

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL MAGAZINES IN RECONSOLIDATING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

In this article we intend to present the role that the cultural magazines must have in the reinforcing process of national identity. Cultural magazines are part of the forming process of modern Romanian state. Thus, the starting point was highlighted in 1840 by "Dacia Literară" magazine. National identity is an actual term in the context of globalization and its European Union but tends to be almost replaced by the so-called multi-national identity.

National identity must be maintained even in conditions of globalization and decrease of cultural borders, a process that happens in the European Union today.

Keywords: *cultural magazines, reconsolidation, national identity, the European Union*

Apart from the media spectacle that we witness today (which is almost entirely built on a vulgar expression of what we try to refer to as the art of communication) there is the fundamental layer of the national culture, a layer activated and maintained alive by the country's cultural magazines

If the freedom of speech, awarded to all citizens on the basis of Article 30 of the Romanian Constitutions, was assumed by the daily press, by offering the mass media this desideratum, on private expense, without involving the state in decreasing the higher and higher financial pressure, the national identity of the same people is at threat of being disjointed as long as it is defined by the live part of the national culture, identifiable in the pages of the cultural magazines.

The Romanian people has also lived periods of isolation in which the right to information and opinion was restrained and it did not benefit from this freedom of speech "of thoughts, opinions or beliefs and the freedom of creation of any kind, through speech, writing, images, sounds or other means of communicating in

public..." (Constituția României, 2003). Not even in the hardest years of dictatorship was the national culture deprived of her fundamental support, the cultural magazine.

Acad. Nicolae Manolescu, president of the Romanian Writers' Union, at *The National Symposium of Cultural Magazines*, organized by the "Arca" magazine, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the first apparition, stated that "without the literary publications, culture would become a bottomless pit and without control the literary network would be devoid of any value criteria. In other words, the critical selection spirit is vital for the existence of any culture. And this spirit is mainly supported by the cultural magazine. One cannot count on television, let alone on radio. At the moment, literature is not subsidized and it is only supported by town halls and city councils. In France, for example, three billion Euros are being allocated yearly for culture, in comparison to only 130 million Euros in Romania. Finally, we need to find grant solutions. Therefore, people need to work on a subsidy law for the written culture, including the literary magazines." (Arca magazine, 2014)

Cultural magazines "are guilty" of having given birth to the modern Romanian state because they appeared during a time of coagulation of the national spirit, and together with it a national identity was built. Therefore, we speak about the first cultural magazine "Dacia literară" (1840), after the publication in 1829, in Bucharest and Iasi, of the first printed newspapers in the Romanian language, "Curierul Românesc" (April 8, 1829), belonging to Eliade Rădulescu, and "Albina" (June 1, 1829), edited by Gheorghe

Asachi. In 1838 (on March 12) appeared George Barițiu's "Gazeta de Transilvania" and also in 1838 (on January 1) the first written newspaper in the Romanian language appeared in Bucharest and it was called "România"

Very soon, different supplements such as "Buletin, gazetă administrativă" (Bucharest, 1832) or "Buletin, foaie oficială" (Iași, 1833) have been edited, as well as literary supplements, the best known being "Muzeul Național" and "Curierul de ambe sexe" (for "Curierul românesc", 1836), "Alăuta românească" (for "Albina Românească", 1837), "Foaia pentru minte, inima și literatură" (for "Gazeta de Transilvania", 1838).

In 1855, under the leadership of Vasile Alecsandri, in Iasi, the magazine "România literară" appears, as well as the magazine of the Junimea society "Convorbiri literare" on May 1, 1867. This magazine led to the training of some significant political and cultural personalities of modern Romania.

In 1865, in Budapest, the magazine "Familia" appears under the directorship of Iosif Vulcan. Issue 6 of the magazine, released on February 25 - March 9, 1866 marked Mihai Eminescu's debut, with the poem "De-aș avea..."

This sparkling debut of the cultural press coincides with the years before or after the Romanian revolution in 1848, in Moldova, Țara Românească and Transilvania, as well as with the Union of Romanian Principalities, Moldova and Țara Românească, on the 24th of January 1859, when Alexandru Ioan Cuza becomes ruler of both Romanian countries. The development of our national identity through the country's cultural magazines continues also after 1866, year in which Carol I led Romania after the forced abdication of Alexandru Ioan Cuza due to a coup.

What should *national identity* really mean to us? It is a feeling that binds us to the nation to which we belong. This phrase appeared in the 1980s, without being different from the meaning of the phrase *national feeling* (a concept which was used at the end of the 19th century) or *national conscience* (used in the first half of the 19th century). Much more aggressive actually seems *national identity* under the current conditions led by a more and more obvious intention of globalization

and the consolidation of a supra-state (to which we have already adhered), a kind of replica which Europeans try to give to the United States of America, under the form of the United States of Europe. The European Union has found a name, a flag, an anthem, a unique currency and a unique form of government, trying to adopt a unique Constitution, which should be accepted by all the 28 member states. At the same time, it also has to think of a self-identity, in order to justify its existence.

This multi-national identity is desired to represent a common ground for the national identity of the member states, therefore building a common multi-national cultural language, in which the national values of every individual to become European values with a distinctive European identity, having the power of a spoken language understood by all components of the European Union. Even though this project still seems an utopia, I believe in its success, with three degrees of freedom, which can give communication the chance of a dialogue kept inside the understanding of common values, produced not only to be used, but also to be representative, in order to help us understand ourselves, the people around us and those from everywhere. National identities that preserve their interior strengths, necessary for expression, will be visible in the context of the new product, and they can offer it glamour, depth or mobility.

This structure is in itself a work of art, a creation that requires not only a creative effort, but especially a lot on inspiration on behalf of the one who is going to take the role of harmonizing the national identities, without passion and wounded pride, knowing very well the souls of all people in the Union. Such a person, in flash and blood, doesn't exist. I don't think that such a person will ever be born, with an outstanding synthesis capacity, in order to govern that axiological system necessary for success. A man, no way. A settlement between nations, yes. A gathering of the wise, yes. A multinational construction, in which the political man doesn't have access or has a limited responsibility, yes. This should be the entrance towards a European identity, which should demonstrate high respects for the analysed

national identities, as we have today a deep respect for the religions of our neighbours.

"Globalization and the national identity are realities of the contemporary world. Can we resist or do we let them overwhelm us? To oppose is as if we tried to withstand an inexorable process. To allow it to walk over us means to deny our history and to betray our fate. Tough dilemma. It is clear that all of us want to refer to the benefits of the phenomenon, but not everybody is willing to pay by giving up the spiritual fundamentals, as the global market and the world's information system cannot compensate for the loss of identity. Globalization doesn't mean that we give up our identity and perennial values and that we homogenize. Without the national identity we wouldn't be what we are today, nor would we know what we are. Centuries of faith, blood and song would completely be deleted from our collective memory and from the Romanian soul. And our future would be insecure". (Georgiu, 1997) This comment shows the importance that the national identity has on the challenge of globalization.

"We, Romanians, have come up with another attempt to destroy the national identity - in the first part of the communist era - especially through a cultural action. Because culture itself represents the matrix of the national identity. Therefore, the resources for resistance are to be found in culture. Yet, our identity has partially been affected and communism destroyed our souls. This is why today we are obliged to make a double effort: of rediscovering our entire identity and a defensive effort against the new destructive germs." (Mureşanu, 1997)

In such a conjuncture, going back to the infrastructure needed to save the national identity, it is immediately necessary to change the government's attitude about its importance, in order to strengthen the national fibre, the cultural magazines, which today are on the verge of collapse. They still resist in some places, either due to a private initiative or with the help of the local administration, being at the edge of survival, according to the old Marxist principle "it doesn't allow you to live, nor does it let you die."

"A country has to finance its culture, and not to influence its production", represents a statement

belonging to Martei Petreu, editor-in-chief of the "Apostrof" magazine.

"Because the Soviet Union doesn't receive any money from the state, it is a miracle that the magazines survived so far", is an opinion belonging to the writer Dan Mircea Cipariu.

"Now we have enough hierarchies and the literary ones seem useless. Culture has to be brought under the attention of the Romanian Secret Services, because it is part of the national security" - Nicolae Prelipceanu, editor-in-chief of "Viața Românească"

We need clarification by assuming the lack of responsibility, with name and surname, with function and its prerogatives, which should clearly state who takes on this enormous responsibility that for some decades has been included in speech in the category of "diverse". Culture has always been pushed towards the end of the conferences, after many hours of communications of "up to date important matters". In this marginal field money wasn't enough (today, it also isn't enough), which doesn't mean that this order was also kept at the budgetary rectifications, when they first cut (something that should now long happen) the Culture Budget, from its ridiculous values to even more ridiculous values, according to the principle "smile, tomorrow could be worse."

Nicolae Prelipceanu's statement, which sets culture in an area of national security, is not only serious and profound, but also disarming and stunning, as long as behind it lays the faith of the Romanian people, threatened to become a migratory population, on the verge of dissipation, and assimilation by other European people, on the outskirts of which it tries, today and maybe tomorrow, to get assimilated.

We need a clear head to decide what the political class hasn't been able to decide for a quarter of a century. No current politician has an intellect that can make him understand the problems that Romania is facing by ignoring to protect this layer of national identity through culture.

President Klaus Iohannis is the only one who may still have this outlook, far from the political interests of the main actors on the country's

political scene, who are much too preoccupied with scandals, than with the clear and revolting truths, to help us take a step forward (and not just an imaginary one).

In the past, before communism, in a Romania which then was European, people spoke seriously and responsibly about national culture and national specificity. What followed for us Romanians was an abyss of the socialist realism, whereas in other European countries, there already were some decades of respect and interest for the national culture and the national identity. These countries became part of the European Union ready to preserve their national identity even after integration "avoiding to destroy a culture, expressed in a language which was used less, in the mixer of globalization." (Popa, 2013)

We don't have the right to disarm. We don't have the right to lose our cultural legacy at a card game of occult interests, because our great ancestors sacrificed their life and immortality. Our duty is not only to warn about the alarming condition of the Romanian cultural magazines, both the eight magazines belonging to the national heritage (which are still alive today after 25 years of savage capitalism, which followed the 45 years of savage communism) and especially the new cultural magazines, that can be identified with the new generations of writers and the new trends in the national culture and literature, necessary to support the postmodern era in Romania, as a nation, state and national identity. The Academician Ioan-Aurel Pop in the above quoted article, "National culture and national specificity", which appeared in the September 2013 issue of the "Magazin Istoric" magazine, manages to detach himself from the passion and pathos which we used especially in order to try to offer a replica of the immediate reality than to be responsible for the destiny of the country, at the beginning of this third millennium fever.

"I think it's a time when we need realism, responsibility, accountability, solidarity. On the basis of culture there is training and education, that is school. On the background of school decay half-learned school graduates even are born, even illiterate who no longer can speak well their mother tongue. They become a favourable environment for destructive, nihilistic,

extravagant ideas about the past, present and future, uttered from the peak of their lips by some interested "analysts". School and family are entitled to their rights to be restored, cultivated, cherished, stimulated. The rulers and we all have a duty to regain our consciousness as Romanians, accompanied by the idea that we have a message to deliver to the world.

If we didn't perish - like the Huns, the Gepids, the Avars, the Cumans and many other nations who came over to us - it means that we have a mission. We have a country equal to the land area of the United Kingdom, are the most numerous people in the south-east of Europe, we have resisted and existed here, as Romanians, for over a millennium! What better premises can we ask our Lord? We can only build together in Europe's institutional environment, we entered in 2007, to appropriate our dreams to reality, not to complain and not to give any haughty lessons to others. If we want a better world, we must want a better country, and this country is called for us Romania. « (Popa, 2013)

How important is a *literary magazine* for reinforcing our national identity? Why do we need today a *reconsolidation*, and why is not enough only the consolidation? In whose responsibility falls this mission of strategic importance today as long as these days there is a *unique command* on the decision level and the decision is taken exclusively by the political will of the existing leaders.

"*România literară, Viața Românească, Contemporanul, Observatorul Cultural, Luceafărul de dimineață, Cultura, Apostrof, Secolului 21, Convorbirilor literare, Dacia literară, Scriptor, Zona literară, Feed back, Simposion - cultural addition of the daily paper al cotidianului 24:ORE, Nova Apollonia, Conta, Antiteze, Bucovina literară, Ateneu, Cronica Veche, Cronica, Onyx - Irlanda de Nord, Izvoare - Israel, Vitralii, Saeculum, Porto Franco, Dunărea de jos, Familia, Discobolul, Steaua, Orizont, Poesis, Contrafort, Hyperion, Europa din Novi Sad, Banatul, Semne, Realitatea bănățeană, Arca, Verso, Naše Snahy*" represent that majority of culture magazines in Romania, which in the absence of a national cultural strategy are trying to do what they know best to do for the national culture composing an image that more than often

uses the explanatory key: "Everyone pulls in one direction, without realizing that they all pull in opposite directions." The common denominator that still maintains a certain balance towards a certain direction / path is the tradition of those who come from the historical past, while the new culture magazines are live stands for the expression of experiments and especially the reactions of the young generation towards what they he found on the country's cultural market.

The same as the governors do not crowd to finance the country's culture, the cultural institutions necessary to support the development of the national identity, the same there is a total lack of concern for the destiny of our national culture, a young, energetic culture, ready to conquer Europe, compared to the other important cultures of the continent (the German culture, the French culture), which seem to be increasingly tired and biased. The culture can not repeat the experience of the Ceausescu regime when it was asked to be profitable, to pay all the necessary expenses, following the model of the *Theatre Scenery Workshops*, for example, obliged to conceive a coffins making program for the institution to become profitable.

There is an urgent need for a change of perspective, a reinstatement of the country's priorities on the normal path, where the national identity is actually a mirror in which we look at and understand not only how we look but especially why he look like that, what we have to do for our image to have direct and profound connections with the fibre of our history.

Regardless of what we propose to do with the size of the discourse about the *country, nation, national*, we are obliged to begin our incursions from the essence of Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Constitution of Romania: "*Romania is a national, sovereign and independent, unitary and indivisible state*".

"The national identity as Professor Constantin Schifirneț states in the article Romanian identity in the context of biased modernity expresses attitudes, mentalities and collective behaviors resulting from individuals belonging to a national state. Modernist and postmodernist doctrines bring into discussion the appropriateness of the national state, starting from the premise of the integration of national

collectivities in supernational structures such as, for example, the European Union. If, for the national states with a long history, the national identity is indisputable, the national states emerged after World War II are facing adversities concerning their own national identity. A good example is provided by Israel, subject to contestation, especially from some intellectuals in the Western Europe, including some Jew (among them, the notorious one being the philosopher George Steiner), who do not recognize its right to exist as a state, calling upon the argument the depreciation of the idea of national state in the present era. The supporters of the idea of statehood argue that Israel is a state in preparation, which has not yet set neither its boundaries nor its state identity. The Jewish identity is not complete unless it is stated within the framework of a Jews' own state, and its absence would lead to a delay in relation to Europe: "The current Europeanization of the European states came after hundreds of years of national state settlement".

After 22 years, if we accept 1993 as the year of birth of the European Union by signing the *Treaty of Maastricht*, the founding states of this union started thinking about a "return to their origins". (Schifirneț, 2009)

"The national identity comes back as a matter of the utmost relevance to countries which have been integrated for decades in all the structures of the European Union, being thought over as a fundamental process of the current Europeanized society. We stop to the Netherlands, a founding member of the European Union, clearly interested in reinventing their national identity. The intellectuals together with the state officials, are seeking to provide new content to their national identity ".(Schifirneț, 2009)

The solution the Dutch thought about seems to be the winning one, legitimate for all the national states who will be able *to render to Caesar what is Caesar's*, to give culture what it deserves to receive, even if only for its ability to save and impose the national identity of the state. "The national identities will be redefined through a complex process of renegotiating the place of national cultures within the global identity." (Lechner, 2007)

Constantin Schifirneț in *Modern Genesis of the national idea: Ethnic Psychology and Romanian Identity*, detects this deviation to primitiveness of the Romanian people forced in the course of history to find its national identity. "We do not have yet a comparative study of the Romanian identity with that one of the other nations. A brief history of some of the Romanian visions about the Romanian identity shows a trend towards reducing the identity to the Romanian soul". (Schifirneț, 2001)

Although there has been and there still is a pretty strong current, which stresses the importance of a European state, no state is acceding to this project. So far there has remained the idea of a structure which provides the frame of an association increasingly close among the peoples of Europe and in no way to accept the idea of a power that would go beyond the national state. The national feeling is very strong in all European countries, especially in the founder states of EU - France and Germany. This is why any attempt to diminish the national state to act autonomously is repudiated. The central issue remains the harmonization of the new European construction with the concrete interests and aspirations of each nation.

"The Romanians see themselves more as members of the national state, than as citizens of Europe. An research on identity in the city of Sibiu in 2007, when the Transylvanian town was the European Capital of Culture, confirms the thesis that the Romanians identify themselves first and foremost as Romanians. Only 4% of respondents claimed to have a European identity, compared to 33.6% who identify themselves with the national level, 27,7% with the regional level 24.1% with the local identities level. The Romanians can not perceive yet an European identity, established as a result of the integration in the EU, which would limit the sovereignty of the national state". (Dragoman, 2008)

This reserve preserved by 85.4%, whereby the residents of the Europeanized city through culture "recognize their local, regional, national, identity to the prejudice of the assertion of the European one, can come to our advantage of"

returning home through culture "following the strategy initiated by the Dutch.

"The Romanian identity designates what the Romanians specifically have, as a people distinct from other national communities, reflecting the specific way they build their culture and organize their private life and public life, express their particular way of responding to the universal constants of culture: clothing, food, housing, religion, play, art, communication, language. The Romanian identity derives from the participation of individuals at cultural practices and the activities proper to the Romanians, imply positive attitudes towards the national group members, attachment and national pride, feelings of protection, determined by belonging to a nation, loyalty to the members of the national group, claiming a common origin and the sharing the same traditions and customs".

We can not overlook the first steps already taken towards normality, towards saving the culture magazines by the state. Thus, since the 1st of January 2015, Romania's cultural magazines were given a lifeline needed first for their reanimation and then the salvation of the national culture, recalling here the words of Acad. Nicolae Manolescu, the rightful craftsman of the 80s generation of Romanian writers. "... without the literary publications, the culture would become a bottomless pit, out of control, the literary network would lack value criteria. In other words, the critical spirit of selection is vital to the existence of a culture. And this spirit is mainly maintained by the culture magazine". Here is what *The law for financing culture magazines representative in Romania* says.

Art. 1 (1) The magazines of the unions of creators from Romania, members of the National Alliance of the Unions of Creators, named further NAUC as well as other cultural journals will be financed from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture, with a minimum amount of 4.5 million lei, amount to be indexed annually.

(2) A percentage of 10% of the amount referred to in para. (1) shall be allocated to the Ministry of Culture to finance and support publishing magazines and cultural publications

other than those proposed by the unions of creators, in accordance with the law.

Art. 2. (1) From the amount allocated from the state budget, according to Art. 1 para. (1), the unions of creators from Romania, NAUC members, each for its field, will determine the list of journals to be financed and the amounts required.

(2) If the amounts requested by the unions creators NAUC members cumulated top the amount allocated to them, under this law, the minister of culture, in consultation with the unions of creators, approves by order the distribution of the amounts for the magazines proposed under paragraph (1) in the allocated amount. The Order of the Ministry of Culture is published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I.

Art. 3 (1) For the cultural magazines and journals of the unions of creators, the funding is granted based on contracts between the Ministry of Culture and the beneficiary unions of creators. The beneficiary unions of creators in their turn sign due contracts with the final beneficiaries: the cultural magazines publications.

(2) For the cultural magazines and publications referred to in art. 1 para. (2) the funding is granted based on contracts signed between the Ministry of Culture and the beneficiaries.

Art. 4 (1) The amount referred to in art. 1 can be used by the unions of creators from Romania as well as by the beneficiaries, to finance the following categories of expenditure due to supporting the publishing of magazines and of cultural publications: personnel costs, administrative expenses, royalty, materials cost and services expenses for printing and broadcasting as well as prizes awarded by the magazines.

(2) The settlement of expenses incurred to finance the magazines of the unions of creators is made by the Ministry of Culture based on supporting documents drawn up under the legislation in force and of the contracts.

(3) The payment of the expenses made for cultural magazines and publications referred

to in art. 1 para. (2) is based on supporting documents drawn up by the beneficiary magazines and publications presented to the Ministry of Culture.

Art. 5 - This law comes into force on the 1st of January 2015.

This law was adopted by the Parliament of Romania, in compliance with art. 75 and art. 76 para. (2) of the Romanian Constitution.

The liberal MPs Traian Dobrinescu, Varujan Vosganian and Gigel Sorinel Știrbu submitted in March 2014 a draft law to subsidize the representative culture magazines in Romania. This parliamentary initiative was joined by 82 deputies and senators from all the parliamentary parties. The first Chamber, the Senate, approved the project on the 2nd of September 2014 (voting result: for -109, counter-2, abstentions-2). The Chamber of Deputies, the decisional chamber, voted for the bill in Parliament on the 3rd of December 2014, unanimously (279 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions). The law was passed and will take effect after being promulgated by the President and published in the Official Gazette of Romania.

There have already passed two months since this law was passed and President Klaus Johannis has not promulgated it yet. There is nothing alarming, as long as culture is still positioned at "among other things". *

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