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IS ROMANIAN POSTCOMMUNIST IDENTITY HYPHENATED IN THE SAME WAY AS THE POSTSTRUCTURALIST, POSTCOLONIAL AND POST-TRAUMATIC HYPHENATED IDENTITY?

(DEBATE ON THE APPLICABILITY OF A CONCEPT FOREGROUNDED BY EMILY APTER'S NEW COMPARATIVE LITERATURE OUTLINED IN THE TRANSLATION ZONE)

Narrative Preamble about the Genesis of the Identity Hyphen Series of Terms

My attention was first drawn to hyphenation in *the poststructuralist sense* by Emily Apter's adoption (in her 2005 comparative literature book *The Translation Zone*[1]) of a Derridean term which served to describe the condition (in the sense of "predicament") of colonized nations whose natural historical processes were denied and the language testified to it. "The hyphen signifies all the problems of national/ linguistic unbelonging characteristic of post-Independence Algerians, including the way in which Jews, Arabs, and French were neighbored, yet separated, by the French language"[2]. According to Apter, Derrida also theorized on the imposition of "the monolingualism of the other" (subjective genitive) which reduced the amputated natural complexity of the denied language and presented the victim with a prosthesis of origin to replace the amputated complexity of the natural language; an example of the prosthesis of origin, offered in a footnote to her concluding remarks by Apter, is the term *negritude*, "coined by Aimé Césaire in Martinique, a place that had no single African language on which to ground it"[3]. In Derrida's wake, the hyphen is foregrounded to signal the prosthetic language imposed on the colonized by the colonizer. Another symptom of hyphenation and

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[1] Emily S. Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, see especially the conclusion in Chapter 16, titled "A New Comparative Literature".

[2] Apter, *Translation*, p. 246.

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 286 (Note 9); her reference is to Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, translated by Patrick Mensah, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998. More particularly, what is invoked is the Derridean theoretical demonstration about the corporeal aspect of language when it is and it is not one's own, as explained in terms of the dynamics of cultural-political inclusion and exclusion that affect a French speaking Algerian Jew.

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the monolingualism of the other is, in a quotation given by Apter from Kenneth Reinhard[4], the creation in the course of colonial history of "'neighbourhoods' determined by accidental contiguity, genealogical isolation, and ethical encounter"[5]; and the verb "to neighbour" is coined (by Reinhard) and used (by Apter) to describe the predicament of "[neighbored] languages, nations, literatures, and communities of speakers ... articulated as the uncanny neighbor of the other ... [in] traumatic proximity"[6]. Neighbouring disrupts predication and leaves a hyphen behind:

> "Neighboring" describes the traumatic proximity of violence and love, manifest as exploded holes in language or translation gaps/ spaces of nonrelation; such spaces […] are directly relevant to the problem of how a language names itself because they disrupt predication, the process by which verbal attributes coalesce in a proper name or noun[7].

Equipped with Apter's conceptual apparatus, a/the new comparative literature could not fail to become more attractive, merging poststructuralist with postcolonial theory and being readier to address the translatability of cultures to each other efficiently. In an ethical sense, Apter militated for a thoroughly intersubjective translation in response to, and in the wake of, the civilizational implosion of 9/11, indicative of serious misunderstandings constitutive of our discourses. It is possible to extend even further the range of new comparative literature so as to address and translate the discourses of the neighboured postcommunist, just as the postcolonial discourses, but not before the outline of the way hyphenation emerged as an academic tool is allowed to come full circle.

I further exploited the notion of hyphenation in teaching Irish identity to MA students at the University of Bucharest in order to explain the uncomfortable coexistence of a historically successful *settler colony*, Northern Ireland today, with a *colony of occupation*, in the same confines. In retrospect, as identity should be taught anyway, the falling apart of the historical colony of occupation, perceived as such by the colonized Catholics, began precisely during the nineteenth century Union with Britain. It gave a clear political expression to the Protestant neighbouring of the Catholics[8]. After the Protestants secured the perpetuation of

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[4] Kenneth Reinhard, "Kant with Sade, Lacan with Levinas" quoted by Apter's Note 10, p. 286, from *Modern Language Notes*, CX, 1995, 4.
[5] Apter, *Translation*, p. 247.
[6] *Ibidem*.
[7] *Ibidem.* The attention to depredication is further connected by Apter in loc. cit. with Saidian secular criticism and indicated as an important preoccupation for philology in the postcolonial age, given that philology originated with Western Biblical and classical hermeneutics placed side by side with Arabic-Islamic Koran hermeneutics. Apter quotes from Said's 2003 text in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (p. 58).
[8] Protestant colonization had been going on in Ireland since the sixteenth century but even earlier there had been Catholic or Old English and more precisely, at the beginning, Anglo-Norman settlers.

the settler colonial tradition in the Northern Ireland dominion during the 1920s, the definitive decolonization of the Catholic colony of occupation was effected as late as the year 1949 with the appearance, in the South, of the Republic of Ireland, after an Anglo-Irish, then a Civil War immediately following the First World War. Decolonization was also perfected by the replacement, in 1937, of the constitution imposed by Britain with one that explicitly declared the status of the liberated colony of occupation. Meanwhile, the North traversed a period of Troubles, an unofficial terrorist civil war waged by Catholics still raging against their own perpetuated colony of occupation (what happened was that *the Catholic replica to the former colony of occupation had moved inside the original settler colony*; Catholics suffered at the hand of a Protestant parliament for a Protestant nation for 45 years until an unofficial terrorist civil war was unleashed; it lasted from the Human Rights agitation in the late 1960s, followed by the loss of autonomy in 1972, until 1999; in 1999 the dominion status, which was actually unwanted by the Unionists, was restored after a period when Northern Ireland had been no more than a British province). From the political point of view, in the latter half of the twentieth century the hyphen isolated the North from the South and explained, first, the international boundary between the transparently English Northern Ireland and the Gaelic *Éire* (or, in English, the Irish Republic); it pointed, secondly, to the reduplication, in the late twentieth century and in Northern Ireland, of the endemic historical Troubles. The hyphen indicated in the North the uncomfortable coexistence of two kinds of colony in one – and the near impossibility for an analyst to include in the same linear narrative the history and the present of the two kinds of colony. It became necessary to separate the causality links of the Protestant and Catholic historical narratives in order to explain things. In the settler colony, Old English identity grew "naturally" to become the Unionist British identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the colony of occupation, the Catholic resistance to the Protestant Ascendancy also grew: it grew in outbursts of insurgence, periodical troubles in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth century – to became endemic, as a disease or a plant that catches, growing from the soil beneath, from beneath the normalized, acceptable life. From the soft/rhetorical discourse analysis perspective, hyphenation provided a clear starting point for demonstrating the incommensurability of the Catholic historiographical discourse, a typical *colony of occupation* discourse, with the Protestant successful *settler colony* historiographical (and literary) discourse. It was a discourse ready to mimic/reproduce the colonizer's narratives and values. This was evident in the difference between a very professional comprehensive literary history book about Ireland titled *Colonial Consequences* and written from the settlers point of view in 1991 by John Wilson Foster and a more recent reference book, Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*, originally published in Cambridge, Massachussets, but circulated in the paperback London, Verso edition, of 1996. These books share the right cultural monumentality of good literary

histories, but whereas the latter is widely read as the main work tool for literary criticism on Ireland's reinvented identity after centuries of colonialism, the former traces the common elements (themes, literary species) that unite Irish with English literature in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century. By contrast, Kiberd's titles play with the hyphen to dislocate the inwardly perceived difference between Catholics and Protestants by popularizing the playful, very Irish cliché speaking of Catestants and Protholics. Next, I put to work Emily Apter's Derridean discourse politics hyphen to explain the complexity of *the Irish question* as seen in the metropolitan nineteenth century discourses while also thematising *the ambivalent relationship with the English neighbour* as seen from across the Irish Sea, especially after the mid-century disaster of the Famine. The verb *neighboring* emerges as a useful tool, a transitive verb which draws attention to stronger nations forcing their neighbours. Seamus Heaney's poem "Ocean's Love to Ireland" presents the Irish maid that is forced, backed to a tree, raped by none other than the famous Renaissance courtier, Sir Walter Raleigh. "In London his name/ Will rise on water and on these dark seepings" [of a whole history of rapes] because "He is water he is Ocean lifting/ Her farthingale like a scarf of weed lifting/ In the front of a wave"[9]. In the same generation, Derek Mahon's poem "A Disused Shed in County Wexford" laments a quite different trauma, the trauma experienced in the Republic of Ireland, after decolonization by the settlers cast as fungi proliferating in the dark underground of a deserted hotel. In their sick and wild germination bed, the nostalgic prisoners of the old (colonial) regime long for the return of the departed mycologist (the colonial ruler) with his light meter, this modern implement for taxing light on behalf of an established, central administration; the poem's postcolonial allegory is located in a provincial country reduced to the condition of resembling a disused shed in one southern Irish county, Wexford, a county replete with colonial history reminiscences.

I plucked courage with "my hyphen" next, when I met it in Joep Leersen's cultural history of nationalism – whose motto comes from the Irish Joycean book *Ulysses.* But in Leersen's history, the term *hyphenation* was used with a different sense from the Derridean poststructuralist and postcolonial perspective. In reference to the history of national thought in Europe, *hyphenation* and *hyphenated* point to *the fusions* effected between the nation and the state to yield the ideologically supported modern nation-states (notice the hyphenation in the common noun *nation-state*, the result of "the hyphenation of nation and state into the ideal of the nation-state"[10]).The hyphen was next applicable to the fusion between separatist nations in the name of *Pan-Slavism* (notice the hyphen which

[9] Seamus Heaney, *North*, the explosive volume of 1975, London, Faber and Faber, 1989, p. 46. Author's translation.

[10] Joep Leersen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p. 21.

constitutes the proper name) (the fusion of the Czechs and Slovaks for their liberation from the Austrian rule and of the Serbs and Croats to break free from Ottoman rule[11]). In these two cases the hyphen created progressively geared nations and notions. Leersen's book also explores the reverse of the modern liberal coin, looking at things from the colonial agency perspective when explaining that Henri Grégoire's one and indivisible France allowed, in the 1792 code of laws, "no subsidiary or 'hyphenated' identities"[12], or when mentioning that "empires hyphenated themselves into Czecho-Slovak and Serbo-Croat alliances"[13]. Last but not least, Leersen changes the morphological category using verb-phrase references to the "tendency [in the postwar period] to hyphenate various Slavic nationalisms into federal initiatives"[14]. In sum, Leersen's cultural history revolves around a hyphen that expresses the traditional and imperial amalgamation and separation movements whose language can be analysed by the adjunction/ suppression operations of the structuralist model. As suggested by the author himself in a discussion at the Central Library in Bucharest in November 2015, hyphenation is time- and context-dependent. The nationalisms of the nineteenth, early and late twentieth centuries do not resemble, even when the hyphen intervenes. This is why late twentieth century and twenty-first century postcolonial history and theory, and, in their wake, postcommunist theory, must reach, as could be seen by Emily Apter's Derridean hyphen, beyond the straight structuralist fusions and alliances, to the unspeakable of history's residual "dark seepings" that can be approached in poststructuralist terms.

Hyphenation also stands a fair chance of becoming as wide-spread in the postnationalist age as to fit practically every discourse about any form of current social organization; this is suggested by the following quotation from a 1997 article which describes the nation-states as *splintered*: "The world economy requires socially and territorially more complex organizations than nation-states, which have subsequently become splintered rather than developmental in form"[15]. Interestingly, on the same page this article speaks of "the deformations of the postnational" by what seems a direct analogy with the recognition of destruction of predication or depredication as a task for the philologist practicing secular criticism and putting it in the service of circumscribing postcolonial discourses.

The next thing to do is attract into the sphere of these discourses the postcommunist ones.

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[11] *Ibidem*, p. 136 (summarized).
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 138.
[13] *Ibidem*, p. 220.
[14] *Ibidem*, p. 158.
[15] Donald, E. Pease, "National Narratives – Postnational Narration", *MFS Modern Fictional Studies*, XLIII, Spring 1997, 1, p. 2.

The Comparison of the Postcommunist/ Postcolonialist Hyphenation

I shall start the comparison of postcommunist/ postcolonialist hyphenation from Sorin Alexandrescu's coordinates for defining three paradoxes of Romanian identity regarded in the imagological mirror, in *Paradoxul român*[16]. They all translate hyphenation systematically, beginning with space (and the difficulty of assigning Romania lastingly to any precise cultural zone), continuing with time (and the description of the paradoxical Romanian synchronicity that results when borrowing foreign models disposed diachronically, and crowning the description of the Romanian ethnotype by referring to continuity in discontinuity. Interpreting, next, the resulting image of discontinuous continuity in Romanian modern and postcommunist western aspirations in the light of Ireland's case of white colonialism, I will show how hyphenation between modern and anti-modern aspirations works in the discourse of anti-modernist intellectuals representative for the Eastern and Central-European elites between 1880 and 1945. I will refer to the intellectual history reader (an anthology published in 2014 by the Central European University Press) that gathers texts illustrating radical revisions of collective identity in the entire postcommunist region. These observed samples of postcommunist identity analysis can finally be shown to bear numerous resemblances to postcolonial theory discourses but to differ in some significant details which may resist the assimilation of postcommunist to postcolonialist discourses.

When moving on Romanian soil, in Sorin Alexandrescu's *Paradoxul român,* which opens with the translation of an article that predates Apter's and Leersen's previously mentioned books by about thirty years (since the original article from which the 1999 Univers Publishers book by Sorin Alexandrescu sprang was first published in English in The Netherlands in 1976) – we miss the hyphen in material form in the text as a first thing worth noting. The discussion about Romanian identity, nonetheless, revolves around precisely the same "hyphenation complaints" as does any postcolonial analysis text. Sorin Alexandrescu's first and third paradoxes, respectively, depict the Romanian nation as inhabiting an intermediary space. He does not call it *hybrid* and does not speak of *liminality* but of "an intermediary space that attenuates and absorbs shock-waves coming from neighbouring colossi, Austria, Russia, Turkey"[17] and causes Romanian culture to be marked by both continuity and discontinuity, as the Romanians' (survival) reaction to their milieu. Paradoxically, then, the constitutive Romanian continuity expressed in cultural texts rests on vertical, and transversal (or horizontal) *discontinuity* (one of Sorin Alexandrescu's words for hyphenation constitutive of

[16] Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român* [*The Romanian Paradox*], Bucureşti, Univers, 1998.
[17] *Ibidem*, p. 32 (here and in what follows - the author's adaptative translations).

his third paradox). According to the space-paradox, continuity is achieved as part of the Romanians' survival in relation with the neighbours based on a pattern of "multiple differentiation from and assimilation of" foreign models[18]. A few paragraphs later, Sorin Alexandrescu points to the same *neighboring* phenomenon when he speaks about "a culture that has had to conceive itself as *constrained* in order to survive"[19]. The emphasis on survival in the imagological representation of postcommunist identity represents the first difference from the postcolonial (and postnationalist) approaches already examined. The difference comes from the Romanian discourse focusing on the (felicitous) *result* achieved in the process of historical survival rather than focusing on the Derridean prosthesis of *origin* as a symptom of unbelonging. This makes manifest the difference between historical and genealogical approaches to identity and the different assessment of modernity's relevance to the construal of identity in the two approaches. It recalls the fact that modernity is assumed as substantial by the former, while the latter's contestation of modernity is blatant and a source of differentiation: the source for the postmodern and poststructuralist stimulating difference. Consequently, the noticeable difference indicates the affinities between the hyphen as a signal of adjunctions and suppressions in Joep Leersen's account about the ideological nation-state and pan-Slavism formations above mentioned and the equally structuralist presentation of the continuity achieved in despite of the vertical and transversal discontinuities in Sorin Alexandrescu's text. By contrast, in *The Monolingualism of the Other,* Derrida starts from the postmodernist alternatives of (un)belonging in the light of "monoculturalism or multiculturalism, nationality citizenship"[20] in order to define the identity of the political subject but he goes further, towards '*ipseity*' and its link with the originary power, as shown by Michèle Lowrie[21]. This leads into the heart of the postmodern-poststructuralist paradigm that connects postcolonialism with trauma. Derrida's words in this respect, "Alienation institutes every language as a language of the other: the impossible property of a language"[22], inscribe him in the poststructuralist paradigm invoked by Apter. He is further connected (by Michèle Lowrie[23]) with ancient and modern literature written in the elegiac vein (by Rimbaud and Sextus Propertius) .

Before concluding that it might be due to the different methodological presuppositions of Western imagology as contrasted to postcolonial theory if the

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[18] *Ibidem*, p. 33.
[19] *Ibidem* (author's emphasis).
[20] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 14, quoted in Michèle Lowrie "Divided Voices and Imperial Identity in Propertius 4.1 and Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other* and *Politics of Friendship*", *Dictynna* VIII (*Varia*), 2011, p. 8.
[21] M. Lowrie, "Imperial Identity in Propertius and Derrida", p. 8.
[22] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 63.
[23] See M. Lowrie's motto and the entire case she makes in "Imperial Identity in Propertius and Derrida".

hyphenated identity discourses differ, it is interesting to dwell longer on this point of difference. The comparative postcommunist perspective on Romanian identity appears as less impassioned, less fraught with apocalyptic-sounding or simply psychoanalytic terms ready to reveal ambivalence or disturbing distances that open, as Homi Bhabha would see them, in threatening ways, to declare the structural in-betweenness or dislocation. There is no discussion about Cathy Caruthian unclaimed experiences, either, in *The Romanian Paradox*. The vein of the discourse is not elegiac, to mark historically traumatized nations or communities and their narratives. The postcommunist identity discourse is drier, marked by the historian's objectivity desideratum. In his third national characteristic, Sorin Alexandrescu makes the Romanian character simply paradoxical by the standards of logic, continuity manifesting itself as culturally entrenched discontinuity – both on the vertical and horizontally. First, the vertical hyphen is one between the folklore and formally cultural traditions, with the folkloric one always eventually overriding the succession of institutionalized cultural modes; folklore is the decisive dimension of Romanian identity: an enduring substratum in the local resistance to so many waves of forceful change. As part of this paradox (and in conjunction with the coexistence in time of several cultural models in Romania the second paradox), Sorin Alexandrescu even ventures to declare tentatively that the realer Romanian classicism might be that of the folkloric cultural mode. Secondly, the horizontal hyphen (or discontinuity) originates in the Romanians' break with the neighbouring Balkan tradition in favour of a decisive orientation, in the course of the nineteenth century, towards the never sufficiently approachable West. The western centre was then a rejuvenating, modern one, politically and linguistically a place of romance/ Romance, capital and small case letter. But as a source of discontinuity, it polarized Romanian society, with the Western adepts of the modern and politically revolutionary romance fighting, in the nineteenth century, the traditionalist defenders of what was to become the twentieth century anti-modern(ist) ethos of the Central Powers. This explains the difficulties of past and present Romanian diplomacy. Sorin Alexandrescu insisted, as could be seen in the first part of this demonstration, on the variable and alternative orientation of Romanian diplomacy towards now one, now another of the three colossi (and later the Austro-Hungarian empire) as an inevitable and successful survival technique dictated by Romania's geographical position. From our point of view, the shifting diplomatic orientation and allegiances move the hyphen in so many ways that it becomes impossible to define identity in any clear structuralist terms with it. This condition is communicated, of course, to the Romanian postcommunist age with its two centres of identification and reference: the former, communist one, represented, to the east, by Soviet Russia, and the earliest, eventually retrieved and postcommunist western centre. Consequently, the complexities of Romanian culture and identity had better be analysed with new poststructuralist umbrella drawn from

postcolonial theory. It does not mean, however, that postcolonial and postcommunist theory could or should be conflated, but they had better be placed in communication, mutually translated, joined in the translation zone.

One step towards achieving this is the comparison with the Irish white colonialism case. Though still fighting with colonial consequences (not only in the mild, congratulatory sense of the cultural consequences due to the assimilation of Ireland into the English mainstream culture in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as demonstrated by John Wilson Foster's above mentioned book thoroughly emblematic for the settler mentality), Ireland does not definitely suffer from "the white man's artifice inscribed on the black man's body"[24], this figure for the colonial otherness relation. But it suffers from hyphenation in demonstrably similar ways as Romania does. A double case can be made, consequently, *in the dependency theory sense. Ireland, an island which has been dangerously tilted towards both London and Rome for an entire colonial history, can be seen to share the predicament of East and Central-European countries fighting, throughout the centuries of modern history, between Western and Eastern centres which were now to be mimicked, now to be feared, as the regimes would have it.*

Paradoxul român mentions, in this respect, a series of (polyvalent) self-imposed artifices, indicative of trauma and surviving techniques that constitute the Romanian Self-Other relationship determined by the perpetually shifting *Janus bifrons* orientation of the country in respect to the east and the west hegemonic centres. The predicament of countries exposed to white colonialism is similar in the postcolonial and postcommunist spaces. The Romanian historical testimony of the imagologist Sorin Alexandrescu can be seen to coincide at this point with that of the Irish writers Hubert Butler and James Joyce. All these writers' voices speak of countries "dangerously tilted" or torn between more than one centres as the source of their basically hyphenated identity. To the three "neighbouring colossi, Austria, Russia, Turkey"[25] in the historic-political negotiations chronicled by Sorin Alexandrescu should be added the Romanian allegiance to the Western modernity centre both after the brisk rupture with the Balkan neighbours (as part of Sorin Alexandrescu's paradox of continuity in discontinuity) and after the fall of communism, when the Western modernity centre was frantically retrieved by the Romanian intelligentsia. Similarly, there are enough sources that speak about the Irish case of double dependency, shifting between alternating centres – now regarded as Kristevan abjects, now as simply desirable, depending on what section of the population and/ or what period in time is taken into consideration. Irish

[24] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 45. There is, however, a sense in which the American Irish were racially marked being regarded as white-skinned niggers in the nineteenth century, by an extension of the American South mentality.
[25] See the quotation above from Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul*, p. 32.

hyphenation was described in short by Hubert Butler in one of the opening paragraphs of his fascinating book of essays gathered in 1990, *The Sub-Prefect Should Have Held His Tongue*.

> Living in social harmony is a most difficult art; the most absolute concentration is required, and perfect equilibrium. Our island is dangerously tilted towards England and towards Rome, good places in themselves but best when seen on the level. Everybody is rolling off it and those that remain, struggling hard for a foothold, drag each other down[26].

The same was dramatized in the fables of Irish history hidden among the famous parodies of English styles that make up the "Oxen of the Sun" episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Two scathing Joycean fables about the alternating occupations of the island by Rome and England expose bigoted Irish women for welcoming Rome and cowardly Irish men for fleeing the island's occupation; they serve to prove the same self-imposed artifices which the colonial nation resorted to for survival, adaptation, and, of course, hyphenation as the strategies reviewed in *Paradoxul român*. In the latter, Romanian, discourse there is hardly any self-defacing anger and maybe not enough openly expressed bitterness owing to the context of the original article's publication (it was a debate about the place of Romanian identity studies abroad). But the Irish, just as the Romanian, writings suggest the hyphenation of the nation. Had *Paradoxul român* been written to deplore the way contemporary history saw both countries torn by and between collaborationism and emigration as two social evils one cannot fail to be touched by, Romanian, reminiscing (about communist history) would have been sufficiently bitter, too. But since Sorin Alexandrescu's imagological chapter is only an opening to an otherwise pre-communist history book, there is no room in it for the tonalities of the self-hating nationalist, such as Joyce, or of the twentieth century Protestant settler left behind in the Republic to rail against the (ultra-Catholic) establishment. Although not directly relevant for this paper's demonstration, the Joycean fables are worth remembering. They are exposures of the colonized nation's adaptative artifices; they feature papal and Anglican bulls (the ancestors of the modern oxen of the Irish sons) and extend to an all-pervasive kind of secular sarcasm, via the English punning on son/ sun, the Odyssean allusion to the sacred herd of the god Helios when connecting it with the Christian Son of Man. As a mock-Jesus at the Last Supper, Stephen Dedalus delivers his artist's Salvationist doctrine of male postcreation in the middle of the "Oxen of the Sun" episode about (feminine) procreation in answer to the other younger son, the Anglo-Irish Buck Mulligan. The latter's project of setting up a fertilizing farm, as a princely fecundator ready to repopulate a depleted island mocks the turn of the nineteenth century colonial

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[26] Hubert Butler, *The Sub-Prefect Should Have Held His Tongue and Other Essays*, London, Penguin, 1990, p. 3 ("The Auction").

British projects of erecting (capitalistic) garden cities on John Bull's other island. Read as parodies of hegemonic policies in past and recent centuries, the Joycean fables in this chapter foreground the historical series of seductions which fertilize the nation with despicable foreign seed. Reading very much like Heaney's allegory of colonization in "Ocean's Love to Ireland", they dramatize the curse of alternating centres envisaged by hyphenated nations. And they re-mediate anti-colonial anger, though Joyce wrote before the fall of colonialism and Heaney during the Troubles that re-edited it.

Ten years after 1989, the objective historian's tone was still dominant in the Romanian postcommunist imagological discourse of *Paradoxul Român*. Self-hating statements were intentionlly refined to mere openly expressed regrets. The same is true in the only slightly more impassioned historical account presented, as a gesture of reparation for the benefit of the postcommunist younger generation, by Neagu Djuvara's *A Brief Illustrated History of Romanians* of the year 1999. In the English translation of the book, done by Cristian Anton and published by Humanitas in 2014, I have in mind Professor Neagu Djuvara's comment, for example, in the sixth and last chapter dealing with contemporary Romania, about the possibility that the 6 members of the Crown Council may have been right when they advised King Carol II against ceding there and then Bessarabia and Northern Bukowina as demanded by the Soviets in the Ultimatum of 1940. Had we not given in as the majority of 15 Crown Council members decided, and had we patriotically fought for our historic land, though with such meager chances of success in resisting the Soviet forces on our own, we might have fared better than we did under communism. "Decades later I still ask myself", Neagu Djuvara confesses, "whether it was not those six men [including the reputed intellectual Nicolae Iorga, *author's note*] who were right after all... Would it not have been better to declare our resistance on that day?"[27]. And the Irish case might contribute to answering this question if one considers the Easter Rising in Dublin, commemorated in W.B. Yeats's poem "Easter 1916". When defeated, this anti-colonial outburst with very few chances of success was followed by the British execution of the Irish leaders; and it is worth remembering that they and the passionate faith they embodied resounded in William Butler Yeats's words as the moment when "a terrible beauty was born". The terrible beauty refers to what was gained, nevertheless, after the failed insurrection. Despite the Easter Rising operations being officially cancelled in 1916 by part of the movement's leaders, the radicals disobeyed and the actually hopeless anti-colonial insurrection made its mark. Though indirectly, and later, it did change the country's history. The

[27] Neagu Djuvara, *A Brief Illustrated History of Romanians*. Translated by Cristian Anton, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2014, p. 326.

executed heroic leaders passed their radical legacy on and a majority of Irishmen were granted a free state in 1921.

The Benefits of Opening the Discussion on Hyphenated Identity in Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Terms in the Central and East-European Meso-Region

After proving to some extent how hyphenation in postcommunist and white postcolonialist spaces can resemble, more in the basic historical data than in softer discourse terms[28], a comparison between Romania and other countries in the postcommunist region has been made possible by the CEU anthology of 2014, edited by Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balász Trencsényi: *Anti-Modernism – Radical Revisions of Collective Identity* published in Budapest and New York. It provides a sequel to the conundrums of the pre-communist baffling Romanian negotiations with the Western centre discussed by Sorin Alexandrescu and Neagu Djuvara; and it may indicate how postcommunism can be accommodated into the poststructuralist paradigm. It opens ways of analyzing further the centre denied by centrist communization and retrieved from the postcommunist debris in the transition period (if transition is tendentiously understood as a necessary drifting towards capitalism, centered in the West).

In this book's preface, by Sorin Antohi and Balász Trencsényi, the lines and concepts that unite some radical platforms in the meso-region, i.e., Central and Eastern Europe, whose study only became possible in the postcommunist decades, are clarified. The volume represents an act of orderly restitution since it clarifies not only the anti-modernist, i.e., antiliberal ideas developed in the Central and East European world which later fell under Soviet rule, but also shows how kindred spirits were inserted in several concrete cultural and political contexts of the meso-region. The book helps create an image, like a radiograph, of meso-regional interwar identity, a period to which postcommunist hearts are inclined to return. In structuralist terms, this collection establishes the meso-regional/ Central and East European region as a reference point by hyphenation, i.e., adjunction because it joins and revives various home-bred anti-modernist revisions of official pre-communist discourses on collective identity. They are thoroughly documented radical intellectual opinions that ran, and still run!, counter to the fascination with

[28] In connection with the distinction between hard and soft arguments for the postcommunist/ postcolonial comparison, this is the place to acknowledge my indebtedness in the observations of this article, to the entries on discourse, allegory, mimicry, hegemony, dependency theory, dislocation, hybridity, globalization, worlds, diaspora, communization, communism, colonialism, colonization, self-colonization, and, last but not least, postcolonialism and postcommunism, in the volume *Postcolonialism and Postcommunism: Dictionary of Key Cultural Terms*, prepared by the members of the English Department, the University of Bucharest, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2011. The reference here is to p. 256.

the western modernity centre. They were put forward in undesirable/ unpopular affirmations made by cosmopolitan Austrian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Serbian, Croat, Bulgarian, Greek, Turkish and, of course, Romanian intellectuals. The Romanian authors are, in the order of their appearance in the five sections, Nicolae Iorga, Aurel Popovici, Mircea Eliade, Lucian Blaga, Nichifor Crainic, Emil Cioran. The five sections document important intellectual history topics of the first half of the twentieth century: integral nationalism, the crisis of European conscience, the search for a national ontology, conservative redefinitions of tradition and modernity. Last but not least, the chapter which presents some calls to anti-modernist revolution promises an understanding from new angles of the postcommunist identifications and oppositions relevant for the negotiations of national identity. *As a new coinage that denotes a discursive fusion, the meso-regional hyphen opens the way for developing a meso-regional postcommunist theory critical of western hegemony and dependency theory by restituting marginalized pre- and interwar radical discourses.* It allows hyphenation to work as a convenient operator, suitable for integrating Romanian postcommunist hyphenation in a transcultural frame. Meso-regional theory being home-bred, since it arises from restituted local discourses, cannot function as a derivative of postcolonial theory translated for postcommunist use. It can represent a discursive practice generated from the inside, by the thick-description of Central, East European and Balkan studies (since Austria, Turkey and Greece cannot be included in the postcommunist zone). As such, meso-regional theory can draw attention to the diverse speed-gears of change in interwar history in so far as it adds rapid/ revolutionary/ catastrophic crises (these being Mircea Eliade's terms in "Spiritual Itinerary"[29]) to the series of mainstream modernity terms that revolve around the reformist, liberal politics of the establishment and modernization (illustrating the even pace of change developed in western democratic regimes). In addition, anti-modernist affirmations coming from local interwar intellectuals can qualify the statements about the postcommunist aspiration towards the western centre and pluck them out from the reach of neo-dependency theory claims. Lastly, operating with the hyphen in the meso-regional comparative frame may lead to the discovery of relationships within, and between ethnical and supra-national paradigms. Hyphenation outside the nation may serve to analyze, directly refute, or relativize Romanian exceptionalism, too, opening it to a world larger than the local identity.

This kind of opening was effected by the postcommunist identity lesson in survival that Hertha Müller teaches – and she was rewarded for it – in her Nobel Prize winning novel *The Hunger Angel.* It is a lesson about the power of discourse

[29] Mircea Eliade, "Spiritual Itinerary", in Diana Mishkova et al (eds.), *Anti-Modernism – Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Budapest – New York, CEU Press, 2014, pp. 127-133.

taught facing the West from the East of Europe. Because of her own, and her penalized protagonist's, capacity to survive communization by preserving the advanced values of the West, she achieved the performance of defeating, while also frontally addressing, the forceful postwar communization in the Soviet Union satellites. The survival of a poet, the real and fictional poet Oskar Pastior whose concentration camp thoughts the book chronicles, may well differ from that of an ordinary, anonymous figure in the crowd; but the effect of rich discourse substituting itself to the decimating realities of concentration camp oppression is an overwhelming act, and gift, of secular grace. Hertha Müller's transcription refines to the angelic sublime and transcendence the hunger flagellum in the novel. Writing in what one may well designate as "postcommunist German" about a typical experience in the meso-regional world (with Hertha Müller being a postcolonial citizen of the Austro-Hungarian empire in the Romanian Banat) is the perfect equivalent of writing back to Empire in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese. The only difference is that it writes back to the western world from, and about, the communist meso-regional oppression. Thus it is that the East and West of Europe are hyphenated together, if not reconciled, in postcommunist discourse made possible by expressing the postwar hyphenated trauma in a language graced with sufficiently wide-circulation. So, what can one derive from this exceptional case?

Derrida's analysis of identity starting from uniqueness and performed in increasingly abstract, comprehensive terms can help answer this question. Derrida started from his own experiences *in extremis*, as shown in the following quotation.

> What happens when someone resorts to describing an allegedly uncommon "situation," mine, for example, by testifying to it in terms that go beyond it, in a language whose generality takes on a value that is in some way structural, universal, transcendental, or ontological? When anybody who happens by infers the following: "What holds for me, irreplaceably, also applies to all. Substitution is in progress; it has already taken effect. Everyone can say the same thing for themselves and of themselves. It suffices to hear me; I am the universal hostage"[30].

These thoughts fuelled the Derridean diagnosing of traumatic experiences in social terms because they opened the way for defining identity under imperial and post-imperial circumstances by using hyphenated counter-terms, the result of negation or contrast, but also of inclusion. It is to describe post-traumatic identity (whether imperial or not) and the divided voices that resist inclusion in homogeneous discourses that the flexibility of the hyphen operator is welcome. It may well satisfy the criterion of unchecked substitutions that poststructuralism wishes to liberate from the hegemony of centered structures in discourse as well as in civic life.

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[30] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 20.

Because it encourages substitutions in both directions, the graphical figure of the hyphen, which is not a trope either, really, allows one to think of both ends, or of the linear hyphen middle. Hyphenation reaches for generality, as an operator ready to accommodate (or graft) on postcommunist soil the postcolonial experience of hybridity, dislocation, liminality which have already been deconstructing hegemonic centres and narratives for so many decades now. What can boost one's hopes is the fact that bolder literary discourses have already done that in addressing postcommunist alienation frontally. Hailing from Romania, Hertha Müller succeeded in bridging the gap, and placed a hyphen, between the two halves of Europe, West and East of the Berlin Wall, in associating German as a major cultural language and Russian. Her merit was that she made palpable the postcommunist hyphen that decolonized meso-regional nations have to strive with; in fact, she made the traumatic hyphen visible by moving the long silenced anti-communist language to the Western left in the discourse of the hegemonic age that both postcommunism and postcolonialism strive to move beyond.

All this brings us back to the way hyphenation, understood as an almost impossible coexistence in time and space (such as the coexistence of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland or of communist nostalgia and the decommunization pathos in the meso-region), becomes recognizable when it is pinpointed in/ by discourses. When acknowledged as such, in the poems by Seamus Heaney and Derek Mahon or in the German language and in Romanian translation, Hertha Müller's Nobel Prize winning novel, literature manages the performance of fixing the hyphen – which slips and slides as a supremely floating signifier. It is now a structurating fusion or defusing operator (as seen in the history of nationalist thinking), now a pointer or an arrow speaking, rather than of linguistic neighbouring or othering, of the trace and the lag in time of theoretical discourses. There is a roughly ten years' space which separates postcommunist from postcolonial theory discourses, if we consider the distance in time between Robert Young's account about hybridization and the *Colonial Desire* (1995), for example, and the self-divided desire, manifest in the postcommunist meso-HYPHEN!-region. With a little bit of patience and equipped with the right understanding of the instruments at hand, accountability might be secured for postcommunist self-reflection. This will situate it so as to counter the fact, noted as early as 2001 by David Chioni Moore, that "South does not speak East, and East not South"[31].

[31] David Chioni Moore, "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique", *PMLA*, XVI, 2011, 1, *Globalizing Literary Studies*, p. 115.

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IS ROMANIAN POSTCOMMUNIST IDENTITY HYPHENATED IN THE SAME WAY AS THE POSTSTRUCTURALIST, POSTCOLONIAL AND POST-TRAUMATIC HYPHENATED IDENTITY?

(*Abstract*)

The paper is an attempt to approach postcommunist identity scholarship to postcolonial and poststructuralist theory by focusing on hyphenation as an identity mark traceable in both harder and softer disciplinary approaches – and in poetry or fiction. In the first part, the theoretical scaffolding is constructed in a narrative about the origin of the hyphenation terms. They are shown to derive from postcolonial and poststructuralist theory as advanced in *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (2006) by Emily Apter, a text which ties into Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (1998). Both of these are read in conjunction with the history of nationalism in Joep Leersen's *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (2006), where the hyphen indicates structuralist fusions, suppressions and adjonctions. The second, comparative part of the paper debates and demonstrates the applicability of the hyphenated identity terms in several collective identity discourses and texts. After documenting the Irish postcolonial identity still segregated between the typical mentalities developed in a colony of occupation (nationalist) and the successful settler colony one, by referring to poems by Seamus Heaney and Derek Mahon, to scathing satires from James Joyce's "Oxen of the Sun" episode in *Ulysses,* and to the elegiac metropolitan essays by Hubert Butler, the following hypothesis can be advanced. That there is an analogy between the postcolonial case of British white colonialism in Ireland, a country still torn between two centres, and the postcommunist hyphenation due to the confrontation with eastern and western hegemony and discourses. On the

postcommunist side, Romanian hyphenation is followed in Professor Sorin Alexandrescu's imagological essay *Paradoxul român* (1998), which is compared to Joep Leersen's history of European national thought, and to a more recent intellectual history anthology, *Anti-Modernism – Radical Revisions of Collective Identity* (2014). Because it documents several radical statements deployed until 1945 in Central and Southeast Europe, the latter book helps reconstruct the horizon of pre-communist identity to which postcommunist discourses prevailingly refer. The similarities and differences between European imagological and postcolonial studies, the latter developing under the sign of critical theory, are highlighted. They are put to work in the paper's third part. Future directions for the analysis of meso-European regional hyphenation in relation to the poststructuralist and postcolonial paradigms are suggested.

Keywords: hyphenation, postcolonial, postcommunist, (post)structuralist, anti-modernism in the meso-European region.

IDENTITATEA ROMÂNEASCĂ POSTCOMUNISTĂ SE ARTICULEAZĂ ÎN ACELAŞI FEL CA IDENTITATEA POSTSTRUCTURALISTĂ, POSTCOLONIALISTĂ ŞI POST-TRAUMATICĂ?
(*Rezumat*)

Lucrarea de faţă îşi propune să stabilească o similitudine între studiile asupra identităţii postcomuniste şi teoria poststructuralistă, printr-o discuţie pe marginea despărţirii prin cratimă ca marcă a identităţii, reperabilă în studiile mai mult sau mai puţin riguros disciplinare, cât şi în poezie sau ficţiune. În prima parte, demersul teoretic porneşte de la analiza originilor termenilor formaţi prin afixare. Aceştia derivă din teoria postcolonială şi poststructuralistă elaborată de Emily Apter în *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (2006), text înrudit cu *Monolingualism of the Other: or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (1998). Ambele lucrări sunt interpretate în relaţie cu istoria naţionalismului din studiul lui Joep Leersen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History* (2006), unde cratima indică fuziunile, suprimările şi alăturările structuraliste. Cea de-a doua parte, comparatistă, a lucrării discută şi demonstrează modul de aplicare a termenilor referitori la identitatea realizată prin cratimă la diferite discursuri şi texte despre identitatea colectivă. După demonstrarea identităţii postcoloniale irlandeze, sfâşiată încă între mentalităţile specifice unei colonii aflate sub ocupaţie (naţionalistă) şi, respectiv, ale coloniei învingătoare, prin referinţa la poezii de Seamus Heaney şi Derek Mahon, la satirele sarcastice din episodul „Boii Soarelui" din romanul lui James Joyce, *Ulise*, şi la eseurile elegiace metropolitane ale lui Hubert Butler, putem avansa următoarea ipoteză: că există o analogie între cazul postcolonial al colonialismului alb, britanic din Irlanda, ţară încă împărţită între două centre, şi clivajul postcomunist determinat de confruntarea cu dominaţia şi discursurile estice şi vestice. În domeniul postcomunismului, cazul românesc este urmărit în eseul imagologic al profesorului Sorin Alexandrescu *Paradoxul român* (1998), prin raportare la istoria gândirii europene naţionale a lui Joep Leersen, precum şi la o antologie a istoriei intelectuale recente, *Anti-Modernism – Radical Revisions of Collective Identity* (2014). Analizând câteva afirmaţii radicale utilizate până în 1945 în Europa Centrală şi de Est, cea din urmă lucrare contribuie la reconfigurarea orizontului identităţii precomuniste la care se referă în mod preponderent discursurile postcomuniste. Accentul cade pe similitudinile şi diferenţele dintre studiile europene imagologice şi cele postcolonialiste, întreprinse în numele teoriei critice. Acestea sunt reliefate în cea de-a treia parte a studiului. Sugerăm, de asemenea, posibilitatea unor direcţii viitoare în analiza segregării regionale din Europa Centrală, în relaţie cu paradigmele poststructuraliste şi postcolonialiste.

Cuvinte-cheie: despărţire prin cratimă, postcolonialist, postcomunist, (post)structuralist, anti-modernism în regiunea mezoeuropeană.