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# Romanian Dacianism and the production of a “vernacular modernity” in the context of the Europeanization process

Ioana Virginia Brezeanu

Postgraduate student/Université Lumière Lyon2

## Abstract

Romanian Dacianism represents a neo-nationalist movement that experienced in the past years an important raise of popularity in the virtual sphere and it can be seen nowadays as an extension of elder forms of nationalism (notably the development of the “theory of continuity” in second half of the XIX century or the protochronism in the '70s). In this article, I will discuss primarily about the political, economic and cultural changes that allowed the spread of the phenomenon, and I will try to reflect on the production of the dichotomy “east” vs. “west”, employed by the promoters of the movement in the elaboration of public speeches on the social media. Since the fall of communism, in December 1989, Romania passed from a socialist planned-economy to the free-market. The persistence of the period of transition brought to the development of an “identity crisis”. In fact, it is exactly within the effort of integration in the European Union, in the context of the Europeanization process, that a new myth of nation is created by nationalists and it has the role to define a “new national identity”, based on Dacian roots (antic population antiquity that inhabited the territory of nowadays Romania). In this context, the image of the “Occident” has been negatively embodied and then re-interpreted and transformed in a “collective enemy” or a “collective culprit”. The imaginary of “them”, the “occidentals”, is translated by the construction of some myths of conspiracy. The appropriation of a vernacular, non Western model of modernity can be seen in this particular case as a social construction of peripherality. Based on the analysis of articles promoted and discussed on the Facebook page of the movement, I will describe further how the construction of a national imagery and the production of otherness contribute to the creation of a “vernacular modernity”. Two examples will be elaborated for this purpose: the “fear of islamization of Europe”, and the “victory of Conchita Wurst at the European Song Contest in 2014”.

Keywords: Nationalism, Europeanization, post-communism, Orientalism, identity crisis

## Introduction<sup>i</sup>

In this article I would like to draw the attention to the development of a neo-nationalist movement that re-emerged in Romania in the last decade – the Dacianist Movement (making reference to the Dacian population, peoples that inhabited the area of modern Romania during the Ancient Rome’s empire). The supporters of this movement refuse the idea of a Daco-Roman, and other invaders’ ancestry of the Romanian population, pretending that on the present-day territory of Romania lived in the past a population that had been the cradle of “European civilisation”. This appropriation of meaning represents a common status in many societies which practice their ceremonies based on myths of foundation, in the opinion of Eliade<sup>ii</sup> (Elaide,1980).

Having encountered an important success among different virtual communities, this movement is transforming into a concrete phenomenon, interfering in religious, cultural and historical areas with the purpose of resisting globalisation and claiming an authentic and true ‘Romanian identity’ based on Dacian roots. For my master thesis I elaborated the hypothesis that a process of rewriting the history, together with the re-actualisation and popularisation of ‘ancient cultural forms’ and the commodification of a Dacian culture, have been set up in order to accomplish this aim. I will try to demonstrate in the following lines how these elements contribute to the creation of a feeling of adhesion to the “national Dacian identity” by drawing boundaries between “self” and “other”, between “false” and “authentic” and between “official” and “vernacular”.

## Contextualization

### Romania's integration in the European Union

From the fall of communism in December 1989 until the date of European Union (EU) accession (2007), Romania moved from a socialist-planned economy to free-market. The pact that allowed the country to become an EU member was already established in 1995, so the EU pressured the speeding up of the process of transition, democratisation and modernisation. Several programs and strategies meant to prepare the Romanian society for accessing to the European structures have been adopted successively and the enlargement of the European Union has taken over all problems resulting from the disparities between its members. The integration was made in a comparative perspective between the so called "more developed" countries in the "Western Europe" (Bonfiglio, 2006). In fact, the connection established between the two entities is a centre-periphery relationship where the decisions of the centre have an impact on the periphery's economic, political or social development<sup>iii</sup>.

In order to understand better the context in which the neo-nationalist movement was born, I found it necessary to first provide a larger perspective of the relationship built between the two bodies within an historical approach regarding Romania's position in the European space.

### The Europeanization process

The evolution of the Europeanization process in Romania is closely associated with the process of accession at the European Union. Europeanization is considered to be a stage in the integration process. For Radelli, this is a method of construction, diffusion and institutionalization "of the EU rules, which shape the internal discourse, the identities, the political structures and the public policies." (Radelli, 2003, p. 30 in Schifirnet, 2011) In other words, this operation implies the changes produced in the internal context of each country through enforcing in models, norms and community policies, based on substantial modifications in the national policies and the institutional framework of their adoption and implementation.

Friedman considers that the articulation between the local and the global is constituted by two principal mechanisms: assimilation of external imported objects, texts, schemes and the material integration of the local into the global (imperial expansion, incorporation in larger systems) which implies mostly a relationship of dependency. (Friedman, 2008, p.2) The connection established between the two entities is a centre-periphery relationship<sup>7</sup> where the decisions and the requests of the centre have an impact on the periphery's economic, political or social development. Before the fall of communism, peasant class and working class which incorporated the major number of the population suffered some structural changes. After the process of deindustrialization many of the individuals belonging to the old working class had to reorient themselves and due to the lack of economical investments done by local or foreign companies in a Romanian new possible industry, the labour force dropped down, creating a huge wave of migration in other of the member countries in the EU (Bonfiglio, 2006).

For some scholars, it is exactly this migration, through its transnational flows that will represent the Europeanization of this country. It is important in our context to see migration as a process that could help to reach this stage and at the same time as a factor that brought to the development of neo-nationalism by the representation of the image that Romanians have in the other member countries. Based on my own research and observation in the migration context the integration process and the immigrant's status abroad bring up the creation of a crisis of personal identity and individual memory, of "frustration, inferiority and felling of being second-hand EU citizens" (Schifirnet, 2013, p.310) that is linked to the desire of a way of integration or acceptance that could generate a legitimization of their own existence. We observe how the effort of integration in the EU and of exiting this period of transition participated to the creation of a collective frustration and identity crises.

We can say that Europeanization stage is still a dream to accomplish, and Schifirnet argues that we could consider the country nowadays as belonging to a "tendential modernity stage" (Schifirnet,2011)

### Concept of "Modernity" and the integration in the EU

If we compare several definitions of the notion "modernity" we can understand better the confusion produced by the meaning of it. For many centuries, in the "western" vision, the modernity presupposed a particular, rational view of the world that has its roots in Europe, "where it can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, re-emerging in renaissance Italy and coming to full bloom during the Age of Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

This meta-narrative has then been extended to include nineteenth century European imperialism in other parts of the world, reaching its culmination in the present condition of globalization, in which modernity has become a universal phenomenon” (Houben and Schrempf 2008, p.8). Is modernity a product of European capitalism society? Friedman considers that modernity was linked to the idea of individualism, nation-state, imperialism and capitalism (Friedman, 2008) (and it is still under this vision that the accession of a country in the EU is considered).

In fact, for a state to be integrated in the EU, its entire development is dependent on capitalistic economic growth. But in its turn is dependent on the formation of a larger economic and therefore political arena than the territory of the state itself. Friedman argues that this process must be considered on three levels: structural changes for urbanization, industrialization, economic development and capitalism; institutional formations: nation-state, democratic institutions, power, capitalist-political economies; and cultural components: education, knowledge, literacy. Modernity is a mythical component of contemporary Europe (Friedman, 2008). Under these circumstances, we should consider that not all the social formations are subjected to the same kind of trajectory.

Under these conditions, Romania is confronting today with an identity crisis that can be due to the failure of integration into the EU and its persistence in a period of transition. Nowadays official statistics show that 1.5 million of Romania’s inhabitants live in extreme poverty. Also, in 2004 almost half of the population was employed in the agriculture sector and the rural and urban division has stabilised at numbers similar to those of 1990. Moreover, in 2003 it was reported that 1 out of 10 families had someone working abroad. It is certain that the EU’s rules and norms of integration cannot be applied in the current situation. If the model of this modernisation will be achieved only by the strict application of the rules of the European Community, without taking into account the local conditions and historic processes, those putting these decisions into practice can elicit rejection and public reactions. The result is, that within this context, Dacianism offers another form of Europeanisation, by affiliating Romania within the European space as being a primordial territory of ‘civilisation’ of the entire continent, and on another side, by isolating the ‘national specific’ and developing a ‘common culprit’ in the collective imagery, pictured as the EU.

This reaction is not new; in fact, for many scholars, ‘non-Western’ countries do not passively consume cultural and ideological products that came from the West through media, but they always ‘bring their own cultural resources and horizons of expectations to bear in a fully dialectical and often unexpected way upon the imported goods and images of cultural capitalism’. In other words, all information can be processed, interpreted and reworked according to the interests of different social actors.<sup>iv</sup> Additionally, in Romania, “the obsession with belonging to Europe settles in during the 19th century, when the elites begin shaping the national project as well as the economic and cultural policies of modernisation”; therefore, “if we understand modernity as an ample programmatic process of adjusting a marginal, peripheral society to Western modernity, we already see that we had the perfect premise for the settling in of this ‘desire for Europe’.”<sup>v</sup>

## Identity crisis and the desire of “belonging to Europe”

Within the contemporary context, the one of integration in the EU, the concept “identity crises,” is strongly evidenced by all my interlocutors, in connection to this process. Cristian E., Romanian ethnologist, considers that *“People have complexes...there exists a Romanian...this huge inner pain, suffering..they are denationalized..they don’t know their own culture..they haven’t been culturalized with their own culture..so as long as they won’t have an identity, either they over-nationalize, or they denationalize and became strangers. This is all about overcompensation.. you become racist....most of Romanians citizens today are romanophobes....they lost their identity..as long as you claim to be a dace, you cannot be Romanian.”* (Cristian E. ethnologist)<sup>vi</sup>

This lack of “Romanian identity and culture” it is, in his opinion, strictly linked to the construction of a national imagery by comparison or opposition with or within a Europe that belonged to “Occidentals” (imagery adopted and reproduced especially by intellectuals):

*“The idea is that for “Occidentals”, Europeanization is their Europe. And here we have to deal with a racist ideology. Like in the colonialist terminology “we have a higher civilization, the others are barbarians”. This is the thinking. And this thinking is deeply rooted in the Romanian literature Which is extremely affected. Created in the nineteenth century and influenced by German and French society. Mister Boia in “ Why is Romania differently”, (reference to Lucian Boia, historian) makes hard affirmations for an ethnologist. I have a PhD in Ethnology and I don’t agree when he affirms that until the end of the nineteenth you couldn’t find sculpture to Romanians.”* (Cristian E. ethnologist)

In Gazeta Politică’s article about “Nation, Subalternity and desire of Europe-A discussion about national identity and the need of European belonging, Veda Popovici and David Schwartz agree on the fact that nowadays, the national discourse in the Romanian context is basically a narrative of belonging to Europe. Its different versions

build its different representations of Europe and some of them even consume their own interpretation, but all have the same aim: to one of proofing the belonging (Gazeta Politica, 2014). From my point of view, I support this declaration since it contributes to the confirmation of my hypothesis. And since they declare that this need of acceptance and this national construction has been initiated long time ago, I will try to understand it better through the analysis of the “balkanization process” as seen by Todorova. It is important to precise first that Todorova’s volume has been published in 1997, 20 years after the apparition of the famous Said’s *Orientalism*. Both volumes make references to the “Occident” or “western culture” that de-contextualized geographical appellations in order to appropriate them a mythicized and constructed imaged, especially in the academic middle.

Todorova understands by balkanisation a notion that has been adopted in the political vocabulary after the First World War: “The word was coined by German socialist to describe what was done to the western fringe of the Russian Empire by the Peace of Breast-Litovsk”. In 1920, during a journalistic visit in Austria, Hungary Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, Paul Scott Mowrer, correspondent of “Chicago Daily News” declared that “this is the region that has now been balkanized”. And he understands by this notion, “the creation, in a region of hopelessly mixed races, of a medley of small states with more or less back-ward populations, economically and financially weak”. (Todorova, 1997, p.35) Todorova employs the notion of “Western Culture” to make reference to “Occident”; this appellation engages clearly the presence of a “Eastern Culture” even if the dichotomy East Europe-West Europe has never been used in this volume. For her, the imagery of the Balkans by the Occident, frames into a continuity of Said’s thinking about the social and political construction of one in relation to the other, and embodied both in “emic” and “etic” contexts (Kottak, 2006, p.47). Balkanization, “had come to denote the parcelization of large and viable political units but also had become a synonym for reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian.”(Todorova, 1997, p.3)

What I find interesting to retain from the reflections on orientalism and balkanization is the idea of “primitive” versus “civilized” that characterizes in these authors’ opinion the duality between the two categories. In order to understand the following reflections about Romania’s imagery nowadays, and as we will see, the adoption and reproduction of this image by different actors, it was important for me see how this image does not represent a new, created or emerging problem, but it represents a long process of socialization that can be frame in a specific historical and social context.

## Dacianism as a form of “Vernacular modernity”

Schifirnet considers that within the integration process, “the Romanians were forced to adopt norms which do not belong to them, because they entered an organization with rules established by those who had built it. Some of these norms have inevitably come into conflict with values, stereotypes and local mentalities but also with the historical inheritance. This way Romania was asked to give up certain particularities because they did not coincide with the main directions of the accession to the EU”. (Schifirnet, 2011 ,p.218). The appropriation of Western modernity by non-Western societies is therefore not just a problem of historical transition - it is a problem of translation or interpretation.<sup>vii</sup>

Alternative modernities can be seen as a social construction of peripherality, where the alternative is “an understanding of the world in which identity is reduced increasingly to social role, achieved rather than ascribed and temporary and even alienated from the subject”( Houben and Schrempf, 2008, p.7). Nevertheless, as Ferguson argues, where Western scholars or local westernized intellectuals see the triumph of “alternative modernities”, local populations may discern only the failure of their hopes for the improvement of living conditions (Ferguson, 1999). The elites in my case can be considered the dacianists that, in Romanian academics’ view, their discourse that interferes within national public sphere cannot be consider as being intellectual.

Vernacular (alternative) modernities can intervene in the process of interpretation, translation and intervention regarding the reception of global communication networks. For Neyazi, these are conceptualized as a “critical appropriation of Western modernity reproduced in indigenous forms”<sup>viii</sup>. As I already argued, present day-to-day life in Romania is performed in the context of transition to a market economy after the fall of communism, where the (recent) past has been integrated and reproduced in activities and speeches. By trying to prove historical legitimacy for the transition period and to deal with the fact that most of the population would have preferred the communist regime, the new regime tried to create a common point for national identification – the concept of freedom. Freedom goes back, in the new context, to the freedom of being Romanian and of being accepted in the European space (Kelemen, 1999). During my field research in Romania I led various informal conversations with people that I met there. Many times, in fact, I was surprised to hear to a series of stories regarding the nostalgia of

communism – without even asking. The passage between those moments and today is marked by the ‘death of Ceaușescu’ in their speeches and to some extent by ‘the fall of communism’. If this movement represents a continuation of protochronism, the fact must be considered that the general economic situation and the cultural changes that are produced within the process of globalisation continue to offer a good basis for the presence of nostalgia in the daily life.

I realised in fact, that the idea of “nation”, as expressed by contemporary Dacianism, has roots in the ideologies promoted by protochronism<sup>ix</sup>. Thus, we must keep in mind that a series of variations are presented between the two forms of nationalisms due to the fact that each is executed in a specific époque with specific aims. Although there is an historical interrelation between these two variants that are characterised by continuities and differences, both forms are characterised also by their intentions of eternal values and defence of timeless aspirations towards a continuous reinvention of tradition (Gingrich, Banks, 2006, p.2). I won’t go deeper into the various definitions and debates that have been expressed in the social sciences around the term “nation”<sup>x</sup> because the interest is to show how this notion has been engaged in the production of nationalism in Romania. Verdery considers that “nation is first of all a political symbol”. As such, its meanings are as varied as its multiple histories and as numerous as the social structural positions from which it can be both utilised and read. In fact, if a specific definition of “nation” cannot be furnished, it is interesting to see what meaning is attached by our interlocutors within this specific context. For Verdery, nationalism in Eastern Europe is associated with the idea of “nation” based on ethnicity (common language, history border and “cultural identity”) (Verdery, 1996, p.109). In Romania, socialism at one time encouraged the idea of homogenisation of the nation. Although this period did not cause a concrete ethnic union of the population in daily life, it perpetuated and intensified the national feeling.(Verdery, 1996, p.110) According to Martin B., my interlocutor and one of the main exponent of Dacianism<sup>xi</sup>, the idea of a “Romanian nation”, with its “own specificities”, based on a long and continuous perpetuation of “dacian traditions” should be shared by the “collective consciousness”

## The imaginary of “Occident” in the Dacianist context

While I was reflecting on how this failure of reaching all stages of integration has been translated and reproduced in this particular case by Dacianism, observing the permanent comparison in speeches with the “Occident”, my first idea was related in fact, to the effort of recognition of a “Romanian specific”. I first developed the idea that nationalists ‘aim was to show this aspect by a process of reconstruction of the past, by creating a new image of “barbarians”, opposite to the one that has been given to Dacians by the Romans. This is not only about the production of a speech about identity, but also about the effort of nationalists to create a collective adhesion to this discourse and generating this way a sense of belonging in order to establish also another form of adhesion and participation at the European discourse. However, I realized after following in time different articles published by neo-nationalists, that this discourse engages also the production of this specific by opposition to EU’s model.

During the interview, Martin B claimed the importance of “a great history” in a first place for the Romanian people and for their identity, in order “to be in a better relation with the other”, to be able to “highlight Romanian realities when he faces the Occident”(interview with Martin B.). In the past two years where I could observe the production of Dacian literature, I could notice a series of articles that make reference to the relationship of Romania with the European Union. Represented both by an image of a “national culprit” and by the creation of the imagery that surrounds the organism through the development of myths of conspiracy, emphasizing the “Romanian characteristics” in opposition to “another”, seems to be in my opinion a good example of vernacular modernity. The words “barbarian” and “exploitation”, very often employed in the production of narrative, show also very well the two ways of distinction and at the same time desire of integration that I claimed in my hypothesis. Several articles published on Dacian webpages led me to the elaboration of this idea: “*BBC Documentary: Dacians were barbarians, chiefs and rapists*”<sup>xii</sup>, “*Where Vlachs barbarians? Surprising proofs of civilization for the Romanians of Middle Age*”<sup>xiii</sup>, “*Dacians, barbarians? You’re wrong: they even had sophisticated surgery instruments*”<sup>xiv</sup>, “*EU wants us to be many and fools. Romanian Polenta is made by Romanian corn*”<sup>xv</sup>, “*Does EU targets the disappearance of Romanian traditional seeds?*”<sup>xvi</sup>, “*Is it time to exist the EU? Economist Radu Golban published the volume ‘Romania, alternatives to EU’s girdle’*”<sup>xvii</sup>, “*German euro-sceptic. Romania, between the exploited countries for the revitalization of other states*”<sup>xviii</sup>, “*EU means empire. Empire means war.*”<sup>xix</sup>.

The “Occident”, as is translated by neo-nationalists, engaged on the other side also the construction of a “culprit” for the collective imagery. When I first started to follow the virtual movement in early 2013, I could notice an important circulation of narrative related to the myth of conspiracy. Many of these myths were already circulating in the virtual space for many years and under different form and, I can affirm, I was already socialized with part of

them. Discourses about conspirationism are performed both through literature and everyday life. Verdery and Brubaker and his team, anthropologists that worked on different social situations of post communist Romania, confess in their writings that speeches about conspiracy seem to be a very common subject of communication between people<sup>xx</sup>.

Adriana Dudas, basing her writing on Tismaneanu's volume, argues that for Romanians, the conspirationism represents one of the basis of nationalism. In her vision, this implies the necessity to search for culprit for all problems and obstacles that Romanians could meet during the centuries. The culprits are many and they often change according to the period and context (Duduas, 2008).

In the interview that I could lead with Martin B., being asked how does he see the changes that developed after '89, he accused the "artisans of globalization" of betraying the country and starting a "process of destruction of identity". He claims that "globalization" is "the most evil enemy for the preservation of national identity"; those "betrayers", are again identified in his speech with the IMF, World Bank (WB), EU and the commission in Brussels.

Two examples of resistance to the "western model of modernity"- "the victory of Conchita Wurst at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2014" and the "Islamisation of Europe"- will supply us some models of the counter-answer provided by Dacianism in relation to the adaptation to norms that seem to be specific to the "Occident".

## "Conchita Wurst at the Eurovision song contest 2014" and the "Islamization of Europe" - fear of the "western modernity"

Regarding vernacular modernity, Appadurai considers that it is situated between local resistance and the sphere of the social imaginary, and he conceptualizes it as "neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 4) but rather a space of contestation where the global is appropriated to become the local through translation, interpretation and adaptation. Within the article published about the victory of Conchita Wurst, representing Austria at the Eurovision Song Contest<sup>xxi</sup>, the social imaginary is fed through the accusation of "educational system" in this country, where the idea of sexuality is embodied since the secondary school. The space given to comments, sometimes in opposition or in contradiction, complete this "non disciplined" creation of the image of "Occident" and of otherness.

I will replicate in a first place a brief extraction of the text written in May 2014 about Conchita and in a second place I will try to show in what the article reveals "otherness" and to what extent this presentation provides a space of interpretation, production and consummation of this imaginary.

### **The grotesque masquerade from Eurovision: The Woman with Beard won the competition!**

#### **Occult messages in the artistic representation.<sup>xxii</sup>**

*"Few days ago I was telling to some friends that I'm absolutely sure that the Woman with Beard, the so called transvestite Conchita Wurst, will win the Eurovision song contest. And I was telling that without listening to the song that she interprets. Well, this prevision was true. (...)the global political intention is to convince youth that is normal to be homosexual, lesbian, transsexual and eventually (in a close future) to have sex with animals....And when a character like this comes up, the system will try to promote it and to make it a winner in order to have additional arguments. In Austria, children learn from the secondary school how to use a condom. (...)Still in Austria, the police (!!!) makes regular visits in high schools and explains to children what drugs and alcoholic drinks they are allowed to consume. This is the nowadays Austria, a country where, from this perspective, is naturally represented by the Woman with Beard, the winner of Eurovision 2014. Who knows and understands more, can see the occult message transmitted by the world's puppeteers through the performance of this ridiculous character, already called by the manipulators of the system: The Queen of Europe! Bleah!"*

Through the accusation of "global politics" and of the "manipulators of the system", the victory and performance of Conchita combines both the critic of the "western modernity" and the "myth of conspiracy". "European states" are seen as the enemy that supplies a model of adaptation to its norms, which are considered to be "abnormal" and "unhealthy" for children. (again, the use of this category is employed here to indicate the changes that can occur in the future). Conchita's performance is being seen as a tool of integration to certain values, but they don't belong to Romania, because they are seen as being "weird". We deal here with a process of inclusion/exclusion, where being homosexual or transsexual it is not accepted by the "normal" values that represent the Romanian country. Moreover, accepting these "occidental" practices can engage the emergence of other

“catastrophes”, such as having sex with animals. The designation of Conchita as being a “Queen of Europe” within the Eurovision Festival (where 37 countries have participated in 2014) has been interpreted by the author as a metaphor for indicating the symbol of a common shared model of modernity for all the European space.

The article points out also what Romania will become if it will accept EU’s models of integration. Same as in Austria, the “woman with Beard” could “naturally” represent this country as well. By expressing, “This is the nowadays Austria, a country where, from this perspective, is naturally represented by the Woman with Beard, the winner of Eurovision 2014!” the author of the article underlines that this performance and this public image has been accepted by the collective sense at the point that trans-sexuality is seen as a “normal practice”.

The “tolerant ones”, who accept this representation, of being a transvestite, are ironically called “modernists” and are considered the ones that support the integration. This article, in my opinion, tends to show the danger of adaptation to European norms; its production can be considered as a base for the creating “otherness”, and its promotion contributes to the effort of construction of a vernacular model, of a “national specific”. We could observe as well how local groups or persons are capable of critically evaluating homogenous programs of modernity and how they can employ this criticism in the production of public opinions.

Later on, in September 2015, another global event was strongly politicized by this movement: the so-called “crisis of refugees”. A large amount of literature regarding the “islamization of Europe” has been shared on social networks, reinforcing this way the myths of conspiracy and the separation with “western’s politics”. These are just some examples: “*We are in the middle of a World War: the process of Islamization of Europe is starting now*”<sup>xxiii</sup>, “*About the Islamization of Europe: A Christian church in Hanburg has been transformed in a mosque*”<sup>xxiv</sup>, “*German authorities, between stupidity and betrayal of national interest*”<sup>xxv</sup>,

In the article “*The conspiracy behind the refugees’ crisis*”<sup>xxvi</sup> the author sees “beyond the real drama of refugees”, all indications that this crisis of immigrants is “part of a plan mixing racial European peoples whose aim is slimming national identities through their ethnic dilution”. Moreover, in his opinion, the ground for interethnic and religious conflicts is prepared this way, in order to justify the drastic reduction in rights and freedoms for all, “just for the triumph of the New World Order led by the great puppeteers of the planet.”

I allowed myself to select few comments given by bloggers to these two articles that I considered to be representative for the point that I tried to underline. Not only the different points of view generate confusion, but the contradiction doesn’t create any problem, because, based on the same principles of inclusion/exclusion, the ones that are not supporting the article, are ironically called “tolerants” or “sold to the Occident”. By choosing these few reviews I wanted to show how the bloggers have embedded a dacianist language, based on the reproduction of myths of conspiracy, otherness, identity crisis and image of Romanians in the European space. Moreover, being “civilized” do not correspond anymore to “western model” of acting, but on the contrary, to the preservation of “ancestral, fair values”. Behind the “tolerance”, “equality” and “human rights actions” that are promoted by the “Occident”, there is the trap of exploitation, of chaos and of the destruction of “Romanian morals”:<sup>26</sup> In order for the lecturer not to be bored; however the number of answers was extremely large

“*Gena Ciobanu . It looks like the civilization goes back in time. like everyone is getting crazy- such a creature should be taken in a museum of curiosities. As for her victory...what to say more..In such competitions with geopolitical implications you should stop participating!*”

“*Anonymous: and when you think about how many others sustain that Romanians are the most uncivilized and crude in the world...but we don’t see much unfortunately about educational system in Europe. Should we be forced to be compared to them and to enter also into this perspective? Shouldn’t church and school intervene in order to allow us to preserve the good and nice traditions inherited from our ancestors?*”

*Anonymous: "Vive the "occident"!"*

*Dragos Scortanu: "100% Judaism and we know why. One of their politics consists in the dissolution of family as the main christian basis of a society with normal people that live according to God’s moral values."*

*David: "If we don’t take in consideration the norms that stand at the base of our civilization, if we accept everything (considering ourselves smart and open-minded) then we obviously head off towards a world without rules, to chaos- which means destruction. Monsters should be kept in reservations, far away from people’s eyes."*

Mario: “All those who lead us from the shadow create the laws in a way that the Islamic terror is favored to the destruction of Christianity”

Alin P.: “Western Europe destroyed nationalist movements after the Second World War. Who should then mobilize the population to defend national values and these have been diluted into the so-called tolerant Europeanism”.

Marta: ““Mother Russa HEEEEEEELLLLLLPPPPPPPP!!!!!!!!”

The analysis of the articles offered me the possibility to observe the various interpretations and translations that different people can elaborate around the Europeanization process. The exponents of Dacianism, by publishing



and sharing a large number of narratives regarding this topic, contribute to the creation of a collective imaginary, that as we could have seen, is further embodied by the members of its community. As Appadurai argues, “images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor and resistance” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 17). Through the virtual space, they are also in my opinion, an important tool in the circulation of exchanges to a large number of persons.

**Biography of the author:** Ioana Virginia Brezeanu was born in Jijila, (in the province of Dobrudja), Romania on the 23th November 1990. Later on, at the age of sixteen, she migrated with her parents in Piedmont, Italy and after her post-diploma in Business and Foreign Languages she decided to continue her studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology. She graduated in June, 2015 from a co-joint master within the University Lumière Lyon2, France and University of Vienna, Austria. Her ethnographical study was dedicated to the development of Dacianism in Romania, a neo-nationalism movement that become very popular on the virtual scene.

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- <sup>i i</sup> This article represents the result of an interdisciplinary study, combining both historical and anthropological approaches. Being based on a research project on Dacianism conducted between 2013-2015 for my master thesis in Social and Cultural Anthropology, a series of empirical data allowed me to develop the content of this text: interviews, ethnographical description, participant observation, cultural and historical contextualization and analysis of speeches of virtual interaction of actors.
- <sup>ii</sup> Some examples of myths of foundation of European Civilization in Dacianist ideology: the development of the first history in the world (Tărtăria's tablets), first 'advanced' Neolithic culture (Cucuteni), first monotheist religion (Zamolxe's cult), born of Aryans and so on. (See more in Brătianu, 2009).
- <sup>iii</sup> See more about this notion in Frank, 1978; Wallerstein, 1974; Agnew, 2005; Schifirnet, 2011
- <sup>iv</sup> Archer, Bosman, Amen & Schimdt, 2007, p. 5-6, in Baysha, 2012, p. 2987.
- <sup>v</sup> Veda Popopici in Nation, Subalternity and desire of Europe-A discussion about national identity and the need of European belonging, *Gazeta Politică*, nr. 8, December, 2014.
- <sup>vi</sup> All names of my interlocutors have been changed; Cristian E. is a Romanian ethnologist who declared himself against the movement and he allowed me a talk in August 2014. Much of the information reproduced in this text is based on the analysis of these interviews, where the intention is to put into dialogue the thoughts expressed by my interlocutors.
- <sup>vii</sup> Eisenstadt, 2000, in Baysha, 2012, p. 2985
- <sup>viii</sup> Neyazi, 2010, p. 908, in Baysha, 2012, p.2987
- <sup>ix</sup> Launched in 1974 by the comparatist Edgar Papu, *protochronism*, it is generally agreed, originated as a concept in literary theory. The term, derived from Greek (*protos* = first and *chronos* = time) referred, in Papu's designation, to the notion of *priority* or *precedence* in cultural discovery. This idea, as Verdery observed, encouraged critics and literary historians to look for developments in Romanian culture that had anticipated events in the better-publicized cultures of Western Europe (Verdery, 1991, p. 167)
- <sup>x</sup> Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Andersen, 2007; Brubaker, 1996; Smith, 1995
- <sup>xi</sup> Martin B. represents the name that I chose for one of the most public exponents of Dacianism in order to guarantee the confidentiality of our talk during an interview taken with him in March 2015
- <sup>xii</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> march 2013, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.ro/2013/03/scandalos-bbc-ul-pretinde-ca-dacii-erau.htm>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xiii</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 <http://adevaruldespredaci.ro/valahii-erau-barbari-dovezi-uimitoare-de-civilizatie-pentru-romanii-dinevul-mediului>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xiv</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015, <http://adevaruldespredaci.ro/dacii-niste-barbari-va-inselati-aveau-chiar-si-instrumente-chirurgicale> -accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xv</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.co.at/2013/03/ue-ne-vrea-multi-si-prosti-mamaliga.html>- accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xvi</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.ro/2013/06/ue-vizeaza-disparitia-semintelor.html>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xvii</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.ro/2013/10/e-vremea-sa-iesim-din-ue-temerarul.html>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xviii</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2013, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.ro/2013/08/euro-sceptic-german-romania-printre.html>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xix</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014, <http://danielroxin.blogspot.ro/2013/01/ue-inseamna-imperiu-imperiu-inseamna.html>-accessed on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- <sup>xx</sup> Verdery, 1996; Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, Grancea, 2006
- <sup>xxi</sup> European festival of music performed every year in the country that won the competition the previous one
- <sup>xxii</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2014 <http://danielroxin.blogspot.co.at/2014/05/mascarada-grotesca-de-la-eurovision.html>-accessed on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- <sup>xxiii</sup> from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015-<http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/generalul-mircea-chelaru-suntem-in-plin-razboi-mondial-incepe-procesul-de-islamizare-a-europei/>, accessed on the 5<sup>th</sup> September
- <sup>xxiv</sup> article from 23 September 2015 <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/despre-islamizarea-europei-biserica-crestina-din-hamburg-transformata-in-moschee/>-accessed on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016
- <sup>xxv</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016, <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/autoritatile-germane-intre-imbecilitate-si-tradarea-interesului-national/>-accessed on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016
- <sup>xxvi</sup> article from the 17<sup>th</sup> September <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/conspiratia-din-spatele-crizei-refugiatilor-ce-li-se-ascunde-cetatenilor-europeni/>-accessed on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016

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