

# THE MESSAGE OF THE ROMANIAN CULTURE IN THE POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL CONFIGURATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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## Abstract

*The analysis of the fundamental features that could define a message of the Romanian culture in the political and spiritual configuration of the contemporary world is a major concern because the Romanian culture occupies a special position in Europe. It has a valuable past enough to have confidence in itself.*

*In the contemporary stage, the Romanian culture is a positive factor in the planetary spiritual and artistic evolution, giving it a universal destiny.*

*In the process of culture creation two factors attend: the individual and the society. But culture is not the same everywhere, because depending on the state of society and cultural values developed by individuals, it is understood that vary with different forms of society.*

*The Romanian culture occupies a special position within the European continent, as it has a valuable past enough to justify the confidence in it self and ensure a welcoming audience on behalf of the past.*

*The major European cultures appeared on the universal scene and they had a global influence at a time because of synchronies, the matching condition of their historical specificity and the universal imperatives of a certain age. Not geography, not demography, not weapons were determined to share the universal destiny of nations created by specific cultures, but their ability to formulate and meet the needs of a particular historical development, in which other peoples and other cultures were involved.*

**Keywords:** culture, cultural values, society, creation, spiritual evolution

In a time when the Romanian presence in terms of major political and moral debate involved in the genesis process of a new world has become objective, we are asking which are the fundamental characteristics that could define a "message of the Romanian culture".

One of the features is "*the availability for universal*"<sup>2</sup>, the ability to intuit the universal structures of past historical and cultural reality as an inner necessity of self-definition and self-assertion. Today the Romanian culture has the largest inner freedom from the old structures, as appropriate as to join and contribute to develop new structures heavily.

The second key feature of Romanian culture and our spiritual structure itself is "*the realism*"<sup>3</sup>, which is the inner willingness to perceive the reality of life beyond just abstract patterns; to continually keep contact with it, to see and discover the deep structures of reality behind the phenomena.

Synchronies and affinities existed in the secular traditions of the Romanian culture and they invite us to meditation on its own genius, trends, aspirations, and sometimes dramatic search of the contemporary world.

## The Romanian culture-European synthesis

To understand the evolution of the Romanian culture, setting the place, the role and the value of the Romanian creations within the civilization of our continent, we must start from the training reality in the Middle Ages, of the two areas of culture in Europe and of two types of civilization.

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<sup>2</sup> Dan, Zamfirescu, *Romanian Culture European synthesis*, (Bucharest: International Letter Publishing, 2002),

<sup>3</sup> Idem, 22.

The first is the dominant religious culture area of the Roman Catholic Church, using Latin as the main means of expression to the emergence of the national literatures, and living the glorious memories of the Roman Empire, who unified to the late Antiquity, the Mediterranean civilization. All non-Latin peoples belong to this area, except the Romanians, and it integrated- in the 5th-9th centuries- Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples, further promoting the great modern spiritual revolution which was the Reform.<sup>4</sup>

A second culture and civilization area revolve around Byzantium, combining, in an original synthesis, the idea of the Romanian state, territory of the Eastern Empire, Greek culture as a cultural tool, and cultivating the memory and pride of the more pregnant Greek heritage from the 9th century.

The Romanian people appears later than other European nations on the stage of history, after an anonymous existence for centuries, whose main virtue was to ensure its duration, therefore, to maintain the difficult circumstances the being of the people, the language and even the name (the Romanians are the only people of Latin descent who kept the name the Romans). Mentioned by sources only in the 10th century, and living until the 14th century, the state forms of life do not allow a large deployment and any large-scale of cultural action, Romanians are building their strong state lives and the written culture flourishes only in the 14th century and a new political culture starts only with the fifteenth century. Then we started a Romanian chapter in the history of European civilization, but the Romanians, as descenders of two peoples, wrote their names deeply in the antique history and civilization.

### **The Romanian culture in the European culture**

The entire human progress can be analyzed from two points of view: invention-creation, the latter resulting in the collective effort of those who agree with the creative genius and turns his revolutionary dream into a work servicing the humanity. Without the hard working hands of the genius assistant, without the calculation of Gorjan engineer and without the money investment of those who sponsored the work, both the highly complex art of Targu Jiu and the Sistine Chapel or the foundations of Stephen the Great would have remained mere sketches on cards creators.

The creative gesture is, then, with all its social conditionings, a social act. The company can stimulate or inhibit the progress from the acceptance and dissemination of new findings, to the creation of an entire environment that magnetizes creative energy producing real explosions, real geniuses waterfalls, or from the disinterest and bantering of the creator to climbing him on a scaffold. Hence, the possibility that the study of the individual and historical conditions appears and the stimulation or inhibition occurs by different nature to the creative act. Thus, an autonomous science is born.

The prestige of a culture never comes from outside. It is a climate irradiation from within, of pride, dignity, self-safety which the creative people emit at a time. Creators do not write for awards or abroad recognition, but write only to serve their nation which is in a happy moment for historical affirmation. The prestige of a culture does not derive from good or bad translations, but derives from the need that I feel, at some point, other cultures to enrich the spiritual power to treasure and experience that culture.

The moment that today's Romanian creator will penetrate deep down to his greatness, dignity and culture that is the actuality, he will not find other places and certificates will bear up before all those who will marvel.

### **Romanian cultural integration in the new European reality**

Even if "the european ideeă" is deeply and actively interested in just an intellectual elite, city, civic, quite small, we have no doubt that this idea will grow over time as the structure and living

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<sup>4</sup> Vasile, Miftode, and others, *European integration and interculturalism. Development of ethno-cultural communities*, (Bucharest: Lumen House, 2008), 78

conditions of the country will change. From a predominantly intellectual phenomenon, the "European spirit" will become more and more public reality, treated in depth. Together with all democratic forces of the country, it will determine a new policy of a Christian or liberal democrat type. It is, in fact, the only real and effective alternative to current nomenclature State. Ultimately, the report must be fundamentally reversed to the centralized state, which leads, coordinates and distributes in order to stimulate and protect. Its function is only subsidiary. As the civil society develops, its role gradually narrows: minimal state-European state, as the product of a new historical development. This requires a profound change of ideological, political and social angle.

The left, right or center culture means axiological balance of values, liberalism, humanism, said Europeanism and active convergence and even synthesis of national and universal values, rationalism and critical spirit.

Three very clear intellectual attitudes can be predicted: permanent connection to the values, ideas and European culture, serious European documentation (library, university, museums, etc...), the extent of any dilettantism and amateurism, cultural achievements of Europe (like writing and value), the Romanian environment, and the people of Romanian culture.

European cultural integration, coupled with the taking of the spiritual identity, begins to increase. If until 1940, it had a predominantly "historic" and "philological" character, through important contributions in these directions, sometimes "artistic" under the totalitarian pressure began to escape, as well as in the entire socialist camp and in the "literary" and "literary studies" area.<sup>5</sup>

From the perspective of the new European reality (by which we understand both the present, as a result, in particular, the collapse of the communist dictatorship in Europe) and, especially, of the future one, the factors that can facilitate the cultural integration of Romania in the new European reality are essentially internal: first, a real European integration policy, taken consistently, constantly and tenaciously under the pressure of external factors, mostly the economic ones. Secondly, it requires a radical change of public spirit, leaving the isolationist mentality, specific, traditionalist, etc. ethnical, cultivated for decades here in Romania by the nationalist right, since the two world wars. Thirdly, an active policy of cultural contacts, as a necessary consequence of mood changes described above: the constant and active participation in various international bodies and literary cultural associations, congresses at international conferences (scholarships and travel), the organization of such events in our country (a long-term investment, high return but cultural) co-editing financing and translations in foreign languages (a very important objective of any active cultural policy).

Particular literary, editorial and individual initiative of the writers, men of culture, plays an important role. They can not expect only a hypothetical support of the official bodies (which often it is not coming), but they must try to integrate themselves. Some examples can also be given in this sense (in literature, criticism, literary theory, comparative), but they are still few and without external prestige and circulation. Only writers like M.Sadoveanu and L. Rebreanu, between the two wars, began to be concerned about these issues and to be translated into some languages. A persistent concern in this regard appeared, seemingly paradoxically, only during the communist dictatorship as a form of escape and direct manifestation of European consciousness repressed.

Looking deep, beyond the external factors, the key issue of European integration is essentially in Romania, the fundamental social structure. A rural and inevitably ethnic, conservative, isolationist, traditionalist, "semanatorist" Romania will not ever feel the need for Europe. Instead, it will perceive it as a serious threat to maintaining "national being". Only a city, urban, open, permeable to foreign influences, and prone to "cosmopolism" phenomena Romania can have real aspirations and "European" needs. Romania's current structure is still essentially rural, with all its negative phenomena. Only mid-range future, urban, Romanian, can effectively absorb and cultivate the European idea. It is now maintained by the Romanian intellectual remnants of the old aristocracy and

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<sup>5</sup> Andrei, Petre, *Sociological Works, Volume II, Sociology of politics and culture*, (Bucharest: Academy Socialist Republic of Romania, 1975) 139.

bourgeoisie, how many could be saved. It is an ongoing, long, lasting, and in the current political and economic conditions still undecided. Between "Europeanization" and "privatization" it is a direct indissoluble Romanian relation, because only economic independence provides effective liberty thinking and cultural relations. In a strictly centralized state, European integration is seen as an attempt at independence and "national sovereignty".<sup>6</sup>

Some blocking, rejecting or docile and lacking personality alignment "European" psychological factors are very considerable. The inferiority complex is still raging.

It can not be overlooked some irritating attitudes of Western "superiority complex". Some deeply mediocre, lack of competence cultural officials in the services of some embassies, institutes, libraries, unfortunately sometimes have a superior attitude, distance, some would say even "neo". The reaction of the writers, people of Romanian culture in Europe is actually consciousness, in some cases, inevitable and natural restraint, reserved, of non-cooperation.

Although the cultural gap of reference and erudition is still immense, in some specific cases, rare indeed, but existing, the question is why a Romanian author would be eternally "forced" to cite only foreign references, and a foreign author, in a certain precise issue, is not interested, in turn, in what has been published and new? Including, sometimes, foreign languages, even on the same subject? Why these references would be, in principle at least, of virtually equal quality?

The studies of "comparative literature" have, as a vocation, the study of literary relations in two ways. Why they would carry only "Eurocentric" one-way? The current European scientific and literary mentality is fragmentary, strictly specialized on strict partitions. Study and life often edit only a single author, etc... Many critics consider European comparative generalizations, summaries, general theories as dilettantism phenomena and even inferiority, etc... It is obvious that things, in some specific cases, at least, are completely different.

The undoubtedly sincere, genuine failure to perceive the real, objective, aesthetic reactions is visible especially in the ideological sphere. Researcher and western reviewers, formed in a democratic, liberal type, where these realities are introduced for a long time and lived in the most natural way in the world, simply can not understand how, in the East, there is (or was ) possible to invoke the idea of freedom, human rights etc.. He thinks, in his view (and so is) that it actually forces the open doors unnecessarily.

The Romanian foreign cultural device (but the situation is characteristic of all former communist countries to some extent) is not at all appropriate, as mentality and methods of European integration of Romanian values. Bureaucratic mentality, centralized, on the other hand makes it unable to adapt flexible total diversity in a free Europe society of literary relations, journalism and publishing. free Europe.

"Integration" does not threaten the existence of "national character" in any way. This "specific" evolves, is enriched, and is nuanced by all fertile influences and purchases of "integration". This alarm is maintained artificially and especially by the conservative traditionalists. The process of assimilation, osmosis and interdependence is universal and the Romanian literature (like any other) can not escape, according to its specific historical context and conditions.

For Romania to be made known, introductory works, reference guides, the history are needed for the general public. "In the editorial, the order would be this: novel, essay, drama. .... Unfortunately, we relied almost exclusively to poetry.

The changing the editorial landscape is in a sense, radical. There was, first, the foreign literature category of consumption, mass, high circulation, totally unknown, for example, before 1989. This kind of translation is by far dominant. Another new category is the emergence of political essay translations, political works of reference, the liberal-democratic, and it completely unknown before. A new species is the category of memoirs, diaries, memories (including detention), unpublished correspondence. Another unusual category: large quantities of literature, esoteric, occult,

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<sup>6</sup> Anton, Nicolescu, *National sovereignty and European integration* , (Iasi: Polirom 2002,) 142

more or less dubious. The phenomenon is, however, inevitably, after a very vulgar militant atheism. Great success and some novels or stories are full of real or alleged revelations about the "old regime", "revolution", "security", etc... It continues to appear literary and critical type operas, so called, traditionalist, but without the sales and listed audience categories. Some magazines prize the original literature today, without a great echo and influence especially on the commercial market the book.

The Romanian literature adapts to these needs with great difficulty and, so far at least, without success, hence the desperate calls for sponsorship and grants, denouncing "cultural crisis" appear.

The cultural integration can be facilitated (and assumed) by intense culture exchanges (contacts) between Romania and Western European countries (cultural agreements, scholarships, participation in international cultural events, etc...) The activity of the government bodies, institutions or other is not sufficient for this purpose. The lack of funds is a great handicap. But the biggest obstacle is the spirit of anti-Western, anti-liberal and anti-pluralist. Everything has been done can be done by the Romanian culture and Romanian culture is not simply the Ministry of Culture, but is almost exclusively the result of private, informal initiatives.

### **The Romanian culture between Est and West**

The Romanian culture, namely the modern Romanian culture from the 18th and 19 to go directly to fund problem-is the product of Western fast synchronization. At the same time, traditional background, history, the late Middle Ages, remains very strong. The result is a characteristic situation: the confluence of two cultural spheres, without real affinity, deep, between them, modern Romanian culture is full of interference, the ambiguities and even inevitable conflicts.

Faced between West and East, the Romanian culture is dominated since the last century, by two major complexes: the west (Western) and Eastern (Oriental). "Between isolation and escape, chauvinistic and proud nationalism, the exacerbated nationalistic anger and western docile, even humble alignment, knocking on all doors in the western continent, Romanian cultural consciousness has not yet found, unfortunately, the balance and peace of mind and creative spirit."<sup>7</sup>

The Western psychology of seduction, of emigration, of the flight at all costs, has reached deep layers of the population. It needs a collective effort for a real political culture, including cultural distribution abroad. Objectives as competent, honest and free instruments and organs as organized, skilled and active must guide the presentation of Romanian culture and literature through systematic acts of knowledge and dissemination. We need competence and professionalism, spirit of cooperation throughout the EU, to participate with equal rights. It indicated the spirit of cooperation and team spirit in the new Europe that is necessary and that we can not ignore it or boycott it. Thinking and acting so far means not to be integrated in synchronous rhythm of the contemporary world.

The European and universal culture requires communication and circulation of free culture, continue to stimulate and intensify the exchange of values everywhere.

The European culture requires and stimulates cooperation and mutual influence. It promotes a permeable, responsive, sensitive, and open to creative and differentiation assimilations literature. Fostering friendly relations, mutual tolerance are correct and moral imperative and literary needs and outstanding.

We ask ourselves: what kind of culture is better? In what direction is the Romanian culture to turn? To develop? To be nurtured and supported? The answer depends, for a long time, our entire culture and political advancement, both official and especially the private.

We lived for decades under a culture of "left". Its effects are still felt heavily in legislative and administrative measures in language skills and clichés. Most obvious and dominant notes are the collective values, social order and norms, where the authority of a unique idea, the centralism,

<sup>7</sup> Adrian, Marino, *For Europe. Romania's integration. Ideological and cultural aspects*, (Iasi: Polirom, 1995),

conducting, planning, control, uniformity, intolerance are. The state is and remains the great patron-owner, the great administrator of culture. There is a ruling class and culture of a cultural nomenclature. It exercised censorship and cultural policy and reject pluralism as totalitarian order, split, dissidents, so the culture of hate left, fights cultural pluralism, private initiative, intellectual freedom with all its consequences: the expression of personality, originality, experimental, out of time. The principle of individual creativity essentially denies the left culture. Left ideal of culture is that all people of culture to be and remain the state officials to be better employed, directed, supervised, controlled and punished.

In Romania, the whole right ideology came back to the surface and dominated the current Romanian culture. Its exponents are philosophers, essayists, writers of great value, from Nae Ionescu to Emil Cioran, from Mircea Eliade to Constantin Noica.

Between these two compact blocks the Romanian center, frail, intimidated, isolated, without great traditions date, caught between two fires, under pressure from the left and right-wing extremism culture is a very difficult position. The center cultural values are hated in both directions, left or right: axiological balance between values, liberalism, pluralism, humanism, Europeanism, convergence and even synthesis of national and universal values, rationalism and critical spirit, a "common sense" that extremists despise, adherence to human rights and citizen<sup>8</sup>, civil society by integrating nostalgia, direct participation and responsibility of the individual are still perfectly legitimate aspirations of any post-totalitarian society.

In Romania, in the countries of the East in general, this type of thinking and culture is neither obsolete nor exhausted, nor utopian. He is a great need, a real alternative, which alone can oppose extremes. Culture is the center but spiritual freedom, truth and real integration in democratic Europe.

### **The Romanian "lights" and Europe discovery**

At the end of 18th century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the novelistic intellectuals make a true "crisis" of European consciousness, spiritual solidarity with the first signs of civilization, culture and history of Western ideas and values, style and design dates back to life that time. The need to be in Europe, to bring it to our home was acute and urgent. This magical notion contained a global concept: admiration and inferiority complex, emulation and envy, hope and rebellion, and integration ideal, desire and progress, regeneration and rehabilitation. The true spiritual mutation, Romanian crucial moment in the history of consciousness and experiencing first phase of modernization, the discovery of Europe by the "lights" Romanian crucial raises cultural and comparative history and ideas.

European lights were indeed fertile and creative both in the spiritual and cultural Romanian space, because they determine the revelation of our own beings, reveal us in front of our own consciousness. European lights Romanian decisively help the Romanian spirit to discover its identity, to form its own aspirations, beliefs and European dimension. It suddenly had the revelation and conscience of being European. Cultural exponents of the Romanian people proclaim that they are Europeans, are in Europe, speak a European language and live in a European country.

The fundamental reality of time is as follows: for the Romanian Enlightenment, Europe was essentially a geographical or geopolitical notion but a cultural, spiritual pole. It expresses values, creations, original ideological trends: a new culture and literature, new and advanced social and political institutions, achieving a high level of progress, culture and civilization. This concept was tied to the belief that Europe radiates and gives new impetus to a cultural process, high quality of

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<sup>8</sup> Human rights are classified according to various criteria, but the classification is used which is based on two international human rights pacts. Thus, according to those documents referred to, human rights can be divided into the following broad categories: political, economic and social, cultural. (For more details see Cristina Otovescu FRAS human rights in contemporary society, Romanian Writing Publishing House, Craiova, 2009, p. 22-23)

everything the Romanians knew before. Its meaning is equivalent to a real break, mutation and spiritual revolution.

Europe has all the characteristics of a cultural "model" in its fundamental meanings: "normative ideal, a force-idea, which proposes models, examples, paths to follow, imitate, assimilate, ideological system that organizes a whole, according to a structure basic data that fall within its scope, theoretical, abstract, autonomous plan functioning according to its internal logic, even if the image data does not take account of all Western reality".<sup>9</sup> The European idea operates uniformly in all Romanian countries, with specific features, but in the same system of thought. How Romanians find, adapt and make their own picture of Europe, through a spontaneous act of adhesion, is itself functioning of the European model.

The study of the Romanian Enlightenment essentially needs a new and direct reading of the sources. They corrected many schemes, unverified general, outdated teaching exposures, repetition of commonplaces.

Much higher frequency of direct and indirect contact (reading, translation, travel, business education institutions, foreign teachers, intellectual atmosphere) is that "European model" to clarify and to state power in the first Romanian countries, Moldova and Walachia, and the end of the 18th century.

Legătura între iluminare, integrare și recunoaștere europeană constituie un adevărat principiu ideologic. Iar aceste participări-concepute, în principiu, pe picior de egalitate-vor deveni tot mai frecvente pe măsură ce cultura română se dezvoltă în țările noastre și se dovedesc tot mai capabile de inițiative și manifestări pe plan internațional.

The relationship between light, European integration and recognition is a real ideological principle. And these designed participations, in principle, on an equal footing, will become increasingly common as growing Romanian culture in our countries and prove more capable of initiatives and events.

### Conclusions:

The basic concern for the message in the Romanian culture is the affirmation of European culture, defining, defending and popularizing the broad intellectual circles of the "European idea". By extensive and rigorous political and history studies, "European idea" needs affirmation and dissemination, clarification and strengthening of solidarity and deepening in the receptive Romanian consciousness. This preparatory and introductory stage is strictly indispensable. It still requires the removal, at least in part, an obvious gap in our journalism: methodical discussion of the "European idea" in its triple dimension: cultural - literary, ideological and political, as it reflects the culture and cultural Romanian realities.

Four objectives have priority in this respect: an affirmation of Europe's energy and adherence to this ideal in a novelistic perspective, by taking personal charge, a European point of view properly when you go through history, a militant attitude and style by the propagation of active and sometimes controversial ideas, expressed in a civilized and urban manner, exclusive idea polemics and not a people polemics, to bring a "European home" with as many ideas, values and attitudes. The basic program is being at the same time Romanian and EU in all fields of activity and with full conviction and energy.

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<sup>9</sup> Dutu, Alexandru, *Romanian culture in modern European civilization*, (Bucharest: Minerva Publishing House, 1978), 186

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