Romanian revolution, mediated on so many international channels, brought us capitalism and the wish to become part of Europe. After years and years of preparation, on the first of January 2007 we finally found ourselves on the threshold of Europe. We celebrated the dream come true of becoming members of the European Union, of becoming part of the big family of Europeans that we so much longed for in the communist times. Yet after so many years of communism have we also changed our mentality? Have we become aware that we may not be the best nation in the world? Have we become aware of our mistakes throughout our history, have we learnt from our mistakes? And most of all have we changed ourselves in order to teach others to think straight, to make them develop an objective perception of their place in the world, of their becoming part of the big family of Europeans?

### **Some Romanian textbooks published after the Communist era**

One might say that we learnt a few lessons, if not all, and the general outlook on our history has changed significantly. The great national heroes were all debunked and Romanian communism and its radical mistakes were exposed to young children. Yet the Romanian textbooks are still infused with lessons of patriotism that do not necessarily teach us how to adapt to our new family, the European Union. They have not changed in order to prepare young children to become citizens of Europe, but they deny the course of history itself, teaching them how to be proud of their nation, and how to reject foreigners. It is as if foreigners were still at our borders trying to invade our country as they did in those days when those anthologized poems were written. Many of the Romanian textbooks still reiterate the dark myth of the one different by birth, of the one coming from elsewhere, of the foreign who must be feared of estranging our homeland. It is as if literature worth being taught stopped at the threshold of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Without claiming to cover all textbooks published after 1989, my study will look at a few texts that are taught to very young and older children. Mention should be made of the fact that due to the continuous more than unsuccessful attempt to restructure the Romanian system of education and also to reasons of economic crisis at present, many of the Romanian language textbooks which were published at least ten years ago were not changed but re-published without any revision.

We take for instance a Romanian language textbook for the sixth grade<sup>2</sup> which appeared only three years after the revolution at Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, in Bucharest. The editors are academics or researchers or highschool teachers, the team including professor Grigore Brâncuș, researcher Fulvia Ciobanu, teacher Alexandru Crișan, teacher Ecaterina Handruș, teacher Dumitru Săvulescu. The first text to be taught after the national anthem (which itself is a national call to pride, yet its tone more understandable, since it represent the Romanian nation, as the French Marseillaise represents the French nation) is *Patria noastră* (Our homeland) by George Coșbuc<sup>3</sup>. I do not hold the view that everything Coșbuc wrote should be erased, yet one might exercise caution at the very least, knowing how much Coșbuc was used by the communist propaganda through the embellishing rhetoric according to which intellectuals were marginalized, while peasants and workers were given a high position in society. A master of verse (see for instance *Pașa Hassan* for its intricate rhythm and alliteration), Coșbuc might be still taught if editors of manuals for children were more concentrated on style and less interested in teaching young children national pride.

In the previously mentioned Romanian language textbook, instead of coming with such examples of good literature, the editors of the manual opt for a national poem, infused with

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<sup>2</sup> What we call in the Romanian educational system the sixth grade refers to 12 or 13 year-old children.

<sup>3</sup> Romanian poet, translator, teacher, journalist, whose poetry eulogizes rural life.

chauvinistic elements of the reactionary type. The poem supports ethnocentric supremacy and self-determination and is structured in three parts corresponding to past, present and future. The first part abounding in examples of national heroes expresses the blind belief in national superiority and glory. If in the past enemies such Beyazid or Sinan-Paşa were crushed by our ancestors, at present we need to love each other like brothers. Yet love seems not to be the main morale of the stanza, since there is an obvious emphasis on the idea that the country is only ours, the Romanians', excluding anything that is foreign:

Patria ne e pământul  
 Celor ce suntem în viață,  
 Cei ce ne iubim frățește,  
 Ne dăm mâna românește;  
 Numai noi cu-aceiași nume,  
 Numai noi români pe lume,  
 Toți cu-aceiași soartă dată,  
 Suspinând cu toți-odată  
 Si-având toți o bucurie;  
 Asta-i patria română  
 Si ea sfântă să ne fie. [George Coșbuc,  
*Patria noastră*, Textbook Corpus, 1, 5-6]

The homeland is the land  
 Of *us* who are alive,  
 Of *us* who love each other like brothers  
 Of *us* who shake hands as *Romanians*  
 It is *only ours*, the ones with the *same* name  
 It is *only ours*, the *Romanians* in this world  
 All of *us* sharing the same fate  
 All of *us* sighing at the *same* time  
 And being happy as well  
 This is *our* homeland  
 Holy as it is, *let it be ours*. [George Coșbuc,  
*Our Homeland*, Textbook Corpus, 1, my italics]

The third stanza finally alludes to what most of George Coșbuc's poems do, our national pride: our grandchildren's task is to keep the country together, the language, the Romanian law, and to enhance all these national feats and for all these inestimable treasures Romanians should sacrifice their whole lives.

Patria ne-o fi pământul  
 Unde ne-or trăi nepoții  
 Si-ntr-o mândră Românie  
 De-o vrea cerul, în vecie,  
 S-or lupta să ne păzească  
 Limba, legea românească,  
 Si vor face tot mai mare  
 Tot ce românismul are:  
 Asta-i patria cea dragă  
 Si-i dăm patriei române  
 Inima și viața-ntreagă. [George Coșbuc,  
*Patria noastră*, see *Textbook Corpus*, 1, 5-6]

The homeland will be the land  
 Where our grandchildren will live  
 And in a *proud Romania*  
 If heavens accept, forever  
 Will they fight to keep  
 The language, the Romanian law  
 And they will enhance  
 Everything that Romanianness has:  
 This is the dear homeland  
 And we give to the Romanian homeland  
 Our heart and our entire life. [George  
 Coșbuc, *Our Homeland*, see *Textbook  
 Corpus*, 1, 5-6, my italics]

The same poem is featured on the first pages of another Romanian language textbook for the seventh grade<sup>4</sup>. The editors of the book published by Corint Publishing House are professor dr. Monica Spiridon, teacher Ana Aldea, teacher Paul Androne, teacher Eleonora Zamșa, teacher Nicoleta Petuhov.

One might say that such texts could not be excluded from the Romanian language textbooks only a few years after the Romanian revolution, the editors themselves having been the victims of the communist educational system and unable to offer children other texts which would attract them more to study their language and literature. Yet, what can one say about the *Romanian language textbook* for the fourth grade published by Aramis Publishing House, in 1999 (therefore ten years after the Revolution), by Marcela Peneș and Vasile Molan. The textbook starts displaying immediately after the national anthem, another piece of wisdom in George Coșbuc's patriotic style:

<sup>4</sup> What we call in the Romanian educational system the seventh grade refers to 13 or 14 year old children.

Lubește-ți țara, române, și fii mândru de locul cinstit ce-l ai între popoare!... Ne-am ridicat la un loc de multă vază între neamuri prin trudă și prin vrerea de a ne lumina și de a ținea pas cu neamurile mai înaintate...

Fii mândru de asta, române, dar nu uita nici o clipă că această sfântă țară, de care te mândrești, îți cere să fii vrednic de ea! Să cauți să te luminezi prin învățătua școlii, să te străduiești și tu, după măsura puterilor tale, să muncești pentru păstrarea celor ce le are și pentru propășirea lor... [George Coșbuc, see *Textbook Corpus* 1, 5]

Coșbuc mentions the other superior nations that we should follow without naming them. Our so-called lofty position and the poet's mythical belief in the holiness of the country cannot be considered a lesson to be taught to young children in 1999, one year before the turn of the century.

The next text in the manual belongs to the national poet, Mihai Eminescu<sup>5</sup>; apart from his masterpieces, he wrote poems in which nationalism is pushed to the extreme. These are precisely in my opinion the poems that an editor of manuals for children should exclude, since at such an early age a child is not able to see the genius of this poet in such pieces of work. Eminescu wrote a lot of valuable texts dealing with romantic themes, from simple poems that can be easily learnt by heart by children to complicated philosophical poems. From this huge variety, one could easily pick up for young learners of Romanian his wonderful *Hymn (Rugăciune)* or a few short, simple poems, like *Somnoroase păsărele (Drowsy Birds)* reminding us a bit of Blake's simplicity in *The Lamb*.

Yet the text that Marcela Peneș and Vasile Molan propose is no other but *Ce-ți doresc eu ție, dulce Românie (What I Wish for You, Sweet Romania!)* which basically teaches Romanians what a great past they had, hoping for a future at least worth their past:

Ce-ți doresc eu ție, dulce Românie!  
Tara mea de glorie, țara mea de dor  
Brațele nervoase, arma de tărie,  
La trecutu-ți mare, mare viitor!

.....  
Ce-ți doresc eu ție, dulce Românie!

.....  
Fiii tăi trăiască numai în frăție  
Ca a nopții stele, ca a zilei zori,  
Viață în vecie, glorie, bucurie,  
Arme cu tărie, suflet românesc,  
Vis de vitejie, fală și mândrie,  
Dulce Românie, asta ți-o doresc! [Mihai  
Eminescu, *Ce-ți doresc eu ție, dulce  
Românie!*, see *Textbook Corpus* 1, 8]

Love your country, Romanian, and be *proud* of the *honest place* you have among other nations!... We have risen to a *lofty position* among nations through toil and through our will to enlighten and to keep pace with the *superior nations*...

Be *proud* of this, Romanian, but do not forget for a single moment that this *holy country*, that you are *proud* of, asks you *to be worthy* of it! Try to become enlightened through school education, try to endeavour to work as much as you can to keep what it has and to pass it over to the next generation. [George Coșbuc, see *Textbook Corpus* 1, 5, my italics]

What I wish for you, sweet Romania!

My country of glory, my country of yearning,  
Sinewy arms, strong weapons,  
A great future, worth your great past!

.....  
What I wish for you, sweet Romania!

.....  
May your sons live in eternal brotherhood  
Akin to the night's stars and the day's dawn,  
Life in eternity, glory and joy I wish for you,  
Strong weapons, a Romanian soul I wish for you,  
Dreams of courage, and pride,  
Sweet Romania, this is what I wish for you.  
[Mihai Eminescu, *What I wish for you, sweet Romania!*, see *Textbook Corpus* 1, 8]

<sup>5</sup> Chronologically speaking Eminescu was the last great Romantic poet of Europe.

As Horia Patapievici remarked, the absence of the present time in this poem is “decisive and marks the strictly backward-looking orientation of the national patriotism”. [8, 109] Patapievici even explains why Romanians seem not to mention present time, since “for us, the present is simply not an object of the national feeling” [8, 109].

Eminescu’s reactionary type of patriotism, calling for the return of the national past in a forthcoming future is followed in Marcela Peneş and Vasile Molan’s manual only four pages later by another demonstration of Romanian pride, a Coşbuc revisited, a Coşbuc who this time invokes the Roman heritage on the bucolic homeland in the poem called *Cântec (Song)*. The reactionary type of nationalism is replaced by the revolutionary one, calling for the expulsion of the foreigners whose role was only to lay obstacles in the Romanian homeland. As taught by the Romanian leaders Stephen the Great (Ştefan cel Mare) and Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul), Romanians should destroy their enemies and keep themselves strong as they used to be in the past: “And do believe forever that you will be tomorrow/ Strong as you are today.” The only target and yearning of Romanians is, in Coşbuc’s words, to keep their national identity: “Let the national flag rise with pride above all in the world.” The national flag becomes thus sacred, more of a religious symbol rather than a political one.

Coşbuc’s text is followed by Alecu Russo’s *Cântarea României (In Praise of Romania)*. Originally conceived as a collection of patriotic essays, Alecu Russo’s title was used by the communists to create the famous eponymous festival in 1977, after the first Congress of socialist culture and education on the 2<sup>nd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> of June. It was the way in which the Council of Socialist Culture and Education (Consiliul Culturii şi Educaţiei Socialiste-CCES), subordinated to both the communist party and the council of ministers, could supervise any cultural or educative activity of the country. The main purpose of the festival was not to enhance the contributions of the Romanian popular genius, as it claimed, but to make sure that any cultural manifestation would be directly censored and approved by the party activists responsible for its organization. Ultimately, *Cântarea României* was the undercover praise of its leader(s)-husband and wife. Taking into account that Romanian children after the 1990s would not necessarily associate Alecu Russo’s text with the previously mentioned festival, one might still comment on the deep emotions aroused by the text that grows on a mythological background: this time homeland is a child’s family, it reminds one of the most precious moments of his/her childhood:

Patria este cel dintâi şi cel de pe urmă  
cuvânt al omului; într-însa se cuprind toate  
bucuriile...

Patria este aducerea-aminte de zilele  
copilăriei... Este casa părintească şi copacul  
cel mare din pragul uşii, dragostea mamei,  
locul unde am iubit şi am fost iubiţi, câinele  
care s-a jucat cu noi, sunetul clopotului  
bisericii satului ce ne vestea zilele frumoase  
de sărbătoare... Este zvonul turmelor care se  
întorceau în amurgul zilei de la păşune,  
fumul vetrei [...] [*Cântarea României* după  
Alecu Russo, see *Textbook Corpus*, 2, 12]

The *homeland* is *the first and the last word* of a  
human being; within its bosom are all joys...

The homeland is the reminiscence of  
*childhood*... it is the parental house and the big  
tree at the threshold, *the mother’s love*, the  
place where we first loved and were loved, it is  
the dog that played with us, the sound of the  
bell from the village church that brought news  
to us of the beautiful holy days... It is the  
murmur of the flocks *coming back home* after  
grazing, at dusk [...] [*Cântarea României* după  
Alecu Russo, see *Textbook Corpus*, 2, 12, my  
italics]

This milder form of territorial nationalism, suggests that all inhabitants of Romania owe allegiance and idolatry to their country of birth. Romanians’ task would therefore be looking for their sacred roots, and keeping within the borders of their country which should be their first and last word.

Examples of texts from this textbook may continue, yet the purpose of this article is not to make up a collection of such national pearls, but to show that in a country that aspired to become part of the European Union in 1999, at the time this manual was published, such lessons were not exactly the right ones for the 10 or 11 year olds of those times. Even if poets such as Demostene Botez, Mihai Beniuc, Cicerone Theodorescu, Nina Cassian, Victor Tulbure, Eugen Jebeleanu, Victor Eftimiu no longer adorn the pages with lessons on how to love the country and its leader(s), as they used to do at the time I was myself a pupil in the communist age, the selected texts of poets from the literary canon such as Coşbuc and Eminescu do a similar job in the sense that they feed children complete fallacies. One element that cannot be ignored in all these texts is that the limited range of vocabulary, reflected and equally limited thematic range does not encourage pupils (whose vocabulary is not sufficiently developed) to acquire expressive skills. Eugen Negrici made lists of the favourite nouns in communist propaganda. It is sad to discover that, with a few notable exceptions (that of *pământ de glorie- glorious land*, or any reference to the *golden age- epoca de aur*), more or less the same nouns graciously populate each page of this 1999 textbook: *land, homeland, village, holy day, eternity, glory, nation, past, future, paradise, weapons, dream*, etc. They are preceded by emphatic adjectives: *beautiful, strong, sweet, honest, lofty*.

Nevertheless, sadly, some of those children meanwhile became my students and some of them have been trying to convince me more than once about how great, how beautiful, how wonderful our country is. The purist and reactionary nationalism calling for the return to the national past, which was based on the exclusion of foreigners, took its toll on these students. They have been manipulated against anything foreign to such an extent that they have ended up believing it is not worth seeing other countries, since ours comprises the most beautiful mountains in Europe, the most beautiful delta and the most spectacular seaside. A few trips abroad would be still easy to reconstruct such mentalities, yet other forms of alterity such as ethnic minorities (gypsies, Hungarians), sexual minorities (homosexuals) and religious ones (other religions but the Orthodox one<sup>6</sup>) will take a long time to be settled in Romania even for the young generation – if ever.

The most intriguing example of Romanianism that I have chosen to discuss belongs again to the national poet, Mihai Eminescu. Included in the section dealing with the literary species called *doină* (complaint) in a Romanian textbook for the sixth grade, edited by Anca Serban, Sergiu Serban, and published by All Educational in 1998, the poem *Doină* strikes any ear by its instigating tone and verbal violence. Based on the lesson of how to hate foreigners, the poem displays what I would call *globalromanianization*, to appropriate into a Romanian context Derrida's *globalatinization*. Derrida introduced this notion in a discussion on religion, to underscore the apriori prevalence of the Latin idiom and way of thinking about such worldwide issues as religion (from Latin *religio*) [3, 29], even though one would normally associate the phenomenon of globalization with Anglo-American influence. *Globalromanianization* would thus designate the Romanian tendency which confers superior rights (of excellence, exemplarity, even universality) on the national language and culture. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida had expressed his fear concerning such grand claims of uniqueness for one's self (individual, nation, race, etc), since exemplarity can always potentially lead to totalitarianism. Yerushalmi's assertion of the unicity of the Jewish people and the injunction to remember was understood by Derrida as a threat, since it contained those words "which say the One, the difference of the One in the form of uniqueness ("dramatic difference," "unique vision," "specific hope," "Only in Israel and nowhere else") and the One in the figure of totalizing assemblage ("to an entire people"). The gathering into itself of the One is never without violence, nor is the self-affirmation of the Unique, the law of the archontic, the law of consignation which orders the archive. Consignation is never without that excessive pressure (impression, repression,

<sup>6</sup> Take for instance the particular case of young children in primary school (between first and fourth grade) being taught orthodox religion in schools irrespective of their family religious beliefs.

suppression) of which repression (Verdrangung or Urverdrangung) and suppression (Unterdrückung) are at least figures” [4, 51].

In the poem *Doină*, Eminescu claims the exemplarity of Romanianness. The country seems no longer Romanian to Romanians, due to foreign intervention:

<p>De la Nistru până la Tisa          Tot Românul plânsu-mi-s-a          Ca nu mai poate străbate          De-atâta străinătate. [Mihai Eminescu,  <i>Doină</i>, see <i>Textbook Corpus</i>, 4, 112]</p>	<p>From Tisa to the Nistru's tide          All Romania's people cried          That they could no longer stir          For the rabbled foreigner. [Mihai Eminescu,  <i>Doină</i>, see <i>Textbook Corpus</i>, 4, 112, Translated          by Corneliu M. Popescu, retrieved from the site:  <a href="http://www.gabrielditu.com/eminescu/doina.asp">http://www.gabrielditu.com/eminescu/doina.asp</a>]</p>
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Eminescu creates the archive of reasons to hate the Foreigner, to disdain his nefarious influence. In the national poet's opinion, the Romanian dream is that of getting rid of the foreigners who are a plague that “has spread its ban” to such an extent that Romania has become “a scar/ That you scarcely know it more.” It is somehow shocking to conceive how such an educated person like Eminescu, trained in Vienna and Berlin, a common reader and interpreter of Schopenhauer, could assert that “foreign lords” made “Romanians crawl backwards” similarly to crabs. Destroying the very continental climate of the country (seasons seem not to follow their natural course anymore), destroying the Romanian forest and depleting the Romanian rivers, foreigners transformed the country to such an extent that drastic measures had to be taken.

In fact, Romanians always envisaged their mythic homeland, that of *Mioritza*, a folk national version of ancient Arcadia, the land of utmost beauty and tranquillity, inshrined between valleys and hills, the land where shepherds graze their sheep and admire breathtaking landscapes: “Pe-un picior de plai/ Pe-o gură de rai.”/ “Near a low hill/ At Heaven's doorsill.”<sup>7</sup> Lucian Blaga claimed that the Mioritic space<sup>8</sup> is part of “the Romanian soul”, which shows “solidarity with this space, as it shows solidarity with itself, with its blood and its dead” [2,18-19]. Eliade went further to see in *Mioritza* a symbol of “cosmic Christianity” [5, 5]. The exercise of proving the innocence of the Romanian soul through the protagonist of the ancestral ballad found also its detractors (among which Horia Patapievici) in people who showed with strong arguments that excessive use of such metaphors can easily lead to manipulation. Exploiting the purity of our soul and the “conversion of the concrete, profane space in the cosmic, abstract time” [6, 325] was also one way of showing ourselves our greatness and passivity in front of Foreigners. The Mioritic space is also the land in which he, the Foreigner was seen as a satanic figure, the one who would shorten our rivers (see the poem *Tu, Ardeal*) and destroy our utopic world.

Eminescu's “educational” lesson in *Doină* was produced in a certain context and as long as pupils are not brought back to the present times, in which their country is no longer endangered to be conquered by foreigners, they misunderstand it completely. Ironically enough, Romanians like to boast with their hospitality which for them ranks among their best qualities. Yet their “hospitality” is hard to notice in Eminescu's poem which ends with the invocation of the national hero, Stephen the Great, who needs to rise from the monastery where he sleeps in eternal sleep and destroy the foreigners:

<sup>7</sup> Pe-un picior de plain/ Pe-o gură de rai, translation taken over from Camelia Frunză downloaded from the site: <http://www.proz.com/translation-articles/articles/606/1/FROM-TEXT-TO-THE-SPIRIT-WITHIN---ASSESSING-THE--FUNCTIONALITY-OF-MIORITA-AS-A--TARGET-TEXT-->

<sup>8</sup> The “Mioritic” space would be the mythical Romanian homeland. *Mioritza* is the ballad showing the Moldavian shepherd accepting his tragic fate (being aware of his very own imminent murder) and imagining his death as a possible celestial wedding.

Toți dușmanii or să piară  
 Din hotară în hotară  
 Indrăgi-i-ar ciorile  
 Si spânzurătorile! [Mihai Eminescu,  
*Doină*, see *Textbook Corpus*, 4, 112]

That our foes demolished be  
 From the mountains to the sea,  
 That the crows may hear their knell  
 And the gallows-tree as well. [Mihai Eminescu,  
*Doină*, see *Textbook Corpus*, 4, 112, Translated  
 by Corneliu M. Popescu, retrieved from the site:  
<http://www.gabrielditu.com/eminescu/doina.asp>]

Unfortunately some of the textbooks presented in this article are still the material used by teachers in remote rural areas<sup>9</sup>. The turn of the millenium did not bring to Romania such a prolific economic situation to afford to change such textbooks. The world economic crisis starting to haunt by 2007 and hitting profoundly at present did not create conditions for other textbook authors to come with a new vision and new methods and to really make children love their language and literature. Teaching such texts as the ones presented in this article in the new Romania that is part of the European Union at present I think will continue producing generations of proud and mediocre people who would know only how to love themselves in this new family which we entered. One should look no further when on different private but also on the national channels, different mediocre reporters were extremely ironic about the rules and principles of the European Union, claiming that ours were better at the time we were supposed to implement the European ones. We wonder sometimes why Romanian people wanted so very much to become members of the European Union if they showed and sometimes still show so much scorn for the European laws and the European values.

## Textbook Corpus

1. Brâncuș, Grigore Ciobani, Fulvia, Crișan, Alexandru, Handruș, Ecaterina, Săvulescu, Dumitru, *Limba română, manual pentru clasa a VI-a*, București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1992.
2. Peneș, Marcela, Molan, Vasile, *Limba română, manual pentru clasa a IV-a*, București: Aramis, 1999.
3. Spiridon, Monica, Aldea, Ana, Androne, Paul, Zamșa, Eleonora, Petuhov, Nicoleta *Limba română, manual pentru clasa a VII-a*, București: Corint, 1993.
4. Șerban, Anca, Șerban, Sergiu, *Limba română, manual pentru clasa a VI-a*, București: All Educational, 1998.

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1. Augustine, St, *Confessions*, Albert C Outler (trans. and ed.), 1960.
2. Blaga, Lucian *Trilogia culturii, II. Spațiul mioritic*, București: Humanitas, 1994.
3. Derrida, Jacques, "Faith and Knowledge: the Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone", in *Religion*, Derrida, Jacques, Vatimo, Gainni (eds), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, 1-78.
4. Derrida, Jacques, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression", in *Diacritics*, Derrida, Jacques, Prenowitz, Eric, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer, 1995), 9-63, Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0300-7162%28199522%2925%3A2%3C9%3AAFAFI%3E2.O.C0%3B2-D>, last accessed on October, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
5. Eliade, Mircea, "XXIV de contrapropoziții despre Mioritza", *Cronica*: 1983, nr. 34, p. 5.
6. Kembach, Victor, *Universul mitic al românilor*, București: Editura Stiințifică, 1994.
7. Negrici, Eugen, *Literatura română sub communism*, București: Editura Fundației Pro, 2003
8. Patapievic, Horia, *Politice*, București: Humanitas, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> We must make justice to a few good and very good textbooks of Romanian language and literature, published from 1991 to the present time, such as most of the textbooks published by Editura Humanitas Educational over the years. Authors of these textbooks carefully selected texts which do not claim in any way the superiority of the Romanian nation.

## Globalizând mentalitățile în România secolului al XXI-lea

### Rezumat

*Articolul analizează câteva texte din manualele școlare de limba română, manuale neadaptate încă nici măcar la simplul fapt că România a devenit parte a Uniunii Europene. Istoria românilor, spre deosebire de alte istorii europene, a dat naștere unui anume tip de discurs patriotic cu un anumit grad de șovinism, discurs pe care l-au practicat mulți scriitori, chiar dintre cei canonici. Acest discurs, cu toate că s-a schimbat semnificativ după Revoluția din 1989, se luptă în continuare cu stățile trecutului, care bântuie uneori manualele școlare ale elevilor și care le influențează acestora modul de gândire. La douăzeci de ani după Revoluția din '89, ne întrebăm dacă elevii noștri înțeleg noțiunile de pluralitate, de diversitate culturală și valorile europene, atâta timp cât noi îi instruiem în continuare cât de mândri trebuie să fie de țara lor unică și minunată și cât de ospitalieri și fără de greșală sunt locuitorii ei. În eseul său "Faith and Knowledge: the Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone" (Credință și cunoaștere: două surse ale 'religiei' la limitele rațiunii însăși) într-un context total diferit, Derrida a folosit termenul de globalatinizare pe care am îndrăznit să-l transform în globalromânizare, definit în articol, și ilustrat prin câteva exemple din ceea ce le predăm elevilor noștri, care urmează să devină cetățeni responsabili ai Europei secolului al XXI-lea.*