ROMANIAN SOURCES

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, we have seen in the United States a heightened interest in East European culture and civilization. A large number of centers for documentation, cultural associations, and research institutes have been formed to deal with that part of the world; not infrequently they have received financial support from federal agencies. Romania, as one of these East European countries, has been the object of special attention due to a variety of circumstances which we will be exploring in detail.

Various documented studies, political and economic analyses, translations of literary works, biographies, and all sorts of interpretations of Romanian affairs have been published. Many of these publications have been of considerable scientific, cultural, and political value, but thus far the specific essence and intimate structure of Romanian culture and civilization have not been made known. This, of course, would be possible only through direct contact with Romanian spiritual and cultural values, the means for which have been missing. Even when there has been direct contact, it has been fragmentary. That is, it has typically been limited to a single dimension of the culture, and this dimension has not been researched, analyzed, and viewed in its specific nature and quality—it has not been related to the Romanian culture as a spiritual entity. Consequently, the perspective of the Romanian phenomenon has been deprived of the characteristic elements of its universe. In other instances, contact with Romanian culture has been tainted by ideological principles, thus not permitting a comprehensive understanding of Romanian sentiments, logics of thought, and the perspective and essence of Romanian dreams and ideals.

In addition to these concerns of American scholars, there is another reality which must be taken into account when dealing with Romanian affairs. Second and subsequent generations of Americans of Romanian descent have lost practically all contact with the values and traditions of their Romanian heritage. Certainly, this is a very natural process under the circumstances of demographic pressure: in time all ethnic groups may disappear, converted by the “melting pot” into a new ethnic collectivity—the American nation. There is no power in the world which can stop this process. However, in the transition period leading toward that final point, the young generations of the ethnic groups are living the dramatization of suspension, potentially leading to a complex of inferiority. Such ethnic generations do not belong spiritually to either culture: they are not familiar with the values of the group from which they are becoming detached, nor have they been significantly integrated into the other ethnic magma or reality, since it does not yet exist. It is therefore the responsibility of each individual member of the various ethnic groups to rebuild and reestablish spiritual contact with the historic values of his ancestors’ culture, in order to define a new personality in awareness of the particular spiritual thesaurus he can contribute to the American nation. In this way, his inferiority complex can be diluted and transformed through a qualitative mutation into a self-confident consciousness. This will be a tremendous asset to the American nation.

Faced with these two major considerations, this journal has brought together a number of scholars who collectively possess a clear perspective of Romanian realities
and cultural works, with a determination to make known the true values, customs, ideas, structures, problems, and ideals of the Romanian culture. The journal is long overdue, but it will hopefully satisfy the needs of both of the above interest groups: the scholarly world and the ethnic community.

It must also be remembered that today, as cultural anthropologists are extending their investigative inquiry into the most intimate areas of ethnic creativity and enlarging their sphere of activity by encompassing all possible forms of culture, the Romanian phenomenon cannot be overlooked. Its unique characteristics justify and demand its very own historical existence.

Romanian culture is the expression of an ethnic collectivity which was created through the intersection of various mentalities and races at the crossroads of Eastern Europe; Thracian, Roman, Slavic, and Byzantine elements, to name only a few, went into this amalgamation. The specific identity of this culture took shape during the middle ages of Romanian history and has survived throughout the subsequent centuries with all its traditions; in spite of the most absurd and tragic circumstances, the spiritual unity of the Romanian community has miraculously remained intact.

Today, when the world is struggling for peace and order and enveloped in tremendous confusion, is it not conceivable that a more profound acquaintance with the harmonies of Romanian thought and life could contribute to a tranquilization of contemporary anxiety and an enlightenment of the horizons of all the people of the world? It is with these questions and considerations in mind that we give birth to Romanian Sources.

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MIRCEA VULCAȘNESCU:

THE ROMANIAN DIMENSION OF EXISTENCE

— A PHENOMENOLOGICAL SKETCH —

Dedicated to: Emil Cioran

I. INTRODUCTION; Preliminary Objections:
   1. The dimensional meaning of existence.
   2. Its character within the nation.
   3. The importance of inquiry.
   4. Its supposed sterility.
   5. Outline.

II. THE BEING'S BEING:
   1. Existence as a whole: world and time.
   2. The single being: happening, individual, God.

III. THE NATURE OF THE BEING:
   1. Existence as distinctive quality; the fact and the way of being.
   2. Negation of existence; opposition and limits.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES:
   1. There is no non-existence
   2. There is no absolute impossibility.
   3. There is no alternative: what the verbal moods indicate.
   4. There is no imperative.
   5. There is no irremediability.
   6. Life is to be taken lightly.
   7. Death is to be taken unfearingly.

— I —

The claim that it is possible to talk about a “Romanian dimension of existence” may come as a surprise in two senses.

First, what meaning could the idea of dimension have when applied to existence? What is the dimension of existence? Dimension is a measurement term usually applied to quantities. Existence is a quality. So, how do we measure it?

Second, how is it possible to append a “Romanian” characteristic to existence? “Romanian” is a national characterization, while existence is a general quality of things beyond—at least at first sight—any national limits; or, for a solipsist, existence could be at its utmost and under special circumstances, a general quality of things as perceived by a cognizant subject. It would be possible, therefore, to talk about differ-
ent concepts of existence comparing cognizant subjects which are alike, for instance, a certain philosopher and a poet, Eminescu. But nations do not seem to be considered as cognizant subjects. Why, then, try to outline a national characterization?

These objections seem serious enough and they deserve clarification.

1. — *The dimensional meaning of existence*. The idea of dimension represents a way of measuring one thing by another; that means a way of judging—according to a certain direction or orientation—some other directions and orientations; in other words, a judgment by which you can judge.

Can this idea of dimension be applied to existence? Yes, providing we take it in a slightly amplers sense so that it would not imply an exclusively quantitative connotation. In the present inquiry, therefore, we shall call “dimensions of existence” those of its significations and orientations which are used to measure or estimate other significations and orientations of the existence. In this work, therefore, we shall give the term “dimension of existence” the exact meaning of a judging criterion, a norm for judging other existences, in an intuitive form.

2. — *Its character within the nation*. It is quite true that existence is a general quality of things. But it is also true that the way this quality is considered depends on the person who thinks. The diversity of opinions found in the history of philosophy in this respect, gives entire justification to those who speak about many conceptions of existence, each one depending on the cognizant subject, Kant’s conception, for instance, or Nietzsche’s.

It is at this point that those who contest the idea that nations are cognizant subjects, find the difficulty. We won’t attempt to demonstrate here to what extent a nation could be considered as a person able to uphold its own thinking. All we have to do is remind the reader that there has been much talking in philosophy about existential schools of thoughts or existential philosophical movements, defined—usually—by the name of a region, or a city or a town: the school of Elea, of Megara, of Marburg, or of Cambridge. There are, then, concrete instances in which a philosophical position is upheld inter-subjectively. We may, therefore, assume that “Romanian dimension of existence” means the conception that Romanian thinkers profess about existence, as much as said conception is used as a criterion and estimation scale for the ideas thinkers in other nations profess.

Moreover, we won’t confine our study to the already crystallized concepts that Romanian philosophers profess. We won’t ever stress their importance here. Not because it would be impossible to do it, for it has been done. But it seems so much more interesting and useful to start elsewhere. Undoubtedly, the philosophical reflection of the main Romanian thinkers could very well provide the fundamental data to be used in the present inquiry. But there is a richer source in the things pre-existent to the thinkers, such as the configuration of the language and the structure of the symbols of expression, accepted by the generality of the Romanian people, i.e., the thought-molds by which words were cut out. The thinker—in pursuit of a personal vision or interpretation—sometimes tries to avoid this kind of mold. More often than not, however, the wording will betray him and lead him into blind alleys, which only research can reveal and explain.

3. — *The importance of the inquiry*. The only question that remains for us to answer is: to what extent is such a study a matter of philosophical interest?

Our premise is the following: each nation has—by divine will—its own image, its own way of seeing the world and of reflecting that vision for the benefit of others. The idea that each one of us forms about world and man is a function of the dimension within which existence is projected to him. Unquestionably, to a Frenchman existence is clear and logical; to a German it is deep and nebulous; to Slavs it is tumultuous and unstable, although rich in nostalgic aftertones; the Anglo-Saxon existence is practical and individualistic; to Chinasmen it is orderly and hierarchical. The Mediterranean man sees life in an easy and colorful way, completely free of tyrannic imperatives. For the man from the North, on the contrary, existence is dramatic and filled with inner tensions. Something that isn’t even noticed by the Southerner may become a serious spiritual crisis for the Northerner.

Moreover—and here the deviations begin—each nation is absolutistic in its ways of seeing things and its own particular judgment concerning existence constitutes a mold by which it measures other nations. The Frenchman, for instance, considers the German’s deep-thinking to be nebulous; the Slavic charm to be unhealthy; the Anglo-Saxon practicality, absurd and indiscriminate. The German people, in turn, call French clarity superficial; Slavic affective oscillations, self-destructive; Anglo-Saxon practicality unsystematic. To the Anglo-Saxon way of thinking, the French quest for logical clarity in everything is simply boring and arbitrary; German profundity is merely an artificial quest for systematization; Slavic mysticism is not only dangerous,
but also useless. Finally, Slavic nations consider the French clarity as nothing more than selfish Pettiness, completely void of generosity and humanitarian feelings; German deepness is too methodical and artificial; Anglo-Saxon practicality is mere platitude and lack of inner reverberation and metaphysical perspective.

These few examples illustrate why clarity and logic are—for the Frenchman—privileged dimensions of existence, even absolute standpoints, or norms by which all other accomplishments must be ethically judged, and also, why seriousness, depth of thought and systematization are the criteria by which the Germans judge other people's manifestations and leave out as inappropriate everything that does not measure up to the German perspective of existence.

The spiritual strength of a nation is proportional to the amount of existential perspective it is able to impose upon other nations and to its ability of desegregating and dissimulating others' perspectives of existence by making them see their weak points and—willingly or even unwillingly—forcing them to adopt its own attitudes. This is the so-called spiritual conquest!

There is no intercultural contact which would not carry such consequences, and that constitutes both the advantage and the danger of cultural interchange.

On a spiritual level, the things which do exist must have an absolute profile: an imperial effigy; if they don't have it, they do not exist. In other words, if we, the Romanians, do exist not only as a biological collectivity, but also as a spiritual body, it is impossible for us not to have our own countenance, our unique way of refracting God's world, and the urge to make light of all other ways; that countenance is the justification of our existence in the world, in this great ocean of God's creatures.

All of a sudden, these thoughts of ours—though apparently disconnected from reality—take an acutely interesting aspect. Along with the thoughts, we are now in the very center of the true Romanian realm: the realm of Romanian values. We are looking for the directional axis of the Romanian spirit within the existence and the justification of our being Romanian before the pure spirit. The things we deal with here—simple as they may seem—have a philosophical meaning and are closely connected—as we shall see later on—with everything we do, either knowingly, or unknowingly. These things are so much more important now, when our world is changing, when so many things are at stake: a world in which each individual, as well as each nation, is lured by all kinds of formulae supposed to better anchor us in existence and shape our lives for the future, but also a world in which each temptation could very well mean our ruin.

Some people suggest that we should jump blindly into the future. Others would want us to go back to 1880 and Titu Maiorescu. * There are tendencies in one direction, and other tendencies pointing to the opposite way. What shall we do? Turn back or rush forward? That's why it is so important for us to know the ground we walk on. Let us find out what it means that something is happening the Romanian way, and under what circumstances are our doings really ours, helping us become what we really are; and under what circumstances do we run the risk of being destroyed. When are things happening "the Romanian way"? Do we have such a mold? Do we use that mold in judging ourselves? Do we use it in judging other nations? These questions are subject to debate.

*1840-1917; literary, cultural and social critic.

In this paper, we do not propose to set the norms for gauging the Romanian dimension of existence; we wish only to open a road, to arouse interest for further investigation in this direction. The present work deals with methodology, rather than dogma or system. We do not aim at inventing anything, we aim at discovering something, that is deeply imbedded in ourselves—the typical Romanian reaction. In this field, research has only just begun and we would like to explore some of the methods that could be used for this kind of work, and also to show—by way of a few examples—the results obtained, or likely to be obtained, by using each one of these methods. We do not intend to outline—a priori—any specific characteristic. Should such characteristics become obvious nevertheless—for some of our readers at least—we hope they will be taken rather as a starting point for further reflection, than as the ultimate truth.

4. —The supposed sterility of inquiry. It has been objected that this kind of research is sterile, that there is no need for such preoccupations in defining a culture. Let us give the creative spirit freedom of expression, and the national characteristics of that creation will come out by themselves.

The objectors certainly have a point there. Admonitors are usually dull people and all they do is follow the tracks of the creators. Moreover, creation gets that essentially human glow not by intentionally portraying ethnic traits, but in spite of such intentions; it is the unadulterated reaction of the soul, its direct vibration to the world. Granted! Therefore, these thoughts are in no way to be taken as an attempt to impose a program for creators.

On the other hand, in order to become successful, any creative work has to find some adherence in the people's spirit. There are certain prevalent points of contact by which those who receive are able to identify with those who create. Without such interrelation, the creative work remains somehow obscure. We do not mean to say that the creators can never break the molds. There have been instances in which they have even succeeded in getting the public to follow them into new frames of reference. In other instances, although they do exist, the points of contact are still unrevealed and the audience is slow in responding. It is what happens to the "pioneers." Anyway, some kind of interrelation is always there. In conclusion, creation means getting to the authentic spiritual sources of the people and discovering the gradual grafting of all that made us what we are now. Seen under this light, the creative work is a kind of spiritual precipitate of history, one by which the spirit is enabled to relive—in a condensed form—the effects of an accident, or a complex of accidents, in other words the effect one epoch has had upon another. Historical influences always leave in a nation's soul certain inclinations, certain unformulated inclinations which alter the nation's very being, and will tinge all new spiritual contacts with an ancestral shade.

If it be true that each nation represents a specific hierarchy of inner trials, one way to discover a nation's characteristic inclinations would be by studying the residual precipitate left by each of its bio-historical contacts.

The structure of such inner trials could vary enormously, even where a common set of elements go into the composition of two different nations' spiritualities, because the modality of the combination may lead to different configurations. Let's take as an example the parallel association of similar elements—Slavic and Latin—in the develop-
ment of the distinctive structures of Polish and Romanian spirituality respectively. In
the Polish spirituality there is a slavic ancestral foundation, obvious in all the charac-
teristics of constitutive categories, upon which is superimposed, through catholicism,
the Roman world's spirit of organization. Here we have as a foundation a world both
troubled and tumultuous, always in a state of precarious balance, with infinite aspira-
tions, which is kept in order by an exterior voluntary factor. In the Romanian spiritu-
ality we find the same elements in a different combination, which give a reverted
synthesis; the ancestral Traco-Latin foundation is serious and well-balanced, whose
offspring was a human being characterized by self-control and sociability, respectfull-
ness and fear of God. Upon this the Slavic regulatory categories are superimposed,
with all their inner imbalance, and lack of measure and order. The result? Our own,
theoretically "good country" with all its "bad deals."

Each nation represents an unparalleled synthesis of events. And if every contact
leaves in the people's soul a specific precipitate, we may safely affirm that each nation
is nothing more than a structure of trials by experiences.

We could analyze separately each influence our nation underwent and then we
could try to describe the resulting experience and see how each one has contributed to
the Romanian dimension of existence. Of course, we would have, then, to superpose
upon the original Thracian experience, the Roman experience, the Slavic one, the
Greco-Byzantine, the French, the German... which, each one in turn, would have
added a certain structural quality to the Romanian soul.

In a study we made along these lines some time ago, the results were certainly
interesting enough for other researchers to want to pursue the issue. That is one of
the investigative methods. But it is an exterior method; it is the building up of the ego by
a specified hierarchization of non-egos. In the present study, however, we shall go in
a different way, a simpler one, from the inside out; a method that considers things
intuitively such as they are reflected in the everyday living of the language and are
reduced to function and significance—something similar to the phenomenological
method.

5. -- The pitfalls of such a method. Critics will say that the formulation of such
molds is dangerous. Seeking out specific and transforming them in rules would not
only hinder the creativity by shattering it in yet petrified forms of the past, but also
would turn into norm that which at this time is only normal. The possibility of
invention in culture is jeopardized, and the possibility of amending what is wrong in
the psychological structure of a nation is at all but eliminated, especially when the
history so crystallized is not a very happy one!

Evidently such a risk does exist. But it is mostly due to the pedagogical concept
of nation, according to which a nation would be an unfinished, trainable being. In our
opinion, the moral image of nations, the way they each reflect God's image, is not
subject to the same moral considerations as are the individuals. But even if it were so,
the attempt at discerning such a spiritual profile could be quite interesting. Because,
although spiritual heredity, just like biological heredity, may sometimes be the result
of a tragic fatality, it is only by making out the roots of that fatality that one can
judge to what extent it is changeable and how much of its consequences could be
eradicated from the human soul without a total loss of identity. This is a point to

which the promoters of exclusive novelty in culture do not seem to have given due
consideration.

Moreover, there is still another argument in favor of investigating these molds:
the fact that the object of culture is hermeneutic. Its purpose is to make us under-
stand, that is to communicate spiritually with those bound to us by ties of blood,
country, language, occupation, jurisdiction or simply by the fact of destiny, neigh-
bours or ancestors.

This understanding is often hampered by changes in our thinking due to altering
circumstances, but even so we are what we are only to the extent of our ability to
define ourselves in that community.

Undoubtedly, each one of us could live his own adventure, tread on unwalked
paths and even enrich his fellowmen's lives by new quests and the opening of new
routes; but if such an adventure is to have any interest from the Romanian standpoint,
it has to refer in some way to that community of neighbours and ancestors, even if the
reference is nothing more than the language. Therefore, regardless of the pitfalls of
evaluating the spiritual mutations—and perhaps even because of them—this inquiry
ought to be done.

6. — Outline. We ask the reader's indulgence if we seem to have arranged the ma-
terial of our reflections according to an outline beyond which lay the Kantian cate-
gories.

What we have in mind is a descriptive study. We do not plan to find out the
conditions under which Romanian metaphysics would become possible, nor do we
attempt a transcendent deduction—in the Kantian meaning—of the Romanian cate-
gories of comprehension (which, from a criticist point of view, would even imply a
contradiction in adjeceto). What we try to do is only a phenomenological description of
the idea of existence in the Romanian thinking, that is, that is, the discernment of a
few essential turnpoints and crossroad of this thinking in its reflections on existence,
such as they appear in the immediate experience in the thoughts of anyone trying to
express ideas in Romanian.

If we followed the plan of a categorical analysis, it is not because we could not
find any other, nor is it because such a plan would give the philosophers an easier way
of grasping the articulation of Romanian order. But, since the Kantian method of
using categories of judgment to characterize the imprints by which the comprehension
takes possession of the being is the one method to have gone deeper into the very
nature of comprehension, any exposition of this kind is bound to go through it.

And yet, we know the plan is not exactly right for the phenomenological
description of Romanian thinking on existence, and by the end of the present study,
perhaps even earlier than that, the reader will become quite aware of its inadequacy to
adapt some of the Romanian reflections to the categorical molds. Moreover, the reader
will realize that, in some of its aspects, the structure of Romanian thinking about
existence, even tends to break some of the classical molds. This is especially true for
the categories in the relation and modality groups, and has a specific impact on the
idea of category and disjunction.

A more adequate plan for the purpose of our subject matter would have been
one starting from the particular existence of occurrence with its substratum, causes and
motives, and from there follow up to the ENS either animate or inanimate, with its states, actions and incidents, as well as with its attributes, character, image, purposes and fate; then, reach up to existence as a whole, in the sense of being under the aspect of both world and time, and through them to God. At each step a careful study would try to establish what the fact of being means for all these exists. Still another method would have started from a symptomatic inquiry on the fact of being in both of these exists.

Granted that the order in which we present the subject matter of this paper is no longer quite satisfactory, but since our purpose in writing it was mainly that of inviting further research, not of solving the problems brought up in the process, we feel that the plan serves its purpose and may very well be presented as it is.

Now, as we have established the reasons for which the question is worth asking, its meaning and its sense, let's proceed to the contents.

The idea of existence is a complex one and it can be considered under various aspects.

We can think about existence from the standpoint of quantity, matter, concreteness, taking into account the very content of all that exists, the proportion of being held by both the whole and the parts. We also can consider existence qualitatively, formally, abstractly, taking into account the attribute of existing of both the whole and the parts.

Consequently, the study of this idea shall consist of two parts, reflecting—in broad lines—the classical difference between existence and essence.

II

Quantitatively, existence may be considered from the point of view of the unity or that of multiplicity, from the point of view of the whole and that of the parts. When considered as unity, it is the Being in its doublefold aspect: world and time; as multiplicity, it is the ENS or creature, occurrence or fact.

Existence is, one, rich, full constant beyond any change, strong, eternal, always equal to itself, or at least, so it appears to be; the ens is multiple, weak, inconsistent, changing, transient and threatened by death. Or, to quote one of our poets:

"Man himself is ever changing
A wanderer on this earth;
But we are keeping steadfast
Today as always in the past . . . ."

Congenital suffering, organic unfulfillment seem to be related to the fact of partition and of separate subsistence. Occurrence, sometimes, seems illogical and meaningless, but sometimes it has a reason, or reveals the destiny. The world is of a complex character. Let’s have a closer look at the world.

1. **Existence as a whole: world and time.** The notions of space and time—the first two notions through which the human mind sifts the idea of existence—are not of common usage in colloquial Romanian.

Whenever he wants a thing situated in space, a Romanian uses the word "place" (loc) and when asked about time, he answers using the synonym vreme, not timp (time). What has this peculiarity to do with existence? The answer is not ours, it has been given long ago.

**Loc** (place) and **vreme** (time) seem to be two enormous receptacles for the particular existences, and they encompass, like two frames, or better yet, like two containers, all those existences.

The total number of entities filling the time and space with their being constitute existence under its two aspects: "world" and "time."

It is not known yet, and we wouldn’t want to prejudge upon the question of whether existence in its entirety happens always in time and space, but, for the moment, globally, the world as we know it is in time and space.

First characteristic: For the Romanian mind the world is neither only a spatial receptacle, it is a spatial and temporal receptacle in which that which is known is its being.

Since going on in time and space, the world is not only an hierarchic archetypical of essences, but also a becoming, a flow. Existence is happening in the world or in time, depending on how the thinking of its beings is projected spatially or temporally.

Place and time are, then, the two great receptacles of existence. First of all, the world consists of all that is and of all that happens wherever. And perhaps, even of something more . . . we cannot help but insist upon the idea of fluidity implied in the processive becoming, the world's great pageant which fills time and space.

**Place** and **time** (vreme) are also **dimensions** of the world; in other words, they are means used in organizing, setting and situating the beings within it. The Book of Ecclesiastes, so meaningful to the Romanian spirit, says: “For everything there is a season and a time….” In colloquial language we say that things have to be done “at their proper time”, or to be put “in their proper place”.

So then, the spoken language seems to show a preoccupation that things would have to possess a certain place and a certain time of their own in this world. In other words, existence is a composite of beings, set in order up to a certain point. We said “the world is set in order”, but we also said “up to a certain point” because order in this world is not perfect. Not in its present form, anyway! We say in Romanian that in the long run "justice rises like oil on the surface of water" but in the meanwhile “justice rambles about with a broken head”.

As we shall see later on, there is in this world some kind of "debility", some principle of movement, of disorder, a certain liberty which causes things to be less than whole, or not always at their proper place, or not to come always at the proper time; there’s here also the implication of searching and waiting. This does not mean, of course, that order is altogether impossible.

In space, we arrange things that are immobile; and space would be quite sufficient for the arrangement if only things would stay immobile. But since things move, change and transform, we need, in addition to the frame of state, a frame of change, so that the things that were arranged next to one another, in, over or under one another, would now be arranged in a row, one after the other, in time.

Space has its own well-known dimensions: length and width, that is extension; height and depth, that is capacity. Among these depth, height and perhaps width, seem
to be rather special, not only because they give the world the meaning of containing, but also because they bring into the world of extension an idea of evaluation and hierarchy referring to the being. The depth or height of a thing imply select qualities not found in ordinary things.

Time also has its own dimensions. At first sight, it would appear as if time had only one dimension, length. Since things get arranged in a row, one after the other, length seems to be its only possible dimension. At closer examination, however, we find that time also has volume, i.e., thickness. For, as the world exists all at the same time, as a content of many coeval given things, each one of these things has its own row of specific successive events. Existence, as a whole, unfolding in time can no longer be considered as one single row, but as a collections of rows, a global row of partial ones.

Indeed, the world has all the dimensions of space plus the unfolding in time. For a Romanian, therefore, time (vreme) is the world in process, which implies not only alignment, but also a content.

Seen under this light, both a row and a container of existence, time (vreme) acquires yet another trait, not only does it unfold indefinitely, it also fulfills.

The depth of time brings out a new problem. If everything passes, and if everything has its own place in a row of transformations in other words, if in the world there are parallel unfoldings or interrelated ones, then we should be able to get hold of several of such threads going the same way and bind them together. Hence, the possibility of interpreting the "signs of time", no matter if referring to rain, or snow, or life, or even wars, epochs and "eons".

As we shall see later on, the dominant characteristic of the Romanian conception of the world is the feeling of a vast, universal solidarity. Each fact reverberates into the whole world, each gesture sends vibrations to the whole, just like the Cremona violins, which—they say—vibrate in their cases whenever somebody plays one of them. A man's life is bound to a star's destiny; the crime committed by one man may darken the face of the moon or the sun. Students of the Romanian ethos found out long ago that this universal interrelation is the main characteristic of the Romanian conception of existence as a whole.

The explanation of this phenomenon would be quite easy, if this "world" would consist of a perfect hierarchy of substances ruled by their respective essences. In that case, indeed, the slightest movement of the part would shake the whole.

But, as we have said, the Romanian vision of the world leaves a wide margin for imperfection and freedom. If such reverberations still exist, then presumably, this conception contains also a pre-ordained interdependence of occurrences and a pre-established hierarchy of beings and also the idea that there is something in the world that causes confusion.

The second characteristic, related to the first, is the basic idea of most medieval thinking: that everything has a meaning, that the world is a "book of signs".

The question "is it a good omen?" or "is that a bad sign?" is asked with everything that happens in a Romanian's world. That world is never neutral, occurrences are never senseless or unrelated; it is a world full of powers both malevolent and benevolent, full of call and silences, full of manifestations and secrets. In a broad sense, all the things in this world are beings and each one of them has something to say to those who know how to listen. The shadow of a tree entices you; the field sometimes fights back when you plow it but other times readily helps you; the well offers you a drink of fresh water; the fruit tree invites you to its fruits; a bird's song conveys a message, good or bad; the hare crosses your way; the fairies drag you into their dance when you stay outdoors late at night... It's a concrete world alright, but all the things in it are animated, fresh, alive. Every single thing refers to you, entices, tempts, consoles or threatens you!

Although things are beings, each one of them with its own purpose and movement, altogether they do not constitute a static structure of essences in a hierarchic order according to their degree of beingness; they form a vast procession in which the symbol reveals the ens and the ens conceals the symbol. A viable world in which things are occurring as omens sent from beyond, discloses the invisible world in a mutual relation of substratum to appearance; moreover, the two worlds—visible and invisible—interpenetrate each other by changing efficiencies, as in mythology.

This kind of dynamic and ever changing fullness is found not only among peasants. In the big cities though, where people have become "positivists" and "Laiscreized," it takes a rather different aspect. It's a kind of avid desire for news and novelties, a sort of thirst for rumor and a rather peculiar way of quenching it: the city-dweller lets his fantasy run wild until he figures out an explanation satisfactory for him, then he either calms down, or takes a threatening attitude. In other words, he does basically the same thing as the peasant dragged into the crazy round-dance of the fairies. He starts from the daily routine and ends up in legend.

Let us give some thought to all that is specific in this atmosphere of vivid action and reaction, of communication between man and events, and try to realize why the foreigners—for whom the cold fact, the event, has a completely different meaning: a steady, serious provable meaning—misunderstand us so often. Romanian existence unfolds in a sort of fairy-tale world in which "positive-reality" gets fragmented into a dynamic and anistic plurality, and interpretation is forever seeking for good or bad omens. All this constitutes a different dimension which gives Romanian existence a specific outline. It has been said: "the Romanian is an innate poet," and "Romanians are clever," but alas! also: "Romanians are inconsistent"; Romanian "skepticism," "unpracticality" and "lack of perseverance" have been mentioned often enough.

The Romanian existence encompasses both this world here and—as we say—the world beyond. The fact that our language allows this definition by an adverb without reference is very significant. In Romanian conception, the world beyond has a strange position in relation to the world here. One would expect to find a spatial partition between the two: here and beyond. Surprisingly though, there's only a transition, the being's change in character. For us, the world beyond is not outside the world here. The separation is only a kind of inner barrier, a toll-gate, a difference of existential field, an experience the being undergoes. So deep-rooted is this concept in the Romanian mentality that—before the first world war—we used to call the Romanians living in Austro-Hungarian Transylvania "the Brothers beyond" or "brothers from beyond." Now, would anybody imagine a Frenchman referring to an Alsatian as "frère de l'autre-delà," or an Englishman calling the Canadians "brothers from beyond?" Certainly not! Both "au-delà" and "the beyond" imply a threshold of no return, and the term cannot be used for immanence. For us, between the here and the beyond, there is only a toll-gate.
The world here, or this side, is only part of the world beyond, or the other side; that "other side" is an open receptacle containing the world here and everywhere. Invisible things are, exist, just like the visible ones, even if they are not situated in space. As for the things situated in time, which therefore appear as events threaded on time's yarn, their series is never complete. There are always things which could very well have been left out, things that are not in sequence, as miracles or things beyond the reach of time. Existence as a whole, "the world in general" exceeds time and space, place and term, and all the yardsticks by which the things are set in the world here.

As for the content, the horizon of the Romanian world is not limited by action, trial or portent. Although it is a concrete horizon, we know that there is another, a larger one, exceeding ours and overriding it.

So then, for us there is no existential break, no gap, between the world here and the world beyond, between the time now and eternity; there's only a door.

The sharp difference between the existential presence of the concrete individual, subject to death and fearing death, and the impersonal existence of the world, in which everything is formed and transformed in our mentality is replaced by the difference between two worlds: the world here and the world beyond. The distinction between what is here and what is there is based on criteria completely different from those used in Western metaphysics when comparing "I am" with "I am something."

First of all, our world here is not a world of presences, in the sense of actualist metaphysics. It contains things that were no longer are as well as things that could be but are not yet. This expands the sphere of the world here to limits seemingly absurd for Western logic, according to which what no longer exists cannot still exist somewhere, because "to be" means simply "to take place." For the same Western logic, things that might have been, are not, because possibility is a compound of being and non-being, i.e., the simultaneous affirmation of the conjunction and disjunction of both the existent and the non-existent, which—in an absolute sense—both is and is not.

The Romanian conception of existence, in which things exist regardless of presence, that is, regardless of existence hic et nunc imply two serious questions: what happens to facts already done and what about those yet to be done.

They still belong to the world, but if the world here is too small to contain them, then there must be another world, beyond, for them. Thus, the world beyond becomes naturally a widening of the one here, as an area of the same unfolding. Perhaps, in a deeper sense, there is but only one world.

Anyway, in this differentiation the world here, "presence," holds no existential privilege. Just like the world here, the world beyond achieves and has efficiency. At a closer look, even a greater efficiency. Paradoxical as it may seem, this widening, this unfolding in Romanian existence, takes the aspects of an immanent process fulfilled, not in this world, but in the other.

For us, the "essence of the world" is not affected by the gap between "presence" and "non-presence." The whole qualitative unfolding of the world goes on in spite of that gap. The "flow" of all things proceeds simultaneously at the here level and at the eternity level. The ideas of height and depth apply equally to heaven and hell just as they apply to the visible world, although heaven is supposed to be "there" not "here."

Even the idea of "nowhere," does not mean something outside the world, but only the impossibility of placing something in the world. The world is "all," but it also is "all-over." The world is full, but what fills it is an unfolding. The things contained in it have no definitive place; they "go" and sometimes they "come back."

There seems to be, therefore, a sort of interpenetration between the two worlds. Consequently, "beyond" means for us simply "otherwise." Sometimes, those who are "here" may pass to the other side in their nightmares or even in their daydreams; those who are there may roam around here. So, between "here" and "beyond there" no gap, only a toll-gate, and if you are able to pay the toll, you pass. "Beyond" does not define a spatial border, but a quality of being.

The world's infinitude is merely a problem of perspective. The world here does have an end, but its end is the beginning of the one beyond. More than that, the world beyond began even before the one here. So, there is interpenetration and continuity.

Even "holiness" appears somehow immanent, for holiness is everywhere. For us, the sun is holy, sheep are holy, one's home is holy. Anything in its proper place, at its proper time, in good order, in good sense, is holy. We say holy justice, holy country, and even a holy spanking!

There is, in the Romanian language, a great variety of subtle differences in terms referring to that continuous unfolding we mentioned above, but, unfortunately, only linguist scholars would fully appreciate them. Take the term tot de-a una, which is Romanian for "always," "ever," "forever." Etymologically tot de-a una means "the time in which all is given at once," hence the implication that eternity is the oneness of the whole. Or the everflowing mereu (continuously) and its synonym intru'una (etymologically: into one) which shows how the continuity of the flowing melts the seconds (atoms or time) "into one." And finally, the term with deep religious overtones, puru'res, which means "continuously forever," time and eternity bound together.

I can't help but remember how amazed I was years ago when, in the process of translating a text by Reguy I found out that while the French author had a hard time coining expressions like "continuellement toujours" or "éternellement toujours" the Romanian language had a wealth of such terms, coined by the people hundreds of years ago.

It is interesting to mention here that even a poet of the magnitude of Hihai Eminescu, with all his deep knowledge of the language and his clear philosophical conception, found himself in serious jeopardy when he tried to put into Romanian words, concepts alien to the Romanian spirit, for instance, his verses of Vedic inspiration. Even he could not surmount the linguistic difficulty of expressing without contradiction the idea that things "might have been but at the same time never were."

In languages in which "presence" holds a privileged position in existence, such poetic constructions may be possible, if "existence" is given the meaning of "presence," but in Romanian, where "existence" holds little, if any, such meaning, it is practically impossible to define "the existence hic et nunc" logically projected into the past, as totally inexistent. As an example, here is the literal translation of two Eminescian verses:

"At that time when the earth, the sky, the air, the whole earth
Were of the kind that never existed"
In Romanian it is all but meaningless to say that things that were never existed, or were not.

2. —The single being: the occurrence, the individual, God. Where does this protean character of existence come from? What are the roots of this special, un-positive, poetic embedding into existence? An “existence” in which the world of thoughts and imagination is as important as the factual one, hardly distinguishable from it.

In order to understand this, we must focus our attention on the being of the part, on what we call the existence of each thing.

At this point, we feel we owe the reader a clarification on both the method we used in discerning the aspects of the single being in Romanian metaphysics, and the etymological meaning of the concepts that enabled us to reach a conclusion about the special philosophic structure of the particular existence in our metaphysics.

As a guiding idea, we had the concept ins (individual, person, being), a relatively stable aspect of the concrete existence, as opposed to occurrence. The Romanian ins (from the Latin: Ens) represents the permanent and unitary substratum of attributes, events, and facts in the Romanian evolution, that led to this peculiar transformation of the Latin Ens into the concept Ins. Though its definition would be “a singleness of own-existence” we found it related to the totality of existence by its proper time and proper place.

In our search for the attributes of the ins, we found two from of particular existence: being and thing, and we also found out that the being, the ins, is preponderant over the thing.

On further investigation, we found still another confirmation of the personal character of existence in the structure of gender in the Romanian language. As in all romance languages, the grammatical classification into masculine and feminine is total and in depth. We found the male essence in the dynamic, active nature, and the female essence in the passive one. The absence of the neuter, confirmed us in our opinion that, with us Romanians, the idea of existence is based on the being-type, not the thing-type. And last but not least, the very peculiarly Romanian ambi-gender (a class of nouns, masculine in the singular which become feminine in the plural, the inflection affecting also their modifiers and respective pronouns) along with the fact that the alteration works only one way: from masculine singular to feminine plural, led us to believe that the male essence gets somehow weakened in multiplicity, perhaps as a compensation for the absence of the neuter gender.

In analyzing the elements needed for the characterization of the individual, first we discarded “nature” because it is too general a determination of the variation limits of the individual’s qualities, limits from within which the individual may be taken out by pure chance and are not unopposable to Divine action. We retained nature though as the logic instrument for the classification of beings, but not as the root of the fact of being. In doing so we were able to explain why in our mentality a great number of Western controversies are not found at all.

At logic’s level, we were able also to fully determine the individuality of the being through “image,” “meaning” and “destiny.” We define “image” as the key to the individual’s qualities, “meaning” as the integral of the individual’s possibilities, and “destiny” as the exhaustive line of the individual’s adventures or happenings. At the existential level, we found only one principle of individualization: the Divine Power.

Coming now to the roots of the being, Romanian metaphysics showed us God as a concrete being and a paradox: solitary yet ubiquitous, an individual above existence yet omnipotent in existence, archetype of active masculinity, individualized in three working aspects, before whom the rest of the existence is only a reflection.

Therefore, in spite of the fact that the idea of existence has generated—in the Romanian thinking—a person-type of existence, it did not lead to the energetic personalism. It developed a theophanic personalism, since the individual, as everything else, is only a reflection, an illusion, an un-autonomous phenomenon of the universal Being.

Hence, the Romanian “fatalism” is defined not as a lack of concern towards the concrete conditions of the fact but as an integration of the creature in the universal rhythm which is taken as the revelation of God’s will; hence also, the ritualistic character of creation, in the unrealistic, derivative and symbolic sense.

We close here our digression, hoping that it has helped to clarify the concept in the coming pages.

— III —

Having started from the quantitative idea, we have examined existence as a whole, and then as a part, and in the process of our inquiry we have tried some probing as to its quality.

It is now time for us to take a closer look at this quality.

1. —The being as quality: fact and way of being. Philosophers, from quite a way back, have tried to differentiate the two meanings of the verb “to be.” Indeed, it means two apparently different things: the way of being and the fact of being. In its first acceptance, the verb “to be” is used in sentences like: the sky is blue, the problem is difficult, man in an animal; but also in verses like:

“All is dust,
The world is the world
And like the world are we...”

In all these instances the verb “to be” does nothing more than tie the subject to the predicate, in other words, it ascribes a quality to a being. In all these cases, the respective judgment describes a way of being, the state of the existence of the grammatical subject and relation of logical pertinence.

But there is another use of the verb “to be.” The Shakespearian “to be, or not to be...” or the Eminesian:

“To be, O! Sad and empty madness...”

Or even the everyday expressions: I am, the world is, my thought is, God is.

In its first connotation, there’s nothing mysterious about the verb “to be.” It simply mediates and binds a quality to a being. It ascribes a quality to a being, or establishes that such quality belongs to such being, that a being has, possesses certain quality. The second connotation is not all that simple. For, although we all thought we understood it quite well, in reality it is very hard to define. The difficulty lays in the very nature of definition, and here is why. To define means to explain one thing
through other things. In the case of ontological existence, definition is very difficult, if not altogether impossible, because, in this case, the idea of existence is the most general idea we can conceive in relation to a thing. Anything, absolutely anything, considered in any which way, admits this predicate. There is no idea which could clarify it completely.

That the idea of existence is the most general idea conceivable is not hard to comprehend, because anything we can talk or think about, is, for the simple reason that if it weren’t we could not talk or think of it. But here’s where difficulties appear. In its most general form, the idea of existence is undetermined and, as such, useless. If I am, and the thing next to me is also, and what I think about it is as well, and so is what I wish would happen to it, then the idea “is” is ambiguous and useless. And yet, this is not altogether true since I can use it intelligently to state whether a thing exists or does not exist; hence, the need for a stricter determination of this idea of existence, its reduction to an acceptable meaning.

Philosophers all over the world have tried it; to name but a few: Parmenide stated that existence is unity, Berkeley affirmed that existence is perception, then Heidegger who now says that existence is fear of destruction. Little by little, a whole list of categories has been built up, each one trying to explain the idea of existence.

Quantitatively there have been established distinctions between the unitary existence of the world and the existence of particular beings; between the existence of the whole and that of its parts. Qualitatively they differentiated between the actual being and the imaginary being; between the affirmed existence and the negated existence; between the being that exists per se, and the being that exists in relation with others; in the relation itself they distinguished between the direct relation from cause to effect, and the reversible, functional relation of mutual action. They differentiated between the unchanging substratum of things and the changing occurrences of their relations; between substance and accident. It has been set apart as to what makes a thing to be (cause) from what makes it to be what it is (essence) and even from what makes it be who he is (person). There has been established the difference between the being that can be, the one that cannot be, and the one which is; between the being which exists but might not exist, and the being which would be impossible not to exist. Possibility, impossibility, reality, contingency, necessity and many more have been added to the arsenal of existential differentiations.

We beg the reader’s indulgence for all these didactic explanations, but we had to use them as reminders, if the rest of this paper is to be made comprehensible at all. What we’ll have to keep in mind is the fact that at the root of all these existential distinctions, there still lays the initial difficulty of the opposing senses of “to be something” and of the pure and simple “to be,” because all the attempts to determine the sense of “to be” through something else, have transformed that something else into a sort of “being something” and the initial “to be” got somehow melted into it; which does not mean that the initial sense did not continue to strive autonomously as proven by the concretization of the possibility of negation, the negation of somebody’s or something’s pure and simple existence. Is it? Is it not? Is he? He is not!

Existence, in the powerful sense of the word, concrete, factual existence—although historically depending on a number of different ideas as action, form, matter of substratum—is still, in Western metaphysics, closely related to time and space. In this case, a person or a thing exists only when individualized hic et nunc. Starting from that concrete existence, the idea of existence is defined as something that “takes place.” Thus, although the Germans start from the basic idea of action (Wirklichkeit), while the French from its opposite, the idea of object (réalité), nonetheless they concur in the way of adding precision to the idea by relating it to time and space. Indeed, in German, this factual existence is called “de sein” (to be here, to be present) and in French “avoir lieu” (to take place). Whenever we Romanians want to express that same idea, we say “it happens.” Newspapersmen and such may say “take place” because they are “sophisticated” and translate the expression from the French, but the Romanian people say “it happens.”

Of course, presence is also a situation in time; in the above mentioned European languages it is in our time and at the moment when spoken. Let’s not forget, however, that for the definition of that special “time,” the idea of space is often used. Even in Romanian when we shout “present” at rolcall, we mean “I am here.” So it would seem for us too that “presence” meant what da sein and avoir lieu mean for the Germans and the French; that, once a thing is identified in space, situated, takes place and is here, it is.

But, let us take a closer look at the meaning of the Romanian “it happens” (se întâmplă). Those who studied this expression, believe it to be derived from one of two roots. According to one opinion, întâmplare (a noun meaning “happening,” “ocurrence”) means only “position in time.” According to the other, the term is an etymological derivation from the Latin in templo habere, meaning the astronomic moment in which a star reaches the apogee and is visible at the meridian, hence a determinative of a point in a process. That would bring the meaning closer to the Western “presence,” but does it really? No! And here is why. Se întâmplă (it happens), the verbal form of the noun întâmplare, does not mean, for us, that something gets an additional quality of being, i.e., that it is made or it comes out of nothing; it means only that something gets through a transformation—or to relate it more specifically to time—it means that something “passes,” as in the biblical “come to pass.”

The difference then consists in the fact that while for the Western mind as soon as a thing is verified or situated in space, as soon as it takes place, that thing or fact exists. For the Romanian mentality, the thing which happens, somehow, existed before it appeared and continues to exist after disappearing from the world hic et nunc. Its entrance in the world is more like a coming down from another world, a passing through, not a creation.

Also significant is the fact that the noun’s întâmplare (happening) first connotation is event and consequently should be rich with all the nuances of the concrete being, but instead of that, it means also “haphazard,” a random apparition, an accident, an abnormal event.

If it were true that “happening” in the Romanian sense (just as event of fact in the Western metaphysical sense) is something that comes out of nothingness and takes existence, and that existence becomes effective only at its insertion in time, then why is a “temporary” thing a transitory, precarious thing, whose existence is diminished and somehow inconsistent? This is a point worth considering and it confirms once more our thesis that for us “to be present in time and space” i.e., to occur, to happen, to be within the world, does not add any extra existential quality to the pure and
simple “to be” whenever, and wherever, even beyond time and space.

We find here an element of a temporality and a spatiality very hard to deal with, not only for Western thinkers, but also for those of us who were educated in the spirit of Western philosophy.

Romanian philosophy got carried away by the impact of Western “reality” (a neologism) completely overlooking the native word of the same meaning aveya and never analyzed it philosophically. Had they done so, they would have found that the probable root of this word is the Latin ab aero, the ablative case of aevum, meaning existence from all times, and not the existence here and now that “reality” implies.

Consequently, the same as întâmplăres, (“happening”), The Romanian word meaning “real existence” is derived from a Latin expression meaning “ages, infinity, forever, long-long time.” In its root, aveya means “existence from ages and ages,” not actual existence. The philosophical constructions which could start from this connotation of existence, since the word is only an adverb and cannot be subject to negation, (the starting point of any philosophical analysis) indicates undeniably the weakness of the problematic action of this notion.

There is still another expression by which Romanians seem to establish a distinction between what is and what is not, and how something might come into being. It is the same idea of quantitative fullness we were mentioning before. We say “my dream has been fulfilled” and also “I’ve seen with my own two eyes my dream come true,” which implies the idea of “realization,” achievement in reality, not only in our thoughts. But, the very fact that we must use a quantitative notion to express the essentially qualitative idea of existence, proves how difficult a field this is for our spirit. Well, whatever the origin of the term, our spirit has this peculiarity of having “to be” mean in a privileged place nor “to be at a given time in a privileged epoch”; for the idea of existence includes all that has been at any time and anywhere, and since the future is unknown, it includes also all that might be.

This is not, however, a purely Romanian characteristic. Indeed, in the past other peoples have been through the same quest. But in those cases, the existential meaning of esse has overpowered its predicative sense, and consequently, most of the modern philosophy has taken into account only the existential aspect. Undoubtedly, this has been a reflection of the entire evolution of the European civilization. The Romanians have preserved the old essentialist attitude. In our case, the predicative attitude has overpowered the existential one.

But in order to fully characterize the Romanian “happening” we’ll have to add the following: for the Western actualist metaphysics a happening is, above all, a fact, an action, a working: for us, a happening is mostly a change in condition as the result of an action suffered by a person, a being or a thing, something that happened to you, something you went through, something that befell you.

The insertion of events into time appears, not so much as the result of what the subject has done, but rather as the result of what befell him. It is interesting to note here that the Romanian term pătămint (passion) has preserved the original meaning of the biblical passion (state or power of receiving or being affected by outside influence; the opposite of action) while in most Western vocabularies the colloquial meaning of passion is now that of extreme, compelling emotion.

The Aristotelian category of passivity in the sense of suffering, of receiving, of being acted upon, has been dissolved in Western metaphysics under the pressure of direct action and it survives only in a very altered form in the idea of “reciprocal action.” In Romanian metaphysics that same category still prevails over action and energy at least as far as “the world” and its beings are concerned. Existence is not thought of as an amount of actions, but as the receiving of “passions” and happenings, a change of condition under outside influence.

Moreover, once this characteristic is fully understood, it becomes so much easier to grasp the way the Romanian mind rises from the occurrences of this world up to the Maker. For us, trial is not the practical seeking into possibilities within the field of particular interests, but the attempt to discern the Lord’s intentions towards the being.

As we said, this is an orientation that has been gradually fading away from the actualist Western metaphysics, as experimental science goes on consecrating the triumph of “homo faber.”

2. Negation of existence: opposition and limits. We are coming now to a crucial point in our study: the idea of negation.

It is a well-known fact that Romanians are innate opponents; whatever the proposition, their first reaction, the very first temptation of their spirit, is to go against it. But, strangely enough, this opposition does not cancel the object of negation, but creates, along with what is denied, a new, enriching reality.

Why this negative tendency? And why does this negation lack effectiveness?

Negation is very important. The possibility of saying no, of opposing, is the yardstick by which occidental thinking screens existence and separates possible existence from impossible existence, contingent existence from necessary existence. Well, this kind of from impossible existence, contingent existence from necessary existence. Well, this kind of existential, it is essential. We never go against the fact of being; when we oppose we go against a way of being. We always set in opposition one way of being against another way of being. We are not negativists, we are circumscribers. Usually, a Romanian would concede a point to you if you describe in precise lines the field in which you think you are right; but, he'll never admit you could be globally right in anything.

This would explain also the incomparable, almost excessive, tolerance for his fellowman. Perhaps, it's because for a Romanian nobody is really "the other," and nobody can be absolutely different.

The Romanian negation "is not" is always only relative. In it there's always the presumption that something or somebody "is not here" or "is not there," or "is not so" or "is not yet," or "is not the one." The negation is the denial of a quidmodo or a quod esse, but never the denial of esse, in its existential sense.

"Not to be" has no absolute meaning for us. Ontology is regional and existence, a way of being.

The function of negation is that of denying the isolated existence, in some section of the world, in some part of the being, in other words, of denying an attribute or a situation, but never a fact. Even when a fact, a happening, is denied, basically it is only the existence's situation at an unexpected level that is denied.

Since "presence" holds no privilege in the process of becoming and since one cannot gauge what is and what is not according to presence, the negation too, looses
its privilege at denying existence, all it can do is mark the differences in things and essences. Then, its function is merely determinative and circumscribing. When you look for something you attest its existence, even if the object of your search is situated on a different level, because that level is also a level of existence. Our negation implies only incompatibility of levels.

If we were to imagine the very spirit of negation, the devil himself, as being a Romanian, he wouldn't—when standing before the Almighty—have opposed the Lord's will by a non fiat, a categorical "no," but rather he would have tried to prove that his own point of view was better than God's, which of course, does not make him less evil, or a less dangerous tempter.

It is very important to keep in mind this aspect of the Romanian negation: that it is Luciferian but not Satanic in its absolute form. Satan is the only one whose negation is active, existential; Lucifer, on the other hand, is the one who speculates over possibilities, over attributes and potentials hidden in the essence of things.

The best proof of this characteristic orientation of the Romanian mind is the fact that the negation pure and simple ba (no) is tied with the affirmation pure and simple da (yes) in the expression ba da thus paradoxically enforcing the affirmation instead of weakening it. By the same token, the denial of negation in the expression ba nu (literally "no not") does not convert it into affirmation as double negation does in English. The denial remains an existential opposition, while the negation goes with its proper function of a logical circumscriber. This orientation is confirmed also by the limited use of the preposition de. Indeed, in Romanian negation can be conveyed without the use of the negative ne and ba, as in the expressions de fel, de loc (meaning: "not at all"). But the relative circumscribing sense of de is even more obvious in the phrase de vreme which means literally "before the appointed time."

However, characteristic as it may be, this impotence of the Romanian negation of going to the core of actual existence, is by no means absolute.

We have examined the word aevae, used to separate what is real from what is unreal. We have gotten acquainted now with the negation ba which represents existential opposition, active denial, ethical and ontological withstanding; and which, opposed squarely to da (yes), may give pretty strong alternatives. We come now to the term nimic = nothing, literally meaning: not even a small thing, not even a piece; its relative character may be debatable, but not so its verbal form: a nimici-nimicire (to annihilate—annihilation) whose existential sense cannot be denied. But since the root of the term is a quantitative idea, the lack of quality and the limiting character of the negation stand confirmed as spiritual tendencies.

And that is exactly what these forms of negation are: tendencies of the Romanian spirit, not absolute positions. The very fact that none of these terms: (ba, aevae and nimic) have ever generated philosophical distinction (with the possible exception of the derivate verb a nimici = to annihilate) gives them the definite character of tendencies of the spirit.

But let's take a closer look at nimicire, annihilation or destruction. Apparently at least, it attests of a certain inclination toward the negation of the being. It has a closer ontological character since it no longer negates only a way of being, but the very fact and structure of being, and it is bound to a factual, practical, man-devising meaning, the idea of an action of destruction, of annihilation. But, as the etymological

roots of nimic indicate, the Romanian mind nimicire = destruction, rather than a reduction to nothingness, is more like a breaking to pieces, a taking apart. So, the act of destruction brings about the disappearance of the "fact" inasmuch as aggregate, image, or structure, but not its very "existence."

Conceivably, a rule may be annulled, a state may be destroyed, for they are structures of sorts; a way of being may be suppressed, even certain particular existences. A person may also cease to be present or to be active, in the "world," of course. But this does not mean that all traces of his existence have disappeared. He is no longer within time, but since he once "was," he still holds some kind of existence, and still is more than if he never was. The very fact of his passing through this world before his disappearance, the very fact that he once was, gives him an additional amount of being which will be always his; somewhere—on some level of his self, other than the active presence in the world—he continues existing, because he still stands apart from the inexistential, meaning things that neither exist, nor ever existed.

Whenever we say in Romanian that we have "destroyed" (nimicirit) something, our minds move from the existential level, to the temporary presence of the thing destroyed, a level in which the scattered fragments still subsist. On that level, and on that level only, the thing has been destroyed, exists no more. But, destruction cannot touch it as an entity, because as such it cannot cease existing. Could anyone say that a song exists no more because the voices have stopped singing it and the instruments have stopped playing it?

— IV —

The special connotation of the Romanian negation is rich in consequences. The specific meaning given to the negation is reflected on the existential modality. In this aspect, we find a sort of merging of existence and possibility, which is very interesting for the shades it throws on the world's existence and its consequences. For us Romanians, anything that may be thought of, anything about which a subject and a predicate can be tied together, is. Of course, this be is always up to a certain point, in a certain way, somehow, because existence is always regional, relative. This slow and gradual change from the existential level to the potential level fills Romanian existence with pure poetry, freedom and unreality; it fills the gap between wake and dream with a kind of unending inner-dream which, from the philosophical standpoint, makes our mentality not only pre-critical, but even anti-positive, mythical.

The results of this blending of existence into possibility, are instrumental in the comprehension of other fundamental attitudes toward existence. First, for us, there is no nothingness, non-existence; second, there is no absolute impossibility; third, there is no existential alternative; fourth, there is no imperative; and fifth, there is no irreparability. These are very important positions when it comes to the outlining of the Romanian profile in the Cosmos. Let's take a closer look at them.

1. —There is no non-existence. The non-existence of nothingness was clearly outlined in the paragraphs above. The idea of nothingness holds no absolute level of existence. It lacks content in the sense that you cannot say about anything that it does
not exist absolutely, meaning in “every respect.”

But the idea of nothingness is still very meaningful, for it attests the existence of a certain existential boundary, of a certain threshold beyond which the being changes its nature. Just like negation, when linked with the idea of existence, destruction or annihilation proves that there is a possibility for the being to surpass itself, to glide outside itself, to cease existing. It shows that the being is no longer here, is no longer such, or is not here at all. In other words, it indicates the change the being underwent from an absolute existential level to the existence within the world and its subjection to time.

Moreover, this special idea applies only to the individual being, the ens. Even when speaking of the “end of the world,” meaning the final destruction of the whole world, one is inclined to consider the world as an ens, an individuality, a creation of another greater and more powerful being, who was here before, still survives, and has no beginning and no end. Because only in connection with such a Being could the “end of the world” have any meaning at all.

“Non-existence” means, then, a certain slide-perspective of the being from the whole to the concrete; a perspective which measures the difference between the way of being of the whole and the way of being of the part; it means the sliding of the being into regional existence either spatial, or modal or simply temporal. It is only in this limited perspective that existence can be denied.

Considering that for the Romanian mind existence does not evolve in essence on the factual level but on the level of the way of being; considering also that negation is not used for the suppression of existence, but it is used only as a coordinator of possibilities, as a curtailer of the ways of being, it becomes quite clear why any denial of the existence has necessarily only a relative meaning. Nothingness, the absolute denial of existence, has no content at all. At the utmost, nothingness appears as a limit built up by the spirit by hypostatizing its own negative attitude in a restrictive sense. Negation, nevertheless, will always be, for us, as for any substantialist mentality, the denial of something. The denial of existence cannot have an absolute sense; it is always derivative, implicitly referring to a previous existence which, given the weakness of the negation itself, survives, ontologically speaking.

There have been a few attempts at describing nothingness phenomenologically in Romanian, but—in our opinion—they could hardly be called phenomenological because since phenomenology is reduction to essence, and since nothingness is characteristically void of any such essence, any description of nothingness would necessarily describe only the logical functions of non-existence, i.e., its relations with things that said concept is not (and that is not a phenomenological description).

2. — There is no absolute impossibility. The second consequence of the Romanian negation’s weakness is that, for us, there is no absolute impossibility.

Given the essential, regional sense of existence, and since negation acting upon existence can only question a thing’s way of being and its area, but not the fact of its being, obviously the absolute impossibility of being becomes inconceivable. Anything may be taken into consideration in some way and, therefore, exists at least in the sense in which it has been considered; philosophically any contention on its existence can apply only to its way of being. For the Romanians, the level of true existence is not the level where things are done and undone, where things actualize their possibilities of being. Existence’s true level is that of the virtualities, the level of all possibilities, the level of the vast existential non-determination from the standpoint of actuality, in which all the things exist along with all their ways of being, i.e., actualized and non-actualized, even actualizable and non-actualizable.

Romanians, like most Orientals, feel that what is seen is only a part—and not the richest part either—from what exists. They feel that beyond concreteness lays the potentiality of being, and that the antic becoming is not a surplus of being, but a lessening of possibilities, or—as one of my teachers used to say—a “fall into Cosmос.”

At the very roots of the Romanian conception of being we find the supremacy of virtuality over actuality; the idea of a womb pregnant with all virtualities; the idea of the great mother which is the sum total of the individual’s all possible images, including his face of glory. It is in this sense, not in the sense of the Vedic nothingness, that Romanian thinking ends up meeting the theological and mythical Oriental conceptions, and stands in opposition to the positivist, anthropological Western conceptions.

Let us consider now the implications of this idea. For the Westerner the gradual development of being in the world, the accumulation of manifestations and experiences, enriches the individual’s destiny, while for the Romanian it lessens his beings; it is a reduction in possibilities, a choice he has to make between one way of being and another. The setting of the being in only one way of existence as sifted by negation, somehow consolidates the concrete existence, but takes away from it all the other things it cannot be at the same time. This is the highly transcendental level at which Romanian thinking posits the problem of the existent itself which demonstrates why absolute impossibility is totally meaningless for the Romanian mind.

Impossibility by contradiction has a concrete, existential sense; it does not touch the absolute existence; it does not alter its everlasting image, the image used as reference for comprehension. What a person makes of himself in the world, neither measures, nor curtails his possibilities or his transcendental stature. Perhaps, that’s why Romanians are so insensitive to failure, so little inclined experimentally, and why no disappointment can ever alter their trust in the due order of things. Perhaps, that is also the reason why a tragic alternative—so deeply felt by any existentially oriented conscience—does not seem to affect the Romanians very much, because the tragedy gets quickly melted into the projection of things on the transcendental level, that of their mythical existence, the dream, in which all that was threatened or lost, is recovered again. In the mythical existence things are richer and more “real” than in the temporary existence.

3. — There is no alternative: the verbal moods. The predominance of hypothesis over positivism and disjunction is reflected by the degree of intensity of the verbal moods in the Romanian language.

The essentially impractical character of the Romanians shows in the frequent use of verbal forms denoting speculation over possibilities or future conditions, such as: “what might have happened, if it were to happen in a different way.” The actualist orientation of metaphysics condenses irrevocably such expressions along with the Latin Factum fieri infectum non potest, but this mode of thinking persists in the
Romanian language even in cases of proven impossibility, because there's always that
hypothetical "and yet something might have happened... if...".

Such hypothetical speculations are, in Romanian, much more intense than the
c onsiderations about things that have to be done effectively in the future. So, the
Optative has become a privileged mood, which adds color to the others and even
substitutes for them.

In colloquial speech, the desiderative conditional dominates or even replaces the
indicative future and future perfect and so does the subjunctive. The role played by
the subjunctive in the Romanian language is far more important than in the other
romance languages or in English. For instance, it is used in verbal constructions which,
in English, French, Spanish, call for the infinitive (ex.: he was ready to go; I want to
say; we decided to try, etc.). When used in a conditional sense, the subjunctive has
more intensity than the indicative, present, or the preterite or the future. And what a
variety of anterior futures! The indicative future tense (I shall go) is much too plain, it
presents no problem at all! For the Romanian mind, inclined to speculation, the
perfect futures (I shall have gone, or even I shall have been gone) offer a wider choice
of problematic possibilities. It is as if the Romanians were constantly referring to a
reflective level in which things are already fulfilled even before they are reached by the
thoughts, and were waiting there as temptations to their choice. This, of course,
affects deeply the imperative level. The fact that the proper imperative can be, and
very often is, replaced by the subjunctival form, along with the fact that, as such, it
may be inflected in a sort of past tense imperative (in the sense: He should have been
there, or, you should have done it) proves once more the hypothetic, unpositive
character these expressions take in Romanian.

This would explain why, when facing a choice over a concrete future action, the
Romanian mental nature inclines to procrastinations and lets speculations dominate the
possibilities.

To decide, to opt for one alternative, to choose one of two things, means to stop
at one of the possibilities, disjunctively formulated through negation (yes or no) and
fulfill, or achieve that one possibility, thus demoting it from its ideal existence to
concrete existence.

But, since things are more vivid as possibilities for the thought, than as realities
for the action, the alternative hardly matters any more. Of little consequence is also
the alternative's solution: the decision!

Indeed, decision, or option, is highly meaningful only in a world in which possibility
confronts presence, in other words, in which action chooses among several
possibilities the one it proposes to achieve by acting over the circumstances.

On the other hand, the awareness that existence is possibility, in other words,
that all the levels of existence are equal for the mind, the awareness that anything one
may think of or imagine, one can have, inevitably makes for the suppression of the
existential sense of the alternative and its technical aspect; it means the disappearance
of the need to choose between possibilities. The absolute negation of one of the
possibilities is the door through which the other one comes into reality; it is the sieve
which separates non-existence from the de facto existence. In this case, the sieve does
not work. The double negation, that it is impossible not to, the characteristic of
necessity, becomes the Danaides' sieve!

Like negation, in a world of all possibility, decision holds only a dialeptic mean-
ing; a logical limit, an abstract confrontation of possibilities, a delimitation of fields.
The very term meaning "decision," in Romanian, is hotarare, from the root
hotar = borderline, frontier, limit.

4. — There is no imperative. As a result, the imperative, in Romanian, has a differ-
ent significance.

Let us use an example. Although the verb "to be" (a fi) comes from Latin, and
the imperative mood has been preserved almost unchanged (Fiat in Latin, Fie, in
Romanian) all similarity ends there. By saying Fie, the Romanian expresses none of
the demurgic velocities of the Latin Fiat. They do not command, they do not proclaim
the will of doing something, they do not decree; they simply accept what's happening,
they consent. (The meaning of Fie is very similar to the of the English "Let it be" or
even "So be it"). In some instances, they even emphasize that the consent is totally
unrelated to the personal wishes or to its results, as when they say Fie ce-o fi (Be it as
it may). We see then that the Romanian imperative holds none of the significance of
the Latin Fiat, which carries the compelling command of the grammatical first person.
The Romanian imperative comes closer to the religious Amen, the final "Thy will be
done."

This characteristic is worth remembering because it also gives us the key to the
Romanian idea of empire. For others empire may mean compulsory, oppressive dom-
ination; for us, it means a community of order and human common sense. Don't we
call, in Romanian, a person with a charming, winning personality, a "conqueror"
(acuceritor)?

On what is based, then, the respect for the law and due order, if there is no sense of
the imperative? The answer is: the ritual action.

Compliance with the norm, the conscience of order is not a practical determina-
tion, but a state of cognizance. Imperative is not felt as a commandment, as somebody
else's order; it is felt and considered as a displacement in existence, a disorder, an
unfulfillment; as somebody's appeal to set things straight, as an inner impulse to
restore things in their rightful place. In the Romanian folkloric fairy-tales, while orders
and stern commands are often disobeyed, an appeal, a plea for vindication is always
sure to give results.

So then, the state of legality is not an effort at conforming to rules; it is an
intuitive feeling of organic agreement, the harmony between nature and being, the
freedom and intimacy of feeling at home.

Please, reader, try to measure in your mind the gap between the absolute thresh-
old of the Kantian respect for legality and the Romanian attitude; think about the
inhumane tyranny of the categoric and universal imperative, and compare it with the
humane feeling of liberty and flexibility the Romanians manifest towards rule. You'll
understand readily how deep into reality's structure reach the consequences of the
fundamental difference between existence and possibility.

But the consequences do not stop there. Romanians are not practically inclined,
nor are they success-thirsty. The beauty of the road detains them, and oh! so often
they pay attention more to the passage than to the goal. As statistics show, the
majority of those who used to search for the perpetuum mobile were Romanians,
Now, if there ever was a practical impossibility, certainly *perpetuum mobile* must have been it!

As we see, activity is unrelated—rationally—with its results. Their relation is merely symbolic, magic. The actual, provoked presence; the experience, does not count as proof of existence, nor does it guarantee the repetition of the fact, because only "things" happen again, but not so persons, and their intimate ambiance, and they are the only ones who really exist. In this light, isn't the physical repetition of the gesture rather pointless?

But the world is far from incoherent for Romanians. The world maintains a kind of close cooperation with man's potential of comprehension.

The human being, man, finds himself in the change of things; not because they repeat themselves in the same way, but because their occurrence goes according to a kind of movement, a kind of cycle, which defines the nature of the thing and is related to man's life. And man is able to find the meaning of that relation.

Man discerns the day's cycle. Then he finds it again and again in the year, in human life, in plants, in houses, in nations and in worlds. Sometimes the cycle is interrupted, for its progress is morphologically variable, and man may be misled. But, he still knows approximately where he stands by the "signs" of the time. Hence, the Romanians' great predilection for the calendar, even to the extent that their very life becomes somehow "calendarized"; repetition, the finding of oneself in the world, the recognition of things and their stability, all that constitutes a ritual. Man's action, therefore, is communication, sign, ritual gesture measured by its function, not by its result. And morality is "order."

5. *There is no irreparability*. All these characteristics, which define the essential orientation of the Romanian soul in existence, lead to still another consequence. Romanians do not have the feeling of absolute loss, the feeling of irreparability. For them, nothing is completely damaged, nothing is condemned beyond redemption, nothing is irremediably lost, nothing is irreparable.

And it could not be otherwise, since the rough reality of the action does not cut any incision between what is and what is not, and since the truest reality is similar to that found in dreams.

Fierce opponents that they are in the field of ideas and possibilities, the Romanians are rather conceding when it comes to facts. They feel that facts are rather unimportant. Facts are trials to be surmounted, or perhaps "temptations," or "tollgates," but never inconquerable realities to be taken seriously.

This could be the reason why, in Romania, it is so difficult to obtain accurate statistics. The methods used are adequate enough, but both those who take, and those who answer the polls, having no great respect for the facts, tend to overlook events, which, for them, are inconsistent.

Unfortunately, only too well-known is the Romanians' tendency to complain, and their liking of unending lawsuits. In all fairness though, we should mention also their concessive attitude, their willingness to settle for any somehow lesser, but reasonably fair, solution.

In this respect, Romanians do not cling desperately to the outcome of their actions, as other nations do. "Do a good deed and throw it in the river" says a Romanian proverb. Deeds are done not because some kind of recompense is bound to ensure of it, but because that is the due order of things and Romanians feel very deeply the need to align in the due order of things. For that reason, we'll see them engaging in action under the most absurd circumstances and keeping at it even when, upon reasonable consideration, they should give up hope. Finally, the Romanians get into energetic action when they have no other choice.

There are two implications here:

First: life is taken lightly, and
Second: death is taken unfearingly

6. *Life is taken with ease*. In his normal state, a Romanian feels no earnestness towards existence. Since his life unfolds at the same level as eternity, it is an even and undramatic life. By that we do not mean to say that dramatic events never occur in his life! It is simply that he never considers them as such.

Existence is a game of possibilities; man can always have the best of the vicissitudes in concrete existence by converting them to virtualities, so why should he take things too seriously? Therefore, he will be careless, conniving, happy-go-lucky, but he'll always be pinning his hopes in God for both the small and the important things of his life, as if the perspective of the great horizons would entitle him to make light of the immediate life. This lack of interest, however, is a far cry from indifference. Underneath the irony, there is a feeling of warm tenderness for the way of all flesh. Temporary things are of no consequence, only because the world we move in is merely a speck of dust in the huge world of existence, so easily reached in the mind. In this "here world!" there is only one constant preoccupation: keep in line with the due order of things! Why rush, if "there's a time" for everything? Can a seed sprout ahead of time? And if it does, wasn't it compelled by an outside force?

It is worth mentioning here that every once in a while there have appeared in the Romanian history certain agents eager to wake up in us the feeling of earnestness towards existence and who have endeavored to make us confront ourselves and our responsibilities. This sharp sense of history, of a merciless present which urges you to take action "now or never" is not, in its essence, a Romanian feeling. At the utmost, it could be the symptom of a temporary fever, a kind of sensing that a limit has been reached, or again, the result of an outside influence, attempting to dislodge the Romanian man from his own nature. To this kind of "troubling of the waters" Romanian conscience reacts in a very attenuate way and, sooner or later, the waters go back to their bed. Man, for a moment taken out from under time, resumes his dialog with eternity.

The idea of "waking up," this urgent feeling of "now or never" flares up in the Romanian people mostly under the mirage of modernization and Westernism. Indeed, the revolutionary movement of 1848 (and other "renovative" movements since then) was full of the activist and actualist ideology of the Occident. According to these movements, the Romanian dimension of existence is like a "sleep" from which the nation has to wake up to the "realities of the present." Poets, writers and journalists (Rosetti with his "Enlightenment is being" and "Will and you'll be able"; Mureșanu with his "Wake up, Romanians, from your deadly sleep"; Alexandri with "Arise blood-brothers from your lethargic slumber," etc.) who were trying so hard to arouse the
Romanian nation, at the back of their minds were quite aware that they were addressing a world of everlasting, atemporal reality, to a life spent somehow beyond time and from which “presence” was missing. They wanted to shake it, to force it to live in the present, to insert it in history.

A few words about the meaning of the active, existential attitude towards the world, the emphasis on the present.

It has been suggested that this dynamic moment, this imminent outburst of action, could represent an authentic, periodical function, a dynamic impulse of the Romanian soul when confronting certain limits of lawlessness.

Or it could be—as the philosopher Radulescu Motru once pointed out—the expression of one of the essential characteristics of all static spirits, that they are unable to adapt gradually to changes; when they do, it is by volte-face, by the alteration of their inner springs, as a reaction to pressure, either from the inside, or from the outside.

Let’s examine carefully now the true meaning of this dynamic moment when the Romanian being bursts into action. It happens only when the being’s unity has been broken, when man’s conscience has been parted in two by a too painful reality, and when possibilities have become so remote that even dreaming of them is a torture for the mind. Then, and only then, out of this hopelessness and woe, action, immediate action, ensues.

How strange! In all the Western world, men get into action because “they can,” while the Romanians get into action only when they “cannot” bear the sadness any longer.

Even this pragmatic devastation of the Romanian spirit, shows only a “moment of non-spirituality,” a fall from the state of inner peace. And the best proof of it is the character of despair, of convulsion, that these active outbursts take. And also, the fact that once the dams are broken, once the sorrow’s pressure has been let loose, the troubled waters recess and come back to their original course; the Romanians go back to their dreams.

These dreams, this “slumber,” has a considerable effect on the foreigners who come in contact with us.

Nous sommes aux portes de l’orient, où tout est pris à la légère, once bitterly complained Raymond Poincaré, the former President of the French Republic, when—in the course of the famous Hallier lawsuit—he found out how utterly unimpressed were the Romanian judges either by his arguments, or by the way he was juggling with dilemmas, conclusions and strong juridical logic in a desperate attempt at clutching the smoke!

The same happens in many other instances. A methodical German cannot understand for the life of him how it is possible that there are so few railroad accidents in this land of inexactitude. In his German solemnity, he cannot figure out why people, who smile all the time and seem to make light even of their own lives, would rather stay and get killed than desert their assigned duty. Likewise, our need for clarity in all things and our dislike of ambiguity put the understanding of the Slavs to a hard test—our particularity of being unable to engage in any activity unless we have it safely anchored in a principle, or to consider something unless we have a precise outline of every detail in our mind.
integration into eternal peace. No wonder then that Herodotus would call our ancestors ‘people of immortals’!

In our opinion, this attitude more than compensates for our lack of seriousness. These are, roughly sketched, some of the aspects which seem to characterize the Romanian conception of existence.

If, by reading this outline, somebody, somewhere, would feel persuaded to take up studies of this kind and would, then, write them down in a better, more concise and more systematic way, we would consider it our reward and, also, our excuse for having dealt with the subject in the first place.

Translated by: Natalia Dimitriu

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

Considering that the present study was originally a lecture, later published with a few additions for the benefit of a Romanian student-body and the public, Professor Vulcanescu used as examples and illustrations of his thesis terms, verses, short citations from Romanian writers, and colloquials well-known to his audience and readers. On the other hand, in his argumentation, he mentioned only in passing, grammatical forms and constructions familiar to them all.

In order to make this work intelligible to English-speaking readers, the translator had to slightly summarize a few paragraphs which, otherwise, would have required long and tedious footnote explanations. She also has added more specific grammatical information, blending it into the text in such a way as to add clarity to the study. Or so she hopes.

She also hopes that she has been able to turn into English, as faithfully as she could, Professor Vulcanescu’s brilliant thinking and the true spirit of his words.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ivoare de Filosofie, 1943.
5. București, 1904.

A ROMANIAN FOLK BALLAD

MIORIȚA

Pe-un picior de plai,
Pe-o gură de rai
Iată vin în cale,
Se cobor la vale
Tei turme de miei
Cu trei ciobânei
Unu-i Moldovan,
Unu-i Ungurean
Și unu-i Vâlcean.
Mari, se vorbira,
Ei se sfatuira
Pe la apus de soare,
Dă să mi-l omoare
Pe cel Moldovan
Că-i mai ortoman,
C'are oi mai multe
Mânde și cornute,
Și câi învațați
Și câmi mai bărbați . . . !
Dar cea mioriță
Cu lâna plaiță
De trei zile 'ncoace
Gura nu-i mai tace,
Iarbă nu-i mai place,
-Mioriță laie,
Laie, bucălaie,
De trei zile 'ncoace
Gura nu-ti mai tace,
Ori iarba nu-ti place,
Ori ești bolnavoară,
Drăguța Mioră?
-Drăguțule bace
Dă-ți oile 'ncoace
La negru zâvoi
Că-i iarba de noi
Și umbra de o i
Stăpâne, Stăpâne,
Iți chemă și-un căine,
Cel mai bărbătesc
Și cel mai frătesc,
Că la apus de soare

LITTLE EWE-LAMB

Where the mountains mate,
There is Eden's gate.
They're approaching, lo!
And downhill they go,
Three fair flocks of sheep,
Which three shepherds keep,
One Moldavian,
The other Transylvanian
The third, a Vrancea man.
Hatched a secret plot,
Whispered there a lot
To kill outright
At the dusk of night
The Moldavian,
A rich, wealthy man,
Who had flocks of sheep,
Milch-sheep horned, in keep,
And trained horses, too,
Manly dogs not few . . !
But the little ewe-lamb there
With her wool so fair
For three days or four
Has kept silent no more.
And disliked the grass
What's your distress?
Ewe-lamb, little lass,
For three days or four
You've kept silent no more!
Are you sick of your litter?
Does the grass taste bitter?
My shepherd
And lord!
Let's our grazing henceforth
In the dark coppice do:
There's shade for you
And grass for us, too!
My master dear and strong!
Take a watch-dog along,
The most faithful of all,
And manliest of all!
'Cause the Transylvanian
And the Vrancea man
Want to kill you outright
At the dusk of the night!
—My Bàrsa ewe,
Wonder-working are you!
If my life I must yield
In the bristle-grass field,
Tell the Vrancea man
And the Transylvanian,
To bury me here
In the highlands, near
The pen of my sheep,
That I might sleep
And hear the bark
Of my dogs in the dark.
Now listen well to me:
Here at my head let be
The shepherd's flute of beech
With its dear, dear speech,
The blute of bone,
With its long drone,
And the fiery flute
Of elder-wood!

Winds will sing their lay,
All the flutes will play
And the sheep will crown
Wailing me aloud,
Shedding tears of blood.
What to me befell
You must never tell!
Tell them the truth straight:
That wedded I have been
To a beautiful queen
Bride of the world in sheen.
And on my wedding night
Fell a star bright;
Moon and sun were then
Bridesmaid and bridesman;
Fir-trees, sycamores;
Priests were the mountains high,
Fiddlers the birds that fly
Little birds by the thousand more;
Torches the stars!
But if you espy
And if you pass by
My little mother, old and dear,
Orientation. I offer this paper as a fragmentary syllabus covering some of the principal ideas and conclusions arrived at as result of a close analysis of the significantly important autochthonous milieu, structure and poetic value evidenced in the world renowned Miorița. The bibliographical references and sources are so rich and extensive ranging from in-depth articles to masterful, fully documented scholarly books in Romanian, French and German—that a detailed critical expository study would be virtually impossible within the confines of an essay. Rather I have tried to provide a serviceable introduction to material currently available to the English reading public. To my knowledge no such study is widely circulated, and I hope sincerely that intensive critical studies are in preparation at this moment.

Significant Historical, Social and Literary Background. The specific aspects of Romanian art and literature, like those of any other nation, must be obviously examined both from the point of view of their contents and as artistic form.

As regards contents this naturally implies the reflection of historical, geographical, ethnographic, folkloric and psychological realities, as well as the people’s distinct concept of life.

In the light of scientific aesthetics, these factors assume a great significance. The natural aspect of the homeland, and the customs and folklore, distinct psychic characteristics, and age-long history of the people are all undoubtedly mirrored in art and literature. They form the specific theme of Romanian art and literature. The descriptive poems and ballads of Vasile Alexandri and George Cojocaru, and the novels of Liviu Rebreanu naturally reflect this context, which we do not find in the literature of other peoples.

Eminescu, Creangă, Enescu, Brâncuşi have expressed in different ways the same specifically Romanian and highly original folk background. They have rendered in their works the Romanian soul and landscape, the attitude of the Romanian toward the world, toward life, death and his own soul, and have expressed general ethical values, filtered through their personal understanding and sensitivity.

Romanian culture in its major forms cannot be separated from Folk values perfected in Miorița the final forms of which are now integrated into universal values.

We should also mention that many aspects of ethnography and folklore are not strictly specific and that numerous motives from fairytales, legends and ballads can also be found in world literature. In this case we will have to examine the special way in which they reflect the spirit and concept of life of the Romanian people. However, there also exists a folklore with a specific context, as for instance Miorița, whose equivalent researchers have not found in the folklore of other people.

Romanian folk poetry, like any folk literature, reflects, whether directly or indirectly the social existence of the people. Since the earliest times the Romanian came to grips with a most eventful and harsh destiny. The territory inhabited by them, owing to its very geographical situation was in the path of the most varied historical tempests. To meet the challenge of the day, the people were sometimes withdrawing to the mountains, at other times confronting the invaders in bitter battles. This is how they developed a complex cast of thought, a certain unique outlook on life whose varied aspects they expressed in folk masterpieces of exquisite beauty. The Romanian folk poet discerned the most varied motifs inspiring life, ranging from the love of nature, exuberant joy and feelings of profound yearning and melancholy to the idea of the gloomy destiny hovering over life, and succeeded in conveying them in stirring poetical forms.

Within the vast domain of Romanian folk poetry a prominent place is held by the ballads whose range of subject-matter is manifold. Among the ballads, the most often quoted is Miorița, a ballad evincing consummate craftsmanship; more than any other Romanian folk creation, this ballad has revealed to the world as a whole the profound thoughts and feelings, the undeniable gift of the Romanian people, the beautiful and profound forms of philosophy in which their soul can be expressed. The first to publish this ballad was the poet laureate, Vasile Alecsandri. He made it known to the French readers with whom it won recognition. Jules Michelet singled it out and wrote thoughts steeped in his boundless admiration: “Rien de plus naïf et de plus grand” (see Legendes Democratique du Nord, Paris, 1854); after it had been translated in English and German, many others expressed similar opinions.

In point of artistic achievement, Miorița bears the characteristic imprint of the Romanian people’s soul: the epic structure is permeated by a strong overflow of lyricism which in its intense feelings remains a prominent trait of the Romanian creative spirit. Miorița sets forth a pastoral tragedy occurring in the midst of nature to which the Romanian peasant feels intimately linked.

Plot and Structure Analysis. The imaginary curtain rises revealing a quiet dreamy landscape where three shepherds are watching their flocks on a mountain pastureland. After some time, one of them—the shepherd with the largest and most beautiful flocks—notices that his pet ewe, which loves him deeply, will not eat, will not drink, is fidgeting around. Deeply worried, he asks the ewe what is troubling her soul and she imparts a secret to him: the other two shepherds, the Transylvanian and the Vrancean (Vrâncian) have made a vow to kill him at sunset and rob him of his flock. On hearing the prophecy, the shepherd entreats her that should he be slain, she should tell the murderers to fulfill his last wish: to bury him close to the sheepfold, near his flock, to place his flute, that he is so fond of, on his grave; when the wind blows, the flute will play intriguingly, and his sheep will come together and will bitterly lament for him. The shepherd also entreats his ewe, that if his mother “maica batrană” comes and looks for him, not to disclose the murder to her, but to tell her that he had married a queen’s daughter and had gone far away. Most of the variants, and Vasile Alecsandri’s in the first place, stop here. However, the variant by the folklorist, G. M. Teodorescu, goes further. In this ballad, the shepherd thinks of love instead of his mother; then, we learn, that his mates come and kill him. They then fulfill his wish and bury him close to the sheepfold where he had spent his life. His sheep and dogs truly mourn him. His love, however, does not come to look for him.

The origins of the ballad are very old. It relates to an incident of the period of the moving of flocks to fresh pasture lands, when Romanians from various areas
migrated with their flocks to fresh rich grass-land, they met, and prompted by greed, often started fighting. Such events are copiously borne out by the historical documents, thanks to the researches made by the historian Nicolae Iorga and philologist Ovid Danesăianu, the latter especially in his "Viață Păstoriească în Poezia Noastră Populară" II (Bucharest 1933). Danesăianu, who was also a noted literary critic, tried to compare the version of the romantic poet Vasile Alecsandri with all the known folk variants, and to reconstruct the archetype of the ballad in which he recognized a fundamental epic and pastoral theme enriched by superadded lyrical motifs.

The incident recorded in Miorita may have happened once. However, this is not the merit of the ballad. The incident itself is but the inspiring nucleus, which the folk poet avails himself of to express his outlook on life, his attitude towards life and death. The shepherd is warned against what lies in store for him, the question of his death is unequivocally raised. What is his stand going to be? There are three possible ways in which he may react: to withstand the onslaught and start fighting his foes, or run away cowardly, or else get reconciled to the idea of his death, and to remain on the spot. In most of the variants, the shepherd is resigned, because he neither defends himself nor runs away. On the contrary, he voices his last wish dolefully and makes his will. It should be emphasized that the shepherd’s resignation, wrongly called by some critics “fatalistic,” his full awareness of doom is not at all devoid of heroism. Undoubtedly, the motive of the crime on which the poem draws, is the sense of property, the thirst for growing rich; it is, however, obvious that the folk poet has gone far beyond this empirical datum, and made us feel and search for a more profound and more comprehensive meaning to the poem.

A noble atmosphere pervades the ballad, and considering this important factor, the shepherd’s unwillingness to save himself, should not be construed as cowardice. Were he a coward, he would venture to run away, but there is no such hint at such an attitude. In the course of the tragic events in the ballad and its progressive atmosphere, we feel that an idea is taking shape deep down in the folk poet’s soul: there are things in life which man can escape from, but one thing he cannot elude, that is death. It is the law of nature and it should be accepted as such. To be afraid of death is of no avail. The shepherd in Miorita demonstrates his heroism by courageously submitting of his own free will to the law of nature, to ruthless necessity. Miorita is the tragedy of a gentle, yet strong character who serenely recognizes the inevitable end of life. He does not complain, nor does he curse. He nobly resigns himself, like his Thracian-Dacian ancestors, to the inevitable. The folk poet thus rises from an individual and concrete event to the vast and essential outlook on life as a whole, and looks upon death as concluding life. It is not a moment’s reaction but a comprehensive vision from a considerable height.

Yet, if death is a natural law, the shepherd while accepting it, doesn’t forget to voice his joy of life. The image of the wedding, associated with the moment of his death, does not mean, at all, that he accepts his end with joy peculiar to the wedding feast. The wedding in the poem does not imply merriment but embracing the whole nature and becoming one with it, a union which the shepherd’s heart ardently feels. Moreover, this union is not associated with joy in any of the variants; everything is wrapped in misty sadness entirely roused by his regret for being severed from life. When the shepherd expressed his wish to be buried close to the sheepfold around him everything he loved best, to be one with the vastness of nature, he wants to remain linked with life at least in that way. His love of nature keeps his heart warm and broadens his outlook. From the depth of suffering and despair, the Romanian people’s heart rises to a highly significant conception, hailed by serenity, through which ardent fantasy contemplates a bright light. The Romanian people, with the logic of their imagination, transfigure death into a wedding urged as they are by whatever is gloomiest in life—the spectre of death—they create the image of a feast and the relevant passage in Alecsandri’s variant is characteristic in this respect:

“What to me befell
You must never tell.
Tell them the truth well:
Wedded I have been
To a gentle queen
Bride of the world in sheen”

The shepherd awaiting his death, nobly reviews in his imagination all the magnificent aspects of reality in the midst of which he has lived. He fancies a dreamland full of enchantment, pervaded by elements of earthly reality. With great poetic skill, the poet invokes stately mountains, the surrounding fir trees and sycamore maples, the birds singing rapturously and, above all, the conveying of the great cosmic unity in the midst of which he lived and the contemplation of which charmed him. It follows, therefore, that equally typical of Miorita is the striving to transfigure life with its griefs into a magnificent lofty vision, the striving to create a fairyland of endless bliss out of the sea of torments. This is how the feeling of death, the thought of the inevitability of “what is doomed,” is softened down by an intense glimmer of the feeling of life. To put it differently, the moment of death is an opportunity for stressing the worth of life.

Mioritic Space (Spațial Mioritic). Miorita has still another merit for inspiring the lofty vision which gave wings of light and wisdom to Lucian Blaga’s philosophy. From Miorita, the ballad’s content, he devised the spatial vision specific only to the Romanian people. In order to understand this concept, we need to contrast it with the idea of space as viewed by and applied to other nations.

In the center of Transylvania, encircled by the Carpathian Mountain range there lives a population of Saxon origin endowed with a vision of space totally different from the autochthonous element. It finds its primary sources in Western culture space, which created the Gothic style, whose mysticism and sentiments of boundless freedom are expressed in architectural art in the form of a permanent struggle against nature.

In direct opposition, the Romanian vision of space is impregnated by the original national landscape, namely the plai, which encompasses the hills and valleys of the homeland endowed with sources of tremendous potential of creativity. The Romanian doina is a melodious song characteristic of this space and of this “undulating infinite” so clearly evidenced in Miorita—the masterpiece of Romanian folk poetry. The doina, specific song of the Romanians, is fragrant with the aroma of poetry, and filled with the enthusiastic vigor and untamed force which characterize the artistic creations of freedom-loving people.

From Miorita, Lucian Blaga, brilliant poet, writer and philosopher of the 20th century, devised the concept of the Mioritic Space, an intrinsic part of the Romanian
soul and culture. All the artistic creations of Romania, either folkloric or classic, are the expression of this balanced rhythm of gentle ascent and descent, set in contrast with the infinite ascent of the Gothic or the limitless expanse of the Russian soul and its music. Everywhere he wanders throughout his history, Western man will carry within himself the notion of “native space” determined by his primordial horizons. In the same way, a Romanian will ceaselessly evoke in the melody and rhythm of his doina the “undulating” space of his fatherland.

A man, who is part of the Miocronic Space, is relentlessly driven onward to the framework and core of his space. He conceives his destiny as an eternal rhythmic ascent and descent. Many Romanian poets and writers owe a great deal to the vast horizons of inspiration and style expressed in Miorita. In many instances, the sources they tapped in the ballad were the key to their success. The Miocronic Space, above all, is creative, harmonious and serene. It does not know the meaning of crisis, in the Western interpretation of the word. It defies history as well as events produced by the soaring aspirations of individuals to the lofty summits of ideal and perfection.

In the final analysis, it should also be stressed that the idea of resignation, so suggestively conveyed in the ballad, is not characteristic of the Romanian soul. On the one hand, Michelet expressed his justified admiration for the ballad asserting that “it is a song with the most ancient form, a sacred thing and always ready to break your heart. In this ballad, one feels very profoundly that admirable fraternity of man with the entire creation.”

On the other hand, the same author was wrong, when he gave voice to the idea, that the resignation it expressed was a national trait. On the contrary, the resignation in Miorita provides the very “solution” the folk poet gives to the questions regarding the meaning of life. The vast field of Romanian folk poetry provides countless proofs of energy and strength asserting itself in revolt against oppression, in the fight for justice, in the willingness to create a new life and future. The shepherd in Miorita cannot fail to grasp the inevitability but, thanks to the flight of his imagination, he most warmly voices his love for life, prepared to return gently to the bosom of nature from whence he originally came.

MIHAI CISMĂRESCU:

CLIO’S MISHAPS

OR A REINTERPRETATION OF ROMANIAN HISTORY

I have always opened books written in foreign lands about Romania with a distinct feeling of anxiety and worry. It seems to have been my lot, so many times, to read hasty and rash second-hand information dealing with the history of the Romanian people. Just as frequently, the unjust, obviously tendentious and highly prejudicial assessments of the Romanian nation as a whole, shocked and embittered me beyond expression.

Admittedly, as Romanians, we have our shortcomings. Moreover, there is no denial that our history, like that of other people, has many dark shadows intermingled with countless glorious moments. As a matter of fact, I never expected foreign historians to lavish excessive praises on the Romanian people or display an out of place sympathetic understanding of its eventful history. But oftentimes, these scholars exaggerated in their contempt for even the most elementary objectivity in order to present us to the world at large the way we really are not. Frequently, it occurred to me that this situation is due to the fact that it is indeed difficult to know and understand a people whose history constitutes, according to George Bratianu’s marvelous formula “both an enigma and a miracle.”

Such were the thoughts that come to my mind, after I read the two-hundred-forty-eight pages of a book entitled, Twentieth Century Romania, recently published by the prestigious Columbia University Press, New York, 1970. Its author, Mr. Stephen Fischer-Galati, is a professor of history and director of the Center for Eastern European Affairs at the University of Colorado, United States of America.

This particular study which purports to be, primarily, an essay on political history contains almost on every page a mass of erroneous information, false historical dates, and above all, an abundance of tendentious judgments regarding the past and present state of affairs and events in our country. Perhaps, Professor Fischer-Galati should be reminded that the first obligation of a historian is to write sine ira et studio (without anger and prejudice). The issue is even more serious in this particular case, if we keep in mind that the Anglo-Saxon reading public will probably consult this book authored by an American historian in order to find “documentation” concerning the past and present of the Romanian people.

Mr. Fischer-Galati informs his readers that the “Daco-Roman territories, correspond to contemporary Romania.” (page 9) Now, it is a well-known fact that the Roman province—Dacia—comprised only the Banat, Oltenia, a large stretch of land east of the Olt River and all of Transylvania. The other provinces—Muntenia and later, Moldavia—peasant Getic and Sarmatian lands were left under the control of the natives. The Geto-Dacian population of Muntenia was already under the domination of Roman Rule south of the Danube.

1 Revista Scritorilor Români, Munchen, 1971.
Furthermore, Mr. Fischer-Galati informs his readers about the “disappearance” of Romanians from history for almost a thousand years. (page 9) Although, he uses the word “disappearance” in quotation marks, the author of the book does not deem it necessary to remind his readers that this particular theory of the abandonment of Dacia after the withdrawal of the Roman Legions in 271 A.D., and the avalanche of the barbarian invasions, ceases to be any longer a solid foundation for serious historical research. The more current archaeological, linguistic, ethnographic and numismatic discoveries and explorations conducted in our country, brought to light a truly impressive sum total of uncontested arguments regarding the Latin continuity of the Romanian people.

Today, it is common knowledge that the theory of the German scholar, Rössler expounded a century ago in his book, Romanische Studien (Romanian Studies), according to whom the Romanians are not the descendants of Romanized Dacians, but nomad shepherds who migrated from south of the Danube in the 13th Century, that is, after the Hungarians settled in Transylvania, is very weakly supported by assumptions devoid of scientific evidence, and definitely of a negative character based on political presumptions. Who can believe anymore that the Romanian people born and molded in Dacia abandoned this Roman province after 271 A.D., just to be reborn somewhere beyond the frontiers of Romania; and then, hundreds of years, hence, they repatriated en masse, superimposing their population on the aliens, who in the meantime had settled in their country of origin? Why is this shifting of population across the Danube, involving hundreds of thousands of people and the moving of flocks, not a matter of record in any of the documents of the times handed down to us, while other minor events regarding contemporaneous events occurring in the same geographical zone are mentioned by the chroniclers of that particular era—and with what a great luxury of detail? Historical objectivity and impartiality should have prompted Mr. Fischer-Galati at least to mention the arguments raised against the Rössler theory, regardless of Mr. Fischer-Galati’s personal opinions concerning this epoch in the history of the Romanian people. Unfortunately, the gentleman in question preferred to remain silent on this issue—a silence incompatible with the imperious demands of the science of history.

Let us proceed further and guided by Mr. Fischer-Galati follow the history of the Romanian people. He writes that only nationalist historians upheld the theory that the Romanians in Transylvania were “submerged in the supreme and constant desideratum,” to unite with their brothers from other territories inhabited by the Romanians, and to achieve and milenary dream of Greater Romania.” (pages 13-14) Mr. Fischer-Galati referring to the famous Supplex Libellus Valachorum of 1791, a glorious expression of the nationalism of Transylvanian Romanians goes on to write, “The essence of this nationalism is medieval and provincial.” (page 15) “The fundamental argument that the rights of the Romanian people are based on their Latin origin, as well as on the right of first come against the parvenu newcomers (or intruders of a later date), such as the Hungarians, Saxons and Szeklers, constitutes the expression of the undeveloped character of Romanian nationalism of the times, rather of modern claims which favor a representative government and humanitarian reform.”

Although a settlement of the political differences between the Romanians on both sides of the Carpathians could not be established” (page 15) as Mr. Fischer-Galati chooses to argue the point, he goes on to say, “Political hasles rather than reconciliation, reaction rather than reforms constituted the rule in the years of the formation of Greater Romania as far as the relations between the Romanians of the Old Kingdom and the Transylvanians are concerned.” (page 33) Despite all this, Greater Romania did become a reality; thus having as our guide the same Mr. Fischer-Galati, we come to the year 1918.

The epoch ranging from 1918 to 1940, which the author evokes in chapters I and III, offers our historian a fresh opportunity to present modern Romania in an unfavorable light. Mr. Fischer-Galati holds every achievement, in the past or about to start on the road to success, in the short historical interval of twenty years when Romania was unified and free. The individual, who writes these lines, is not a laudator temporis acti; on the contrary, he is aware of the shortcomings, deficiencies and certain Fanariot and Byzantine customs which existed at that time in the political life of our country as a result of the foreign rule to which the Romanian people were subjected for a long time.

However, what impartial historian, which serious-minded appraiser of Romanian realities between the two wars could possibly accept as valid the theory of the “traditional antisemite attitude of the Brântianu family and of the other political leaders of the Old Kingdom?” (page 32) Who can assert that the threats against Romania’s territorial integrity in the past-war years were minimal (page 38) or that the citizen’s rights and guarantees of freedom, stipulated in the Constitution of 1923, existed only on paper and that in reality the policy of discrimination continued even after 1923 on the national, social and economic planes? (page 39)

Mr. Fischer-Galati, then writes that the “worker, just like the peasant lacked de facto any political right,” and that “at all costs the social and economical reforms which would have been to the advantage of the working and peasant class were avoided.” (page 39) The agrarian reform after World War I is treated by Mr. Fischer-Galati in a superficial manner. (pages 33-34) He speaks about the “political immorality of the National Liberal Party,” (page 43) and on the same page, Iuliu Maniu is described as an “inefficient moralizer, hostile to social and economic reforms,” while General Averescu is presented as a supporter of the “supremacy of Wallachia, of anticomunism, antisemitism and antimaharism.” (page 35) In total disbelief we read, “A policy of discrimination was conducted especially against the maghiar territorial revisionists and communist Jews.” (page 32)

Mr. Fischer-Galati proceeds to review the political line of the Romanina governments between 1918-1940, and writes the following: “It is in general recognized today” (by whom, we ask?) “that neither the Magyar revisionism nor Russian communism constituted a serious menace against the Romanian State in the years of the elaboration of the doctrine: Romania for the Brântianu.” (page 32) In this way, Mr. Fischer-Galati tries to minimize the internal and external difficulties inherent to a young State such as Romania immediately after World War I when the political administrative structures of the country had to be created and strengthened. The author finds it appropriate to state that these difficulties, especially the external threats and dangers, were highly exaggerated by the political leaders of that time and had nothing to do with the welfare of the country or with its higher interests but were used instead, primarily, to avoid the achievement of the long-awaited economic and social
reforms. We ask, now, if the events that followed did not reject the theory of the American historian and offer undeniable proof that the apprehensions and fears of that epoch were not entirely unfounded? And since when does vigilance against threats from outside the borders be called nationalism (in the pejorative sense of the word)? In the same line of thought, Mr. Fischer-Galati insists on informing his readers about the “predilection of Romanian intellectuals for national causes.” (page 73)

Evoking the period of war (1941-1945), Mr. Fischer-Galati does not lose the opportunity to criticize anew the political parties, stating the following: “The defenders of the traditional parties strongly maintained that the Liberal and National Peasant Party alike gave their full support to the war efforts, only to the extent in which the end result was the possession of the dismembered Romanian provinces. Moreover, political leaders, like Iuliu Maniu and Dînîu Bratianu, are considered as being against the dictatorial aspects of the Antonescu Regime. However, there is no proof to fully confirm these statements because the attempts to conquer purely Soviet territories collapsed at Stalingrad.” (page 66)

Let us now go on to the events after August 1944, that is, the post-war period. Referring to the situation of the Communist Party in Romania at the end of World War II, Mr. Fischer-Galati acknowledges the fact that this party was almost nonexistent, but adds textually: “Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Romanian communists were hated by the population in general or that in Romania communism was discredited.” (page 78)

A great deal has been written in the West at that particular epoch about the first parliamentary elections organized by the communists on November 19, 1946; or rather the electoral farce staged by the Groza Regime. In conformity with the results announced then by the government in Bucharest, the National Democratic Front—namely, the communists—had obtained 347 seats; the National Peasant Party, 33; and the Liberal only 3. Everyone knows that the Western powers—the United States and Great Britain—denounced, at the proper time, the manner in which the electoral confrontation took place in November, 1946. In turn, Mr. Fischer-Galati, affirms that in 1946 the political observers and later the researchers of the history of Romanian politics contested the validity of the scrutiny organized by Petru Groza’s Regime. Mr. Fischer-Galati justly underlines the fact that without the presence of the Soviet Red Army and the communist agitators in the villages, the peasants would have overwhelmingly cast their votes in favor of the National Peasant Party. However, this fact does not prevent him from issuing the following remarks: “Although the results (of the vote) did not reflect the interest of the voters and were probably falsified in a large measure, it is not absolutely certain that the National Peasant Party would have been victorious in the 1946 elections, even if foreign observers and neutral enforcers could possibly have maintained a minimum of legality by closely scrutinizing the counting of the votes.”

Mr. Fischer-Galati goes on to say: “The fact that the masses did not support the National Peasant Party in November, 1946, constituted the expression of their reconciliation with the political realities of that year, the realization on their part that a peace with the new regime had to be established. It is highly probable, too, that the peasantry believed in the communists’ assurances that they would respect private property.” (page 104) Further on, Mr. Fischer-Galati tells us that, “The vote cast by the peasantry for the National Democratic Front is perhaps closer to the official results than it is generally believed. Doubtlessly, the vote of the working class was recorded without fault. The traditional leadership of the Social Democrat Party headed by Titel Petrescu is too closely associated with the non-proletarian, conservative wing of the organization. At the same time, it was not capable of handling the demands of the workers in a manner suitable enough to compete with the methods of the National Democratic Front.” (page 15)

Despite this, within the framework of political history and spectral analysis of Romanian political life, Mr. Fischer-Galati’s attention is not retained only by the celebrated November 1946, electoral confrontation. Elections took place also on March 2, 1969, to elect the new National Assembly of Bucharest. Of the 13,577,143 registered voters, 13,543,499 cast their vote in favor of the communist candidates on the list of the Front of Socialist Unity. Therefore, according to the official tallies, this figure represents 99% of the total votes. After asking himself the question—whether these results mean the approval of Nicolae Ceausescu’s policies and communist achievements, or they express the decision of the people to defend the country in a moment of danger and give full support to the “nationalist” leaders at the head of the state, Mr. Fischer-Galati writes, “There are no set answers to these questions. In all probability, the importance of the votes given to the party’s candidates expresses in an adequate manner the effective support granted to the Romanian leaders by the masses in a larger measure than in the case of preceding parliamentary elections.”

Presumably, the voters of March 1969, took into consideration the achievements and problems of their leaders and, on the basis of these factors, they granted a vote of confidence to the Nicolae Ceausescu Regime. The result of the polls reflects the identity of personal interests with those of the Communist Party, the recognition of the progress attained and the acceptance of the Communist Order.” (page 212) How can Mr. Fischer-Galati seriously weigh in the balance the results of the polls in 1969? What kind of elections are those in which only one list of candidates offers the people one possibility to choose their leaders? Perhaps, Mr. Fischer-Galati, who pretends to be a specialist in Eastern European matters is not at all familiar with the meaning of this type of elections in a Communist Regime!

Concerning the agrarian reform of 1945, the American historian candidly states that it brought satisfaction to the large segment of needy farmer. (page 95) Let us dwell longer on this agricultural political view of the Communist Regime in Romania, and find out how Mr. Fischer-Galati pursues and analyzes the implementation of the regime’s projects in that particular domain. Without being surprised in the least, we note Mr. Fischer-Galati’s thoughts on the subject: “The most significant phenomenon in the process of mutual reconciliation between the party and the people was the agreement to collectivize agriculture in April, 1962. The end result of a measure, which on a theoretical plane was so opposed to the aspirations of the Romanian peasant, did not provoke any negative reaction from the peasantry. The great majority of the rural population readily accepted it as a tolerable solution to the agrarian problem in Romania. It was rightfully suggested that in the process of collectivization, major concessions were made to the farmers. Of great impact was the fact that Gheorghiu-Dej consented that the members of collective farms be allowed to own
individual lots and live stocks for economic exploitation, in addition to collective responsibilities. Also, the provision of financial “stimulants” for the production at stable prices, which goes over the quota obligatory for delivery to the State, kept alive the interest of the rural population. If we compare it to their aspirations, the economic well-being of the peasants is relative; compared with the average standard of living before the war, it is ideal. In 1962, the majority of the rural population of Romania was better dressed and nourished than in 1938.” (page 168) Mr. Fischer-Galati adds, “Even in the cities, the progress is clearly visible.”

“In 1962, Gheorghiu-Dej was able to emphasize the remarkable progress achieved by the urban proletariat, after the purge of the ‘anti-party group’ and as a result of the ‘romanization’ of the communist leadership. Although the need for housing, greatly increased because of the development of urban society, could not be fully satisfied, the construction of workers’ dwellings grew rapidly after 1968. The marked improvement of food supplies and nourishment in the cities, officially attributed to the socialization of agriculture, is also considered as a progress by the regime, as well as by the working-class.” (pages 168-169) Mr. Fischer-Galati’s conclusions in regard to agriculture (which no longer amaze us) can be summed up as follows: “Although it is certain that the modernization of villages (under a non-communist regime) would not have led to collectivization; it is, nevertheless, doubtful that the prosperity of the peasants would have been greater under a non-communist government than it is now under Communist Rule.” (page 218)

Let us set aside the issue of the collectivization of agriculture, the results of which seem to “enthusi” Mr. Fischer-Galati and go on to the industrialization of the country—a matter of great pride for the Bucharest regime. One of the major questions raised in this respect is to find out whether, without a Communist Regime, the problems relative to industrialization would have been the same in present-day Romania. A comparison with the process of industrialization in the free countries of Europe, in the period of time following the war and up to the present time assures us that the industrial economic landscape in our country as a result of an evenly-balanced industrialization, realized with private, national or foreign capital, especially in a free enterprise society, would have certainly been different.

This is not Mr. Fischer-Galati’s opinion, however, and he writes, “Considering all possibilities, and setting aside the crucial problem of private industrial property, the issues raised by industrialization would have been closely related, regardless of the regime at the helm in Romania at the conclusion of World War II. The urbanization of the country, the numerical growth of the working class, the training of technical personnel, as well as the rational acquisition and use of resources would not have been different from the material point of view. The experience recorded in countries like Greece, even Italy and France, which have gone through a rapid industrialization in the post-war years, proved the fact that there are more similarities than differences in the establishment of industrialization and with respect to its impact on those engaged in this process.” (page 218) In the next few pages, the American historian goes on to say: “The communists have eliminated the most backward and old-fashioned practices with the exception of the authoritarian system . . . they modernized economy and set the bases for the future evolution of a modern, industrial State.” (page 223) “The new generation of workers, engineers, technicians and others, who take part in the process of industrialization, are proud of Romania’s achievements.” (page 214) Mr. Fischer-Galati asserts that anyone who crosses the frontier into Romania, coming from the West, will become aware of the stage of modernization attained by the country. “Regardless of the preconceived ideas and attitudes of the tourist, the latter must acknowledge the fact that, at least in the last half of the 20th Century, Romania has become an intrinsic part of the Modern World.” (page 6)

I do not know what Mr. Fischer-Galati understands by “modernization” and “modern industrial State.” Can these terms possibly be applied to contemporary Romania, to a country where the destruction of agriculture inadvertently led to the peasant’s misery, without precedent in the history; where an industrialization of gigantic proportions has drained the resources and potential production of the country, without managing to raise the standard of the people’s living and no one knows precisely if it would ever serve to produce anything of practical use at all? Does Mr. Fischer-Galati realize that today’s Romania—which he considers to have become a modern industrial State—is in the last place in Eastern Europe with respect to its standard of living; namely, in the per capita production and consumption of each individual, ranging from food to electric energy? To be fully convinced of this state of affairs, it would have been enough to make an honest effort and consult yearly statistics published by the Bucharest regime itself or to follow closely Mr. Ceausescu’s speeches and read other Romanian communist leaders’ public statements.

The person, who is writing these lines, is not a convinced adept and over-zealous admirer of a society based on consumption of the type which exists in the West. Its deficiencies, among which a (non-Marxist) alienation of the individual, are major. They have ceaselessly been denounced and criticized innumerable times by noted sociologists and philosophers. One thing is clear, however. The system applied in Eastern Europe, which seemingly tends to build a socialist society multilaterally developed, has proven to be a failure in all areas. This immense failure, and not just a simple impasse, is recognized in the West; and indirectly, even in the East. For this reason, we are not at all surprised by the positive assessments made by a Western historian like Mr. Fischer-Galati when he speaks about the industrial development of our country and its modernization. The lack of information and naive admiration for impressive figures and statistics cannot stand against any solid and basic analysis of facts.

I ought to accept perhaps the first hypothesis, considering that in Mr. Fischer-Galati’s book I encountered so many erroneous and confusing dates and information concerning recent events. In the foreword presentation of the book, Romania is described as “the richest and largest country in Eastern Europe.” Mr. Fischer-Galati speaks about “the later acquittal by a Military Tribune of I.G. Duca’s assassins,” (page 49) while it is common knowledge that the latter were condemned to life imprisonment and executed in 1938. Our author states that during 1930-1940 (early thirties), “Nicolae Ceausescu, Miron Constantinescu and Alexandru Barladeanu assumed prominence in the Romanian Communist Movement.” (page 76) Now, at least as far as Nicolae Ceausescu is concerned, he was only 16-17 years old at the time! Referring to the reinstatement by the communists of the county division, as an administrative unit, our historian states that “pre-war names of individual counties were restored.” (pages 203-204) To our knowledge, there never were in Greater Romania counties named “Vrancea, Harghita or Covasna.” Mr. Fischer-Galati informs his readers that the “new
Romanian Penal Code was adopted in April 1968, (page 204) thus, advancing at least by three months the date of its acceptance by the Great National Assembly.

Most assuredly, one can dismiss all these errors and many others, as simple details. But the Anglo-Saxon researchers of Romanian history, who will seek dates and reference points in Mr. Fischer-Galati's study, deserve to be more correctly informed; not to mention the fact that when he evokes certain aspects of literary life in Romania, Mr. Fischer-Galati makes certain remarks and comparisons which could be very amusing and downright hilarious, if they would not clearly evidence how little he knows about the subjects he so painfully strives to discuss. For example, Mr. Fischer-Galati puts in one basket writers like Victor Eftimiu, Mihai Sadoveanu and Cezar Petrescu. (page 113) He writes, "nonpolitical poets, such as Grigore Alexandrescu and Tudor Arghezi" (page 114) which is not only an incomplete but also an erroneous statement.

All these errors committed by the American historian could be considered minor in a final analysis. Indulgent and tolerant as we Romanians are, we could very well disregard and forget them. After all, Mr. Fischer-Galati is the only historian who, here in the Western world, writes about matters he is not too well acquainted with. Nevertheless, Mr. Fischer-Galati surpasses all measures and excels in competition with himself, especially when he attempts to offer proof to his eventual readers that the Communist Regime has reestablished the historic traditions of the Romanian people, "thus fulfilling its centuries-old aspirations." This conclusion seems to have been the principal aim of the author, evident in the final pages of the volume, Twentieth Century Romania. "Finis coronat opus."

In the last chapter of the book, which bears the strange title "Legacy Rein-stated," as well as the epilogue entitled, "Continuity and Change," Mr. Fischer-Galati did tackle the delicate problem of the national and nationalist attitudes of the present-day Communist Regime of Bucharest. Here are a few statements in this respect: "Nicolae Ceausescu, not only fulfills the policies of Gheorghiu-Dej; but also continues the Romanian historic tradition in its totality." (page 182) "Gheorghiu-Dej's nationalism was born from political needs, as well as self-devotion; while Ceausescu's nationalism is deeply rooted in his personal and political experience. This nationalist feeling is definitely not a reaction against Moscow's determination to remove him from power or to intervene in the internal affairs of a country which, after all, is a member of the Soviet Block." (page 184)

Mr. Fischer-Galati continues, "Ceausescu has assumed the responsibility to accomplish the national and democratic historic tradition of the country and the party," (page 184) After he asks whether Nicolae Ceausescu's pretension of continuing and achieving historic traditions and national aspirations can be accepted, Mr. Fischer-Galati discusses the issue, if there can exist a compatibility between communism and historic traditions; if the two complement each other; and if the Communist Party could be identified with the historic aspirations of the Romanian people.

The American historian's answer is hesitant, but affirmative: "The policies and measures taken by Nicolae Ceausescu, regardless whether they were determined by the necessities of a political order, by the realities of the international situation, or his sincere conviction that socialism represents an inevitable synthesis of the Romanian historic experience and national aspirations, casts serious doubts on the theory of absolute incompatibility between the historic evolution of Romanian and Communist Order of today." (page 222) Mr. Fischer-Galati goes even further to state that "Ceausescu's theory, in conformity with which the historic aspirations of the people have been attained by his regime, seems to have been accepted in the measure in which the people no longer consider the Romanian Communist Regime as being alien to them." (page 214)

How ridiculous it is to believe that the Communist Party (indeed!!) continues our historic traditions and accomplishes the national aspirations of the Romanian people! Yet, however strange this may seem to us, this is the conclusion reached by the American historian. We wonder, though, what traditions is he talking about and which specific aspirations have, supposedly, been attained? Are they evidenced in the lack of political freedom in today's Romania, in the preservation of an inhumane regime of oppression, so contrary to our Romanian traditional sense of humanity? Are these aspirations existent in institutions and in the new laws, in the economic and social life of the country? To take an example at random, does the prosecutor's office (the magistracy) have any common link with the past, with the Romanian judicial system? Does Mr. Fischer-Galati have in mind the collectivization of agriculture and its destruction, the excessive plainification of a bankrupt economy? Could there be anything more alien and unrelated to the Romanian spirit and mentality than a system which crushes the being and hinders all its creative initiatives? Is the Romanian peasant, worker or intellectual able to identify with this kind of system or feel any affinity with it? Why does Mr. Fischer-Galati ignore the fact that the Romanians, being of Latin origin (fortunately or unfortunately), have an ancestral horror of everything that comes forced upon them from the East? Does he think for one moment that it is sufficient for a political leader like Ceausescu to assume the image and deeds of Stephen the Great or Michael the Brave, to be considered the successor and hero of Romanian national aspirations?

In his book, Mr. Fischer-Galati mentions at a given moment the manner in which Romanian history was written in the past, rewritten and reinterpreted from the moment the Communist Regime took over the control of Romania. Did the author adopt this particular method, namely, the Marxist-Leninist criteria in regard to writing of history? We are indeed led to believe that therein lies the explanation for the American historian's exposition and conclusions. It becomes even more evident in the preface of his book, where Mr. Fischer-Galati offers thanks to his "colleagues from Romania and the United States" who gave him advice, information and encouragement in the course of the preparation of his study.

In spite of this, it is difficult for me to believe that a history professor at an American university could allow himself to fall under the influence of those who today write history in Bucharest and whose underhanded methods of gathering information must be familiar to him. In the years following the war, the sad memory and example of Michael Roller's official manual of history, right up to the time when the history of Romania was published by the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, our national history has been distorted and reinterpreted in accordance with the designs of the Communist Party.

At any rate, the current book, authored by history professor Mr. Fischer-Galati, does not honor at all the scientific pursuits he claims to respect and share with his
readers. However, Clio is relentless in her refusal to forgive. Sooner or later, she demands the truth—nothing but the truth. Mr. Stephen Fischer-Galati should take heed of this.

translated by
Vasile C. Barsan

ROMANIAN COLLECTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In this first issue of Romanian Sources we present the beginning of our annotated bibliography of the Romanian collection in the University of Pittsburgh Libraries.

This collection has been growing and expanding over the last several years to meet the increasing academic and scholarly needs of those engaged in the study of East European countries and their cultures. The University’s Center for International Studies and its Russian and East European Program have been vigorously pursuing and encouraging a wide range of research activities in many areas in this field for both faculty and students.

The University of Pittsburgh Library, recognizing its responsibility to support such activities has promptly responded with an all-out effort to build a fine collection worthy of anyone’s attention. The core of the Romanian material was formed by the purchase of Donald Dunham’s private collection. Mr. Dunham was for many years an American government representative in Bucharest and his holdings, especially in the field of history, offer a rewarding basis for anyone interested in Romanian affairs. In addition, the library has, through careful selection and acquisition, purchased a large number of books, journals, and newspapers representing all the educational disciplines and reflecting all points of view and all shades of political persuasion to enrich curriculum and research needs. And through the library’s active and alert Gift and Exchange Department, many more items are acquired each year.

The development of this Romanian collection has been truly impressive. In the areas of history, literature, linguistics, and economics it is particularly solid. The casual library patron will find many items of interest relating to the art, folk customs, and social activities of both old and modern Romania. Scholars will surely delight in the depth and range of the holdings.

So we are pleased to offer this annotated bibliography to our readers, who we hope, will take advantage of and enjoy our collection.

John Halmaghi
Alice Hart
1. Academia Republicii Populare Române.
   A history of Romania with a Marxist approach. The authors contend that early Romanian historiographers falsified and hid the truth in order to defend bourgeois interests. "The achievements obtained by the old historiography should not be used for the scientific elaboration of (Romanian) history, but (should be) reconsidered by historical materialism."

2. Academia Republicii Populare Române.
   *Omagiu lui Constantin Daicoviciu cu prileful împlinitrii a 60 de ani.* București, 1960, xix, 576 p. qGA8/A3
   A collection of essays presented in homage to Constantin Daicoviciu on his birthday by friends, colleagues, and former students who share Professor Daicoviciu's interest in the ancient history of the Romanian people, especially in Dacia and Dacia Romana. Contributions, covering a wide range of topics (economics, politics, culture, etc.) in Romanian, French, German, Italian or Russian with summaries in French and Russian for the Romanian contributions. Bio-bibliographical data on Professor Daicoviciu included.

   A useful bibliographical tool for those interested in Romanian literature for the period covered 1948-1960. The authors are grouped alphabetically with their original works and biographical and bibliographical references. In addition, there is a list of pertinent periodicals and bibliographical section on Romanian folklore.

   Part of a vast study plan of research seeking to reach an "anthropological synthesis of Romanian people." Clopotiva is a locality which has been inhabited since the paleolithic period. Anthropological, typological, serological and genealogical data are provided with documentary photos. Summaries and explanations in English and Russian are added.

   An anthropological study of Bâtrâna in Transylvania by Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1961. 407 p. qDR296/B3A6. endocrinological and biochemical tests, the stage of morphological anthropology which characterized anthropology in Romania during the first half of our century, has been surpassed." Summaries in English and Russian are provided.

   *Micul atlas linguistic român.* Serie noua. Sub directia lui Emil Petrovici. An atlas initially published in collaboration with Sever Pop who devised the first plan for a linguistic atlas. The maps are handwritten. The technical presentation is excellent. These maps comprise only the lexicography. The phonetic, morphological and final synthesis will be published separately.

   One of the most complete chrestomathies of the Romance languages. The collection of the texts is organized on chronological criteria. Each chapter is provided with a special bibliography for the respective language, in addition to a general bibliography. The texts are accompanied by a short introduction with comments on the author or work under discussion. There is a glossary for those words not found in any dictionary.

8. Academia Republicii Socialiste România.
   An abbreviated edition of the history of the Romanian Academy on the occasion of its 100 years of existence, 1866-1966. Discussion of the founders of this academy is limited to only 62 of the 152 pages.

   Contributions on various aspects of Romanian linguistics (semantics, influences, etc.) in honor of Alexandru Rosetti's 70th birthday. Texts are in Romanian, Portuguese and Russian. A bibliography of Rosetti's works is included.

10. Adaniloae, Nichita.
    A discussion of the development of the events which led to the formation of the Romanian state, notably the awareness of the Romanian people of their common origin and language, and the struggle for the union of the Romanian provinces of Moldavia and Muntenia in 1859 and Transylvania in 1918. Bessarabia is not mentioned at all.
   *Domenicoara din str. Neptun. Revolte.* (București) Editura pentru Litera-
   *Mârturia unei generații.* București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1967. xix,
   A collection of interesting interviews about Romanian literature with
   Romanian writers living in 1928-1929. This book is a revised edition of selected
   parts of the original.
13. Agârbiceanu, Ion, 1882-
   *Arhanghelii;* roman. 2d ed. (București) Editura Librăriei “Universala,”
14. Agârbiceanu, Ion, 1882-
   *Legea trupului (povestea unei vieți);* roman. București, Editura Librăriei
15. Agârbiceanu, Ion, 1882-
   *Legea mânții (povestea altei vieți);* roman. București, Editura Librariei
   *Ballades et chants populaires de la Roumanie* (Principauté Danubiennes)
   recueillies et traduites par V. Alexandri. Avec une introduction par A. Ubicini.
   A French translation of selected Romanian ballads and popular poetry by
   the first collector of Romanian folklore. The introduction by Ubicini offers a
   discussion of the merits of Romanian folklore and an analysis of certain Ro-
   manian proverbs which illustrate specific conceptions of life.
17. Alexandri, Vasile, 1820-1890.
   *Doine și lăcătinare;* poezii I. Prefața de Paul Cornea. (București) Editura
18. Alexandri, Vasile, 1820-1890.
19. Alexandri, Vasile, 1820-1890.
   *Opere.* Text ales si stabilit de G. C. Nicolescu Editura pentru Literatură,
   An almost complete collection of Alexandri’s poetry, including the folk-
   lore collected and published by him.
   *Proză.* Ed. îngrijită și studiu introductiv de G. C. Nicolescu. București,
   An almost complete collection of Alexandru’s prose. This edition includes
   many titles from forgotten periodicals and manuscripts.
21. Alexandrescu, Nicolae G.
   *La correspondance du Chevalier Frédéric de Gentz avec le Prince de
   DB80.8/G4A4.
   A picture of Eastern European politics in the early years of the nineteenth
   century. In 1812, Austria changed her position vis-à-vis Russia. Wishing to help
   the Turks against Russia, the Austrian Chancellor Metternich prompted de Gentz
   to correspond secretly with Caradja, the Wallachian ruler to this end. The author
   sheds some light on the political manoeuvres of the time.
22. Alexandrescu, Grigore, 1812-1885.
   *Opere.* Ed. critică, note, variante și bibliografie de I. Fischer: studiu intro-
   ductiv de Silvian Iosifescu. București, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Ar-ță,
   1957- PC839/A55/1957x.
23. Alexandru, Ion.
   PC840.1/L4V3.
24. Alfoldi, Andras, 1895-
   *Daci e Romani in Transilvania.* Budapest, Edizione della Società Mattia
   A reworking of the old thesis of the German scholar Roesler to prove that
   the origin of the Romanian people is located in Balkans, not Transylvania. The
   author recognizes the Roman and Thracian inheritance of the Romanian people,
   but disregards completely the stand of the leading Romanian historians.
25. Aliminti, Ugo.
   *La Romania;* monografia storico-fisico-politica. Torino, Casa Editrice Na-
   zionale, 1903. 263 p. DR212/A4.
   A synthesis of historical, literary geographical and political data on Ro-
   mania. The data are not based on a scientific approach, but there are some
   original comments on Romanian questions.
   A collection of Romanian literature before 1944, including articles, essays,
   poetry and prose, as well as literary works of Romanians in exile. This is a mirror
   of Romanian intellectual life in the free world.
27. Amante, Bruto. 
La România. Roma, Bruto Amante, Editore, 1888. DR212/A45.
A travel book in which one finds geographical description, data on customs, literary activities, folklore, religion, and historical episodes with prominent personalities. At the beginning, the author presents a documentary on the ethnological sources of Romanian history.

28. Amzăr, Dumitru Cristian. 
A polemical criticism of the concept of the Science of Nation which was proposed by Professor Gusti.

29. Amzăr, Dumitru Cristian. 
A criticism of the monographic method of research in sociology initiated by Gusti. The author is a former member of the Romanian Sociological School of Thought headed by Gusti.

30. Amzulescu, Al. I. 
A selection of Romanian ballads from the existing literature. Nothing new here. The selection appears to have been made only for representative themes, for which there is an index and bibliography. Texts are accompanied by very good annotations. The introduction includes a discussion of the origin, value and classification of the ballads with an original classification system.

31. Anagost, Michel. 
A plea for the independence of Romanian principalities from any foreign influence and for a new internal political organization to assure this independence. The approach and the analyses are original and polemical.

32. Anania, Valeriu. 

33. Anderco, Artemie, 1853– 
A diary of a Romanian student journeying in Europe. This work sheds light on the psychology of the Romanian intellectual in the third quarter of the 19th century.

34. Anderson, Matthew Smith. 
A study of the union of the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Muntenia. Questions of Bessarabia and Transylvania are treated also as part of the so-called South-East Europe.

35. Andritoiu, Alexandru. 

36. Anghelescu, Mircea. 
A discussion, especially through poetry and translations, of Romanian literature from the second half of the 18th century up to 1840, with emphasis on the origin, development and characteristics of pre-romanticism in Romania.

37. Antim, St. 
An original concept of law. To the author's mind, the function of law is essentially the same as the function of the state: namely, to guarantee the production of goods. Here, the law is considered a simple reflection of economics.

38. Antologia gîndirii Românești, secolele XV–XIX. 
An anthology, more political than philosophical, intended to demonstrate the progressivist tradition in Romanian culture in accordance with dialectical Marxism applied to Romania.

39. Antonescu, G. G. 
A complete treatise on education. The value, methods and limits of pedagogy are discussed with their historical and comparative implications; the Romanian situation is particularly stressed.

40. Antonescu, Mihail, 1904-1946. 
A good source of information on Romanian legislation. This is a presentation of the legislative reforms of the times by the Minister of Justice during the Legionary government, 1940-1941 under General Antonescu.
41. Apostolescu, N. I.
   A documentary literary history demonstrating the influence of French romanticism on Romanian poetry. With an impressive number of examples, the author further shows the spread of romanticism into Romanian literature at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries.

42. Arghezi, Tudor (pseud.)

43. Arghezi, Tudor (pseud.)
   An anthology relevant for the polemical style of the author.

44. Arghezi, Tudor (pseud.)

45. Arghezi, Tudor (pseud.)

46. Aricescu, C. D.
   An invaluable collection of documents concerning the Romanian revolution of 1821, including letters and acts of donation, with special emphasis on the speeches and letters of Tudor Vladimirescu, the leader of the revolution.

47. Arta populară în Republica Populară Română.
   A source book for Romanian popular art, including national costume and embroidery, with 56 illustrations in color, 433 in black and white.

48. Aspects des relations russo-roumaines, retrospectives et orientations.
   A comprehensive account of the historical, political, ethnical, diplomatic and economic relations between Romania and Russia (Czarist and Communist). An original feature here is the ideological controversy in this approach.

49. *Atlas geografic Republica Socialistă România.*
   The first geographic atlas published after 1944 in Romania. Work was begun in 1940 by the Romanian Geographical Society which was later dissolved. Contains various data on physical, geological, climatological, agricultural and industrial geography.

50. Averescu, Alexandru.
   A personal narration of the facts, situations and complexity of problems faced by Marshal Averescu in his position as General Commander of the Romanian Army II in 1916-1918 during the Germano-Romanian War. This is a fine source of information for that period of time.