

LOCAL “IRRADIATIONS” UNDER THE GERMAN HORIZON

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Abstract: *Exiting the fate of predetermination, the initializing process of a culture is assuming in a necessary way the transformation of those “foreseeing of culture”, of “the inner grain” in reformatting values. Even if the founding act of any culture puts in its center the inland element, this cannot be imagined without an intercultural dialogue or without the multiple interrelations (and resonances) in the universal plan.*

Keywords: *Nationality, philosophy, culture, literary model, influence, universality.*

Preliminary Assessments

Sliding on tempting *Meridiane literare* (*Literary Meridians*), A.E. Baconsky was assessing that “the optics of successive generations can register in a different way only that what really exists, only the real values”¹. In the Romanian literary area, there have been found not only “*pulses in andante*”² – as Cioran, in a gloomy way, said –, but also in *allegro maestoso*, outlining our presence in history. Not only just for us, Eminescu is “the poet – exponentially by his inherent value and productive posterity”³, and the Transylvanians Simion Bărnuțiu and Ioan Slavici remain “moral speakers and models”⁴, important men of culture, emblematic figures of the Romanian and European literature.

The plenary assertion of the Junimea Society changes something – essential – in the Romanian cultural area: “Not the metaphor, not the epithet gains a preponderant role, but the vision. The lessons of Schopenhauer, Kant, Hegel are not only philosophy lectures, but also – especially – lessons about our place in time and space”⁵. The action program is almost an obsessive one for the majority of the Junimea representatives, guided by Titu Maiorescu.

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¹ A.E. Baconsky, *Meridiane. Pagini despre literatura universală contemporană*, Bucharest, E.P.L., 1965, p. 13.

² Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1990, p. 80.

³ Mihai Cimpoi, *Pledoarie pentru o sărbătoare națională a culturii române*, a discourse held at “Eminescu-158” manifestations, organized in Bucharest, 15 January 2008.

⁴ *Idem*, *Sfinte firi vizionare*, p. 229.

⁵ Cornel Ungureanu, *Istoria secretă a literaturii române*, Braşov, Aula Publishing House, 2007, p. 87.

Germany is revealed to us as an area of movement, prodigious on the level of universal literature. A horizon opened “infinitely” – in Blagian terms.

The German literature is that particular “teacher who guides you towards yourself”⁶, without displaying its hegemonical presence, and offering you the impulse towards the personal formation. Evolving in different cultural areas, the Romanian and German literatures have known inductions and convergences, fulfilling the Herderian “dream” of universal concord on aesthetic level.

The Literary Society Junimea and the Modern Culture

When defining the fundamental notion of nationality, as a “means of a higher purpose”, meaning “the progress of the human civilization by tolerance and science, by material and moral wealth according always to the degree of culture of a people”⁷, Titu Maiorescu was deciding in fact upon a culture. The Romanian culture.

Exiting the fate of predetermination, the initializing process of a culture is assuming in a necessary way the transformation of those “foreseeing of culture”, of “the inner grain” in reformatting values: “The weight of a historical moment does not consist in a large embedding of complex values and heterogeneous elements, but in the absolute prevalence of specific values, which give shape and physiognomy to the age. The eclecticism is a phenomenon of decadence. When a culture has no longer energy, as to give birth to original directions of the spirit, and to configuration itself in creative moments, then it is summarizing itself”⁸.

Our regeneration on the cultural field will take place – according to the Maiorescian “direction” – “in the spirit of modern culture”⁹. Regarded in literary terms, civilization and culture gain spectacular dimensions, generating a unitary feeling¹⁰. Even if the founding act of any culture puts in its center the inland element, this cannot be imagined without an intercultural dialogue or without the multiple interrelations (and resonances) in the universal plan. The critical steps established for the literary interferences will not find all the sources, but they will prove “the cultural range”¹¹, invoked by G. Călinescu.

The last *turning* and, also *talking* spirit of the European culture – if we subscribe to the appreciation of C. Noica –, Goethe places the literature on the horizon of universality, thinking it as a *summum* of values, as a joint cultural patrimony: “...I like to watch – he confesses to his secretary, Johann Peter Eckermann, on the 31st of January 1827 – also to what happens with other nations and to advise everyone to do the things my way. National literature has not much to say these days; it is the age of universal literature, and every one of us has to bring

⁶ Lucian Blaga, *Spiritul mioritic*, in *Trilogia culturii*, p. 315.

⁷ Titu Maiorescu, *Critice III (1867-1892)*, new edition, Bucharest, Editura Librăriei Socec & Comp. Publishing House, 1893, pp. 174-175.

⁸ Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1990, p. 181.

⁹ Titu Maiorescu, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

¹⁰ Caius Traian Dragomir, *Chipurile Germaniei în conștiința mea*, in *Modelul german în dialog cu spiritualitatea românească*. Caietele “Viața Românească”, no. 3, first edition, Bucharest, Uniunea Scriitorilor din România, Redacția Publicațiilor pentru Străinătate, 2002, p. 5.

¹¹ G. Călinescu, *Opera lui Eminescu*, II, second edition, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1970, p. 120.

his contribution in order for this age to establish itself as soon as possible. However, in such a case of valuing what is foreign, we don't have to stick to a certain thing taking it as a model"¹².

Goethe was considering that "the greatest art is to *delineate* itself always and stubbornly. To delineate means, in fact, to *not limit*, to put a limit to the limit"¹³ – specifies Eugen Simion, making use of the paradox. Thus, the great creators are also the great European spirits, because they build in terms of Europeanness and universality.

Analyzing the factors of stylistically modeling of culture, Lucian Blaga distinguished three ways of the formative aspiration: the individualizing way, the typifying way and the phenomenal way. The philosopher of culture is quoting the German culture as being an exemplary one for the individualizing way¹⁴. The apotheism of Goethe is reviving this stylistic model: "The greatest happiness of the mortals is the personality". The knowledge of the national culture, as well as of the past, with its "reformatory"¹⁵ importance, does not exclude the multicultural dialogue. Our identity configuration is been made "through the consciousness of Latinity, the detachment from the darkness of the Orient and by the rapid assimilation of the French and German forms of civilization"¹⁶.

This arch of the organicist idea includes Titu Maiorescu, Lucian Blaga, with the total or partial support of Eminescu, Conta, Xenopol, Rădulescu-Motru, Negulescu¹⁷. In his essay published in 1934, in German language *Rumänien und die deutsche Kultur* (*Romania and the German Culture*), Rădulescu-Motru asserts that Germany has offered to the Romanian spirit not much of a real influence, but rather "that impulse which it needed for reaching the conscience of its own being"¹⁸. *România și cultura europeană* (*Romania and the European Culture*), the article of Tudor Vianu, written in 1930-1931, theorizes upon the German classicism, the author makes the distinction between the Heraclitian and the Eleat cultures. The intervention of the Eleatic "German complex" in the second half of the 19th century would reflect itself in the theories of Maiorescu and in the poetry of Eminescu¹⁹.

The influences and contaminations, insertions and parallelisms, lineages or interferences between cultures and cultural styles have multiple dimensions. "Our integration in the network of European determinants has been made by absolute acceptance, sometimes even by a programmatic one, of some Western influences believed salutary (...). These have fulfilled their purpose, sometimes by osmotic interposing, from the neighbor (the chain is not really long), sometimes because

¹² Johann Peter Eckermann, *Convorbiri cu Goethe în ultimii ani ai vieții sale*, Bucharest, E.P.L., 1965, p. 226.

¹³ Eugen Simion, *Sfidarea retoricii. Jurnal german*, Bucharest, Cartea Românească, 1985, p. 407.

¹⁴ Lucian Blaga, *Opere. 9. Trilogia culturii*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1985, p. 35.

¹⁵ Lucian Blaga, *Zări și etape*, Bucharest, 1990.

¹⁶ Mihai Cimpoi, *Europa, sarea Terrei... Vise, Utopii și Realități europene*, Bucharest, Ideea Europeană Publishing House, 2007, p. 101.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 84.

¹⁸ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Rumänien und die deutsche Kultur*, in "Europäische Revue", X, 1934, p. 545. Klaus Heitmann, *Oglinzi paralele. Studii de imagologie româno-germană*, Bucharest, Fundația Culturală Română Publishing House, 1996, p. 217.

¹⁹ Klaus Heitmann, *Oglinzi paralele. Studii de imagologie româno-germană*, Bucharest, Fundația Culturală Română Publishing House, 1996, p. 230.

of the pressure of people raised into a much Northern spirit”²⁰ – asserts Blaga in *Spațiul mioritic (The Mioritic Area)*. Speaking about the “tracks of these patterns upon the Romanian substance”, the philosopher will emphasize: “...the difference between the two influences is not only in terms of range, intensity and amplitude, but also in terms of style and quality”²¹.

The Romanian literature has stayed almost for two centuries under the sign of Galophilia and, respectively of Germanophilia. The relations between the cultures and the “expression with a spherical power of one or the other instances of the self” are not to be charged as immutable. “For Romania the Germanity is, simultaneously, an external and internal referential”²². The comparative study, under the sign of interdisciplinary, extends itself both upon the cultural German general field, as well as upon the local one, aiming the innovative impetus. The personality of our literature, defined memorably by C. Ciopraga²³, refers to the *Romanian being* and, especially, to the *being of the Romanian literature*. Its essential utterance implies “a powerful and original affirmation, an existence of a style and nature, a marking with the seal of grace, talent, genius, and an encapsulation of special vital and intellectual energy”²⁴. Referring strictly to the individual (*Höchstes Glück der Erdekinder/Ist nur die Persönlichkeit* – as we read in *Faust*), the notion of personality, subjected to analogical representations, receives the profile of an amount- notion²⁵.

Preoccupied by the synthesis, by the highlighting of the individual, by what it “delineates” and not by what it “joins and incorporates”²⁶, the critic defines the existential mark of the Romanian literature. The personality of a culture is expressing itself also by the way it receives impulses, influences, and foreign models. The well-known moderation principle of Junimea will be invoked by V. Pogor, in his “lecture” in 1876, in which he talks about the French influence. He argues, persuasively, that imitation in excess of the French civilization, as well as of the exaggerated nationalism, are unreasonable positions. “Everything that is adopted from the European civilization has to be justified not only by urgent necessities, but also by the according basic elements (...), generated by historical similar factors”²⁷.

Our approach to the German style of culture has been made in a gradual process, and the impact was felt during many generations. Speaking about the *Factorul german în cultura română (The German Element in the Romanian Culture)*, Henri Zalis quotes some characteristic features of Germanity: the philosophical propensity in order to clarify the concepts, the non-rhetorical spirit, the critical reserve towards the dull phraseology, the hasty transformations and the existential mimetic forms. The assertion, accompanied by analyses, are highlighting a type

²⁰ Lucian Blaga, *Spațiul mioritic*, in *Trilogia culturii*, p. 312.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 313.

²² Caius Traian Dragomir, *Despre germani*, in *Modelul german în dialog cu spiritualitatea românească*. Caietele “Viața Românească”, no. 1, second edition, 2002, pp. 6-7.

²³ Const. Ciopraga, *Personalitatea literaturii române*, Jassy, Junimea Publishing House, 1973.

²⁴ Mihai Cimpoi, *Critice. Fierăria lui Iocan*, Craiova, Fundația “Scrisul Românesc”, 2001, p. 71.

²⁵ Const. Ciopraga, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²⁶ Mihai Cimpoi, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁷ Dan Mănuță, *Scriitori junimiști*, Jassy, Junimea Publishing House, 1971, p. 158.

of "scholar, Enlightenment adhesion", the German integrating factor having a blessed influence in the case of "ten to twelve impressive Romanians, beginning with Maiorescu and Eminescu, passing through the example proposed by Caragiale, Zarifopol, Blaga and Vianu, and all the way to Noica"²⁸.

Led by a "demiurgic spirit", in writing, as well as in his public life, Titu Maiorescu "is establishing himself" as a man of culture, "establishing" as well the Romanian culture – notes Mihai Cimpoi in his *Critice (Critics)*. Having a founder vocation and willing to build a wall "torn down in one night", he places at the base the beauty, the good and the truth, remaining "an Adamic model, and not a Golemic one, of our healthy and founding beginnings". The mentor of Junimea will establish, according to the German model, the doctrine of authenticity, the respect of truth, the cultivation of value and discouragement of non-values, rejection of improvisations, of forgeries of any kind, dissipation of demagoguery and of the confusion of criteria.

With the literary society in Jassy, the influence of the German culture has got, in our country, one of its essential moments. In Junimea dominated the community side of cultural manifestations, by its systemic forms of value propagation: school, publications, sets of sympathizers. The competition of values, the establishing of vocations – therefore, the self – build took place "under the Germanity sky"²⁹.

A relevant fact in the cultural plan, at that time "the overview of ideas receives in a programmatic way the complement of the action projects, either if it's about modulation of the social – political structure, of the economy, of the law, of the institutional organization, of the health education or pedagogy, or about the stimulation of human sciences or not, beginning with history and geography, or ethno-psychology, logics, psychology, philosophy and theory of culture in philology, literary criticism, ethnography and folklore"³⁰. Let us remember the diversity of preoccupations of Maiorescu, Eminescu or Slavici, or the variety of specialization of other valuable representatives of Junimea: Ioan Melic (mathematics), N. Culianu (geodesy and astronomy), Al. Lambrior (history and philology), Vasile Burlă (classic languages), A.D. Xenopol (history, geography, sociology, history of religions), Vasile Conta (philosophy, physics).

The phases of intellectual affirmation, the academic conduct, the creative pulse, the modelation of personality, at most members of Junimea, follow the German pattern. Eminescu – for example – will enthusiastically accept the models of secundar – school education from France and Germany, proposed by the minister Vasile Conta in the reform project from 1881: "The essence of this education is in our country, like in France and Germany, classicists and literary culture and history based on classicists, that means *humanitatis studia* with the meaning of the old ones. On this basis, supported in Germany and in France by the tradition of a culture of many centuries, we also organized our higher education schools and set ourselves in a cultural community with Western Europe (Works, vol. XII, p. 65)"³¹.

²⁸ Henri Zalis, *Factorul german în cultura română*, in *Modelul german în dialog cu spiritualitatea românească*, Caietele "Viața Românească", no. 1, 2002, p. 54.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

³⁰ Mircea Braga, Gabriela Chiciudean, Alin Mihai Gherman, *Ideologia Junimii*, Bucharest, Academia Română Publishing House, 2007, p. 35.

³¹ Mihai Cimpoi, *Europa, sarea Terrei...*, pp. 96-97.

The phenomenologist Hermann Keyserling, in his study *Das Spektrum Europas* (*The Spectrum of Europe*) (1927), draws inventories of habits, starting from so-called genetic codes: for the English the positivism is important; the French is consistent with the surrounding world; the Spanish, Don Quijote-like par excellence, is “ethical culture turned into flesh”; finally, the German is an objective man. “In Germany there is a real cult for *learning*, the country being governed by *scholars*”³². Maybe not accidentally Emil Cioran considers that Junimea represents “a didactic vision of Romania”³³, and Lucian Blaga projects a spot light upon Maiorescu from the same perspective of the German school: “At some point, when the Roman spirit (antique and Catholic) has reduced some of the Romanian spirits to an imitation, and was about to completely distort the Romanian tongue, the decisive and historical reaction came promptly and determined, like a sword blow, also from a personality, who happened to pass through the German school”³⁴.

In an article from 1890, written after the death of Leon Negruzzi, Titu Maiorescu was recalling, with obvious nostalgia, the spirit which was governing the literary society of Iassy: “Junimea” from Iassy was (...) a private congregation of literature and science lovers, of sincere lovers. (...). “The most animated discussions, although without any interference of personal interests, have brought them close to each other and they became friends (...). In the first years of these intimate gatherings they aimed earnestly the reading of the most works of the Romanian literature up to that point (...). And thus there was formed an atmosphere of pure literary interests, which overtook everyone of them in an imperceptible way, so that the hours they spent once a week at *Junimea* were in the highest contrast with the everyday life, they were a unique world, a dream of the free intelligence raised above the real trivialities. And this atmosphere was influencing so intensely and so strongly the ones who were in the middle of it, so that the atmosphere itself was forming a link between them and was harmonizing every one of them for the time it lasted, some of them for their entire lifetime”³⁵.

Developing a strategy of values, Maiorescu will support their integration into a national culture, in order to decide the “background”. The postulate of Maiorescu is aiming, in fact, the configuration of a universal measure of culture. At the jubilee of the “Familia” magazine, on the 27th of May 1904, the mentor of Junimea is quoting rhetorically what he is calling “the saying of a gloomy German”: “...I was always lucky, but I was never happy”, contrasting the more serene conscience of the Romanian: “...I was never lucky, but I felt happy sometimes”. Using the paradox, Maiorescu makes notes about the moment when the Romanian people began to aspire to its cultural unity: “That in the 18-th century the politics of the Habsburgian dynasty tried to bring us under the obedience of the Pope of Rome and, not being able to achieve that, has divided us in two, it was a misfortune. But out of this attempt the Romanian of Transylvania has reached

³² *Ibidem*, pp. 28-30.

³³ Emil Cioran, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

³⁴ Lucian Blaga, *Spațiul mioritic*, in *Trilogia culturii*, p. 317.

³⁵ Titu Maiorescu, *Leon Negruzzi și “Junimea” (1890)* in *Critice II (1867-1892)*, Bucharest, Editura Librăriei Socec & Comp. Publishing House, 1892, pp. 336-338.

the eternal city, where the feeling of the Latin gens revived in their souls, afterwards it has covered all of us, this was an exceptional happiness, which, out of a religious disunion, has lifted the entire nation towards an unity of national culture"³⁶.

Those *intimate gatherings* from Junimea were aiming not only to revive the national cultural fond, but also to promote our literature to the Western world: "We, the Romanians, must be happy to see that, after more generations of our youth have received so many ideas of science and so much feelings of art from abroad, it has come the time for us to respond somehow, and the young Romanian literature has been able to give to old Europe the opportunity of an aesthetic emotion from the very pure source of its popular life"³⁷.

In terms of aesthetics, two trends – perfectly distinctive – were animating the Junimea literary society: the German one and the French one. The "Convorbiri literare" magazine was reflecting, naturally, the disjunctive elements. The German trend was represented – in the spotlight – by Maiorescu. The strategist of Junimea considered that "without the knowledge and imitation of the German literature, the founding of a flourishing Romanian literature is not possible"³⁸ – here is the opinion, during that age, of a comiliton from the opposition, George Panu. The activity of the members of the Junimea society is the peremptory proof of these assertions.

Final Assessments

The irradiations outside the local area, such as the ones under the German horizon, echoed on the territory of all Romanian provinces – consistently, but differentiated. In Transylvania, Banat and the Bucovina, the stimuli came directly, through the Saxons and Austrians, and in Moldavia and Muntenia – through the modeling factors given by the German training and education.

In his fundamental work *Spațiul mioritic (The Mioritic Area)* (1936), Lucian Blaga analyzes the main external influences which have marked the Romanian spirituality, presenting in detail the role of the French and German cultures. It is emphasized, especially, the quality, the particular quality of these influences: if the French spirituality propagates the universal, the classical forms, the balanced ones, the German one is attracted to the particular, to the romantic forms, the anti – canonical ones. Therefore: the French culture stimulates imitation, recommending itself as a "model"; on the other hand, the German culture urges to the seeking of the self – nature, encouraging originality. The philosopher decides upon the two types of influences: "modeling" – French and "catalytic" – German.

Blaga introduces a strictly morphological perspective, reiterating consistently what has been written in *Filozofia stilului (The Philosophy of Style)* (1924) and in *Fețele unui veac (The Forms of a Century)* (1925), where he was illustrating the German preferences for "individual", "singular", "angular"³⁹.

³⁶ Titu Maiorescu, *Pentru jubileul de 40 de ani al revistei "Familia"* (27 mai 1904), in *Critice II*, Bucharest, E.P.L., p. 435.

³⁷ Titu Maiorescu, *Literatura română și străinătatea* (1882), in *Critice III (1867-1892)*, p. 32.

³⁸ George Panu, *Amintiri de la "Junimea" din Iași*, vol. I, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1971, p. 52.

³⁹ Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu, Klaus Heitmann, *Cercul Literar de la Sibiu și influența catalitică a culturii germane*, Bucharest, Universal Publishing House, 2000, pp. 10-11.

One should notice, in this respect, that Slavici is one of the first Romanian thinkers who meditates on issues of culture morphology. In a restoring way, when the sources of the Blagian thinking are researched in this area, the reference to L. Frobenius, O. Spengler a.o. will have to be completed with reference to such inner sources⁴⁰ – emphasizes Anton Cosma.

Without aiming to produce hierarchies, Blaga considers to be fertile that type of language which succeeds to awaken the inland spirit. Exemplifying, he mentions four moments in the history of the Romanian literature and spirituality, results from the catalytic contact, direct or indirect, with the German spirit: Gheorghe Lazăr, Titu Maiorescu, Eminescu, George Coșbuc – all four of them being influenced by the German spirit. He doesn't forget to recall Mihail Kogălniceanu, who was also influenced by the German culture. "Being too modest, Blaga doesn't add himself, as he should have, to this sequence of names, behind which we recognize cultural institutions, literary publications, groups and guidelines with a major role in the history of assertion of the local spirit"⁴¹ – notes Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu and Klaus Heitmann.

Subsequent to the considerations and exemplifications of L. Blaga, *The Literary Set of Sibiu* will constitute a peremptory argument for the "catalytic" process, for the influence of the German spirituality upon the Romanian culture, which has been "in the revealing of identity and originality"⁴².

In the study dedicated to the members of the Set and to the catalytic influence of the German culture, the authors are quoting four founding institutions, which have a decisive role in the manifestation of the national singularity, of the returning to the Romanian self: "Dacia literară", "Junimea", "Tribuna" of Sibiu and "Gândirea".

A generous area of research, the Romanian-German interferences in the literary-cultural space involve all along new explorations, sometimes decisive for the history of relationships of Romanian spirituality with the Germanity.

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⁴⁰ Anton Cosma, *Note*, in Ioan Slavici, *Romanele vieții*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 1979, p. 309.

⁴¹ Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu, Klaus Heitmann, *ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴² *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 11.