

University of Massachusetts Amherst  
**ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst**

---

Doctoral Dissertations

Dissertations and Theses

---

October 2019

## **“You Can Be a Good Romanian, but not a Romanian”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Romanian History Textbook Narrative**

Razvan Sibii  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_2](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2)



Part of the [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Sibii, Razvan, ““You Can Be a Good Romanian, but not a Romanian”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Romanian History Textbook Narrative” (2019). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 1764.  
[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_2/1764](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/1764)

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@library.umass.edu](mailto:scholarworks@library.umass.edu).

“You Can Be a Good Romanian, but not a Romanian”:  
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Romanian History Textbook Narrative

A Dissertation Presented

by

RAZVAN SIBII

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2019

Department of Communication

© Copyright Razvan Sibii 2019  
All Rights Reserved

“You Can Be a Good Romanian, but not a Romanian”:  
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Romanian History Textbook Narrative

A Dissertation Presented

By

RAZVAN SIBII

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Leda Cooks, Chair

---

Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, Member

---

Donna LeCourt, Member

---

Sut Jhally, Department Head  
Communication

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father and to the four ladies in my life: my daughter, my wife, my mother and my cat.

My father didn't get to see me do this, but I know he'd be ecstatic to know that I'm living the best life I know how. He is the main reason I love storytelling.

My daughter is everything to me. I love her more than life itself.

My wife is an integral part of who I am now. Most things in my life, including some much more consequential than this dissertation, would not be in my life if it weren't for her. Thank you, bella!

Much as I try, I will never be able to tell my mother how much I love her. She is an absolutely amazing woman.

My kitty, Muffin, has been an anchor and a role-model in my life for the past 15 years. She taught me much about love.

I am the luckiest man alive.

## ABSTRACT

“YOU CAN BE A GOOD ROMANIAN, BUT NOT A ROMANIAN”:  
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN HISTORY  
TEXTBOOK NARRATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2019

RAZVAN SIBII, B.A., AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BULGARIA  
M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Leda Cooks

Employing a version of the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology that privileges close textual readings, I examine in this dissertation the manner in which contemporary Romanian history textbooks put forward an essentialist view of ethnonational identity by tracing through history the development of a putatively homogenous “proto-Romanian” entity. I seek to show how the “Getae-Dacian” and “Daco-Roman” identity categories acquired their thing-ness and their boundaries as a result of deliberate rhetorical work performed by Romanian historiographers with the help of such heuristics as “Romanization,” “ethnogenesis” and the nation-as-family metaphor. I also scrutinize how the textbooks treat the two ancient texts that contain some of the earliest references to the “Getae” and the “Dacians” (that is, Herodotus’s

*Histories* and Strabo's *Geography*), with a focus on metadiscursive elements dealing with source attribution and credibility.

My data consists of several dozen history textbooks written for grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, as well as a handful of seminal works of historiography that have set the general tone of the Romanian historical narrative between the two world wars, during the Communist period, and after 1989.

My critique of the historical narrative pushed by these textbooks is complemented by a series of proposals consisting of strategies meant to stimulate the student-readers' critical thinking abilities with regards to the politically sensitive issues of ethnic identity, ancestry and rights. These proposals range from different word choices, to the liberal use of metalanguage, to the advocating of a joint Romanian-Hungarian textbook. The wider goal of this critical pedagogy project is to steer the Romanian history textbook towards the promotion of an open-ended national identity narrative that emphasizes potentialities rather than clarities, beginnings rather than closures, ambiguity and paradox rather than linearity and clarity, and choice rather than predestination.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. The Personal Stakes.....	5
B. Research Questions.....	12
C. Description of Chapters.....	13
II. IDENTITY.....	19
A. Stuart Hall’s Critical Project.....	21
B. Critical Pedagogy.....	36
C. The “Genome Revolution”.....	42
III. METHODOLOGY.....	60
A. Discourse Analysis.....	61
B. Ethnomethodology.....	62
C. Critical Discourse Analysis.....	64
D. Theoretical Imperialism.....	67
E. Ideological Commitment.....	71
F. Methodological Standards.....	78
G. Data.....	92
IV. ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY.....	97
A. The Chroniclers.....	99



B. The Transylvanian School.....	109
C. Historiography in the New Romanian State.....	113
D. The Professionals .....	118
E. The Communist Period .....	122
F. The Case of the Treatise of Romanian History .....	130
G. History Education after 1989 .....	132
H. The Textbooks .....	134
V. ANALYSIS I.....	140
A. Sources: Transparency and Evaluation .....	142
1. Herodotus’s <i>Histories</i> .....	145
2. Strabo’s <i>Geography</i> .....	152
3. Not “made up,” but “processed” .....	156
4. “According to the father of history...” .....	162
5. Recommendations I .....	176
B. Ideographs: The Workhorses of Forced Homogeneity .....	180
1. Same language, same people?.....	185
2. Getae-Dacian “kinship” .....	192
3. The “Proto-Indo-Europeans” and “ethnogenesis” .....	194
4. One language, one people? .....	202
5. Recommendations II .....	208
VI. ANALYSIS II.....	211
A. Romanization .....	212
B. Ethnogenesis.....	222

C. The Family Metaphor.....	237
D. Hybridity and the Other .....	243
VII. CONCLUSION .....	258
A. The Joint Textbook: A Shortcut to Critical Thinking .....	260
1. The Franco-German and Chinese-Korean-Japanese Textbooks.....	261
2. Metadiscourse and Dispute Resolution.....	263
3. Diversity of Meaning, Diversity of Identity .....	270
B. Hybridity and Ambiguity .....	273
1. The Marginal, the Immigrant, the <i>Mestiza</i> .....	278
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	282

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In 1930, Nae Ionescu, at the time one of Romania's best-known philosophers and a mentor to an entire generation of young Romanians with right-of-center (often Fascist) convictions, published a series of opinion pieces in the newspaper he directed, *Cuvântul* ("The Word"), discussing what it meant to be a "Romanian." In those articles, much debated by his contemporaries, Ionescu (1890-1940) drew a sharp distinction between being "a good Romanian" - a category to which he admitted Jews, Catholics and other constituents of the Romanian citizenry - and being simply "a Romanian" - a category in which he only allowed Orthodox Christians of Romanian ethnicity. For him, to be "a good Romanian" meant being willing to fight for the betterment of the country, through industry or military bravery, and he freely recognized that plenty of Romanian citizens of non-Romanian and non-Orthodox backgrounds met that qualification. However, to be "a good Romanian," in his opinion, was "from an ethnic and spiritual point of view, less than to be a 'Romanian' pure and simple" (1930/1990a, p. 194).<sup>1</sup> While to be "a good Romanian" simply required that one have a "friendly attitude" toward the "Romanian reality" (1930/1990c, p. 199), to be "a Romanian" required that one embody the very "essence" of "Romanianness" – that is, that one identify and be widely recognized as ethnically Romanian, speak Romanian as a native language, and be baptized in the Orthodox Church faith like the majority of Romanian citizens. Nations are "historical realities," Ionescu argued in his articles, and "normality" is set by the majority of the nation's members. An individual can be either a Romanian or a Catholic, but not both,

---

<sup>1</sup> All Nae Ionescu quotes are my translation from the Romanian.

since “Romanianness” and Catholicism are “organic structures with an insoluble essence” and do not suffer cohabitation within the same affect and intellect (1930/1990b, p. 209).

Several years after the *Cuvântul* opinion pieces, Ionescu was asked by one of his young protégés, a Jewish-Romanian lawyer and author by the name of Iosif Mendel Hechter (better known by his pseudonym, Mihail Sebastian), to write a preface to his quasi-autobiographical book, *After Two Thousand Years*. Having recently aligned his nationalist convictions to Fascism, Ionescu ended up writing a thoroughly anti-Semitic text, which, surprisingly, Sebastian allowed to be published in his book. That sparked what Idel (2015) describes as “an unparalleled controversy in Romania” (p. 42), as various intellectual luminaries rushed to debate with Ionescu “the Judaic problem.” Why do Jews suffer everywhere, in every era?, Ionescu asked at the beginning of his preface. Predictably enough, his answer was not, “Because of Christian anti-Semitism” (Idel, 2015, p. 48), but rather because Jews have no way of assimilating into any European country. The rationale is frighteningly simple and, indeed, frighteningly familiar to anyone in Romania who has ever been subjected to nationalist narratives (which is to say everyone, in every generation since at least the end of World War I): Because to be a Jew is “not an individual act of will, but a natural state.” Jews will never assimilate in Europe regardless of the level of their personal identification with Judaism, and so will forever provoke hatred and oppression in all the lands that they live in. “Following their own law,” Ionescu writes, “Jews must sabotage Christian settlements and values,” and peace will never be achieved unless either Jews or Christians “disappear.”

The debate that ensued after the publication of *After Two Thousand Years* centered on the possibility of (Christian) redemption for the Jews. While the main

protagonists of this debate (which included historian of religions Mircea Eliade) disagreed, sometimes virulently, on whether Jews might reach salvation if they converted to Christianity, no one questioned the essentialist premise of an immutable Jewish identity whose defining characteristic was “suffering.” In his novel, Sebastian had dared to suggest “the possibility of a hyphenate identity”– that is, the possibility that a secular Jew born and raised in Romania might *be* Romanian – but even he didn’t seem convinced that a Jewish-Romanian synthesis was indeed possible (Idel, 2015, p. 44). This dissertation seeks to map out some of the ways in which the essentialist understanding of (ethnic) identity that Ionescu put forth in his writings is still being passed on to new generations of Romanians (albeit by significantly less charismatic figures), 30 years after Romania has renounced National-Communism and 12 years after the country joined the multinational European Union. I also argue throughout these pages in favor of a liberal, multiculturalist perspective that seeks to decenter ethnicity and embrace diversity, uncertainty, hybridity and ambiguity as vectors of choice, self-fulfillment, social justice and peace. More specifically, in this dissertation I focus on one powerful vehicle through which an inflexible ethnocentric narrative continues to be disseminated throughout Romanian society – the history textbook – and seek to offer a few specific ways in which the historiographic discourse can be changed for the better. I consider my work to be a direct, unapologetic repudiation of the nationalist perspective that arguably reached its zenith during Nae Ionescu’s last years of life but that continues to shape the worldviews of so many self-identified Romanians.

In his seminal *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, historian Lucian Boia (2001) famously points out that the Romanian identity narrative is rife with

“nationalist myths which carry an authoritarian and xenophobic message” (p. 30). The “great mythological configurations around which the national consciousness has crystallized and evolved” (p. 83) in Romania are the obsessive search for “origins” (placed by all contemporary history textbooks in the Early Bronze Age, at the time of the formation of the Dacian and Getae barbarian tribes), the insistence on the “unity” of the “Romanian people” throughout its history, and a similar insistence on the “continuity” of the “Romanian people” – that is, on the unbroken thread that starts with a homogenous “Getae-Dacian” ethnic group, then goes through a “Daco-Roman” phase, only to emerge, through a nearly-magical process called “ethnogenesis,” as a homogenous, exclusivist, organic “Romanian nation.” The tropes of “origins,” “unity” and “continuity” frame an ethnocentric view of Romanian identity that is continually fed to Romania’s youth throughout their schooling years, and is buttressed by complementary messages coming from other influential institutions, such as the media and the Orthodox Church. Ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities also receive the message: they never were, are not, and will never be simply “Romanians”; at most, they can hope to be “good Romanians.” They will be tolerated in times of peace and economic development (such as the period between the World Wars and the current, European Union-membership period). In times of war or economic downturn, however, their essential deficit will invariably be remembered and utilized as a pretext for their scapegoating. The analysis, criticism and alternatives that I offer in this dissertation are meant to be part of a loving work of critical pedagogy whose main goal is to dismantling the “ethno-semantics of race and blood,” to use Victor Neumann’s (2013, p. 378) phrasing, that makes this victimization of the Other possible and, indeed, nearly inevitable.

### A. The Personal Stakes<sup>2</sup>

For a variety of reasons, some family- and some job-related, this dissertation has taken me quite a few years to finish. Throughout those years, however, I never lost interest in my topic of choice. Indeed, I can honestly say that I'm at least as passionate now about the ideas I am working through in these chapters as I was when I first started thinking about my prospectus. And the reason for this unflagging enthusiasm is the fact that this dissertation project has grown out of my life experience. The problems I identify here with Romanian schooling are problems that I have been wrestling with since my adolescent years, to the extent that I doubt I have one former high school classmate who doesn't remember the rants I would frequently direct at the heavy-on-memorization, light-on-critical-thinking Romanian educational model. As well, the alternatives that I suggest in the last chapter to the ethnocentric identity narratives put forward by contemporary history textbooks have their roots in my own experiences with, and choices of, personal and social identity. Below, I indulge in a bit of self-hagiography, with the hope that such a personal account will help explain what this dissertation is built on.

I was born at the beginning of the worst period of National-Communism in Romania, when dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu sought to shore up his crumbling regime by deploying an extreme form of nationalism that featured protochronism, exceptionalism, autarchy, militarism and xenophobia. My family is ethnically mixed, and my skin tone is darker than most Romanians'. Unsurprisingly, that accounted for a measure of prejudice

---

<sup>2</sup> Parts of this subchapter were published in Sibii, R. (2012). Imagining nation in Romanian history textbooks: Towards a liberating identity narrative. In Hickman, H. & Porfilio, B.J. (Eds.). *The new politics of the textbook: Critical analysis in the core content areas*. Boston: Sense. The editors of the book, as well as Sense Publishers, have given me permission to use that text in this unpublished dissertation without the use of quotations or paraphrase.

and alienation in my formative years (as has the fact that I am shorter than the average Romanian man). However, in the complicated Romanian in-group/out-group calculus, my native fluency in the Romanian language ensured that I was still recognized as “a Romanian,” if perhaps one with an asterisk.

In ninth grade, I spent a life-changing six-month period in Michigan as an international exchange student. Even though my town and high school there were overwhelmingly white, I was still awed by whatever diversity they did have. As importantly, I was a total foreigner in that community, in a way that I had never experienced in Romania. Unlike in Romania, however, I did not feel alienated. I was learning to enjoy being “odd” and to use my foreignness to forge relationships with interesting people on the basis of shared values rather than shared backgrounds. When the six months were up, I returned to Romania to finish high school, and was met with something less than enthusiasm by many of my teachers for whom my “joyride” in America represented a frivolous waste of time.

Halfway through twelfth grade, I had the extraordinary chance to apply to, and get accepted into, the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) on a Soros scholarship. (George Soros’s foundation had also co-sponsored my high school exchange program, and was a major financial backer of AUBG itself, all of which made me into one of those “globalist” liberal Soros grantees that conservatives in both America and Romania love to hate.) At the time, AUBG enrolled about 800 students from 30-plus countries, almost all of them on scholarship. No first-year student needed more than a week or so to realize that this environment would soon challenge many of his or her values and beliefs and, most importantly, his or her identities. As a Journalism and Political



Science/International Relations double-major with a relatively high level of comfort with foreignness, I was ideally positioned to take full advantage of the incredible diversity of this place. And some of the first venues in which my own ideas were to be seriously challenged were my Political Science classes, where I had to debate Eastern European history and politics with other young people from every single country neighboring Romania. For most of us, history was a collection of stories we had absorbed for the past 15 years or so from our national history textbooks and popular culture. When those narratives conflicted with one another, as they inevitably did, we were stumped: we didn't want to denounce each other like old-school Eastern European nationalists because we were friends, but we'd also been deeply conditioned to protest such statements as "This land belongs to us!" and "We were here first!" when they diverged from the only story we had ever known. And so, with the help of some astute professors and through many alcohol-soaked nights of friendly debate, we stumbled our way to the only reasonable solution to this dilemma: the interrogation of the historical narratives we had been taught in our home countries. We quickly realized that, when asked "How do you know this?" most of us could only summon a weak "That's what they told me in history class" answer. It then made sense to pay some attention to primary sources and evaluate their credibility, to crosscheck historical accounts, to analyze the denotations and connotations of the words used in history textbooks, and to question the logic and purpose of such questions as "Who was here first?" In other words, we learned to engage critically with history, ideology and storytelling.

Those lessons were powerfully driven home in the spring of 1999 when NATO began bombing Serbia over the massacres it was perpetrating in Kosovo. Watching the

air strikes live on CNN in the lobby of my dorm alongside Serbs, Kosovars, Americans, Albanians and Bosnians of all ethnicities and religions delivered to all us a sobering experience that did more to teach us about the perils of ethnonationalism than any Political Science class ever could. We knew each other as much more than “Serbs,” “Kosovars,” “Romanians,” etc., and we weren’t going to reduce each other to one-dimensional stereotypes. So how could we discuss the war with both the Serb friend who was literally seeing her neighborhood on live TV being bombed by American fighter jets and the Kosovar Albanian who thought it was high time that someone punished Belgrade for its miserable actions against the country’s Albanian minority? Once again, it quickly became apparent to everyone that the only workable solution to this dilemma was respectful dialogue in which the interlocutors took nothing for granted, kept an open mind, and took the time to explicitly differentiate between deeply-held beliefs and knee-jerk reactions born of prejudice and ignorance.

Needless to say, when my four years at AUBG ended and I returned to Romania, there was no question in my mind that critical thinking was to be the basis on which I would re-construct my identities – particularly my ethnic/racial/national identities. The fact that the wars in Yugoslavia had been viciously fought by people who looked just like my college friends – and, what’s more, people who looked *like each other*<sup>3</sup> – left me with a deep apprehension about the power of ethnonationalist ideology to warp our sense of reality.

---

<sup>3</sup> Olson (2003) speaks to the thoroughly racist assumptions embedded in this peculiar dynamic: “[O]ne of the most perverse dimensions of ethnic thinking is the ‘racialization’ of culture - the tendency to think of another people as not just culturally but genetically distinct. In the Yugoslavian war, the Croats caricatured their Serbian opponents as tall and blond, while the Serbs disparaged the darker hair and skin of the Croats - even though these traits are thoroughly intermixed between the two groups” (p. 227).

My first job out of college was reporting for a newly established publication in my hometown. Once again, my comfort with the strange and the foreign served me well, as I was able to successfully pitch and write many stories that dealt with minorities of all kinds and with international issues. Eventually, my wanderlust and the precariousness of my job made me apply to graduate programs around the world. I ended up in a Communication Master's program at UMass Amherst. There, in my very first semester, I served as a Teaching Assistant for an Interracial Communication course and discovered, with a measure of surprise, that virtually all students in that class, whether white or non-white, assumed that I was *not* white. My subsequent inquiries identified two elements that had marked me as such: my brownish skin tone and my accent.

I have now lived in America for more than 15 years. I long ago got used to being a *beige* person – clearly not black, clearly not white, perhaps Hispanic? Or Indian? Or Arab? To the ubiquitous “What are you?” I used to respond with “I was born and raised in Romania” and let my interlocutor assume what he or she will about my racial identity (which, in America, I came to understand, was more important than national or linguistic belonging). For the past few years, however, I have been revising my reaction to that question. I no longer offer any semblance of a straight answer. I try not to come across as too facetious, but I refuse to manufacture a simple answer when such simplicity has never been granted to me in the first place. Should I say that I am “white” by virtue of being born and raised in an Eastern European country, and then be forced to find an explanation for why I don't look “like an Eastern European”? And what about the 15 years of nearly unanimous assumption on the part of newly-met Americans that I am not “white” – does that count in any way? I can't say I'm a “person of color” either, as that would feel like a

cooptation of a specific collection of American cultures and histories that I have not experienced. What then is my “race”? I don’t know, and I’m not willing to pretend I do for the sake of intellectual comfort – mine or my interlocutors’. What I have been learning about is how best to address the issue of racial identity in all of its complexity with different kinds of people who ask about my self-identification in different kinds of situations. I now seek to turn the tables on my interlocutor and gently inquire after his or her assumptions about significant markers of race and ethnicity (e.g., skin tone, place of birth, language, religion, citizenship, ancestry, “culture”). Sooner or later, my interlocutor shrugs his or her shoulders - and I often proclaim that to be the only “closure” to this question that I can honestly endorse. It is not a satisfying solution by any means, but it is a true assessment of my ethnoracial agnosticism as it stands right now.

Those who inquire after my “ethnicity” (or “cultural background”) do not fare any better than those who inquire after my “race.” I am now at a point where I have used both my personal experiences and my scholarly study of identity to create for myself a narrative that allows for a rather nuanced ethno-cultural identity. I now approach the discursive terrain of roots/origins and national pride with immense apprehension and not a little cynicism. I speak, read, write and dream comfortably in both Romanian and English, and I immensely enjoy my experience with both languages. I consider both my native Romanian town and my current American town to be home. When someone asks me “What are you?” once again I generally refuse to play the game and provide the type of answer that is expected of me (e.g., “I am a Romanian” or “I am a Romanian-American”). I do not, however, deny or minimize my active participation in the Romanian cultural space; when relevant, I discuss my Romanian childhood, my

knowledge of the country and its culture, and my work of journalism in the Romanian language. If pressed, however, I will explain that “my people” are the millions of cultural sponges out there who recognize that each culture has desirable and undesirable elements, and who would be willing to relocate to any country in the world, provided that the local environment (town, workplace, friends, etc.) was a good personal match.

This openness to alternative cultural narratives has not led me to experience a loss of identity; I am not uprooted and do not experience cultural schizophrenia. My Eastern European self (acquired during my college years) has not replaced my Romanian self; rather, it has added to it, as has my American self. I identify with like-minded people around the world, and will unabashedly refuse to identify with nationalists of all stripes and colors, including American and Romanian.

I don't know if anyone, anywhere has ever felt completely at home in a community, ethnic, racial, or otherwise, but I surely never have. But I have learned that foreignness has its advantages. When you don't share the same background, the same assumptions, and the same expectations as the people around you, you are forced to question everything – including your own background, assumptions and expectations. And that act of questioning helps you grow and never cease learning. I have never forgotten those late-night debates with my Hungarian, Bulgarian, Serb, Ukrainian, Russian, Macedonian and Albanian friends, and, as a journalist and a teacher, I have tried to replicate for others similar conditions for self-reflection, critical thinking and dialogue. This dissertation, with its focus on critiquing the narratives served up by contemporary history textbooks, is one such attempt.

## B. Research Questions

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that

[e]ducation shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Does the contemporary Romanian educational system accomplish, in any significant manner, the goals outlined above? My answer is an unequivocal “no.” In this dissertation, I make the case that one aspect of that system, the history textbook, utterly fails to strengthen “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” and to “promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.” I seek to identify a few concrete ways in which the textbook comes short in these respects, as well as a few concrete ways its contents could be changed to bring it more in line with the Universal Declaration’s goals. To those ends, I posit the following research questions:

How do contemporary Romanian history textbooks construct “the fiction of a uniform population inhabiting the Romanian national territory” from ancient times to the present? (Niculescu, 2007, p. 139)

How is the identity category of “Romanian ethnicity” normalized in the textbooks, and how is it deployed as the exclusive organizing principle of “The History of the Romanians”?

How can the textbooks construct a narrative of Romanian history and identity that would foster critical thinking rather than nationalist dogma, and would encourage cultural identifications that embrace tolerance, flexibility, agency, ambiguity and pluralism?

### C. Description of Chapters

Before jumping into my extended analysis of the language used in contemporary Romanian history textbooks, I need to map out the coordinates of the kind of identity/-ies that I would hope the history narrative served up to schoolchildren would help constitute. In *Chapter 2*, therefore, I take the time to develop something of a vision for a “Romanian” identity that is “never guaranteed” (per Stuart Hall), flexible, unfixed, tenuous, generous, multidimensional, open, nuanced, ambiguous, and as infused with personal choice as possible. As is to be expected, I am partial to constructionist understandings of identity formation, especially those that focus on the role of language in giving shape to ideologies that “hail” the subject and present it with offers it does not know how to refuse. In this chapter, I draw heavily on Hall’s writings on identity and identification because of his superb ability to stay clear of determinisms of any kind while also recognizing the awesome pull that ideologies exert on the individual. I connect his project for the creation of “new ethnicities” to the discipline of critical pedagogy under whose scope I consider this dissertation to fall. I end the chapter with a discussion of the resurgence of what Hall (2011) calls “the last refuge of racist ideologies” – that is,

the pernicious marshaling of genome discoveries to police the shape and boundaries of old ethnic and racial identity categories (p. 617).

In *Chapter 3*, I attend to my methodology of choice: a brand of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that, in its close attention to the minutia of actual text, borrows heavily from Ethnomethodology (EM). CDA and EM both have their roots in the Discourse Analysis tradition that, simply put, examines how semiotic acts (including written or spoken language) work within their sociocultural contexts. Both CDA and EM have been applied to a dizzying array of work dealing with identity-formation processes. As Hester and Housely (2002) note in the introduction to their edited volume, *Language, Interaction and National Identity*, while EM scholars have long concerned themselves with matters of identity, they have usually avoided dealing with *national* identity in particular (preferring to investigate the discursive construction of class, gender and racial identities). At the same time, the authors note, “the sociology of national identity has been, for the most part, theory driven” (p. 2), an observation echoed in several CDA critics’ contention that, as things stand right now, CDA work could certainly pay more attention to actual instances of language deployment (whether in interpersonal interactions, written documents, or other sites). Taking advantage of the rather generous word count of this dissertation, I attempt to fill in both gaps: I use some of the tools of EM to analyze the construction of ethnonational identity, and I apply the insights of CDA to actual data which ranges from entire textbook chapters to individual word choices.

Benwell and Stokoe (2006) point out that the CDA and EM traditions also differ significantly in their assumptions about their subjects’ perceptions of their own identities (p. 68). In other words, ethnomethodologists denounce the constructionists for the



arrogance with which they seem to treat people's "common-sense" understanding of their identity as rather unitary and stable. "[P]eople generally treat 'identity' as a real thing that they can know about themselves and other people," runs the critique, "and are not generally sent into a 'metaphysical spin' about their own ontological status" (p. 68). Scratch "common sense," CDA practitioners retort, and you will find finely tuned ideologies that, simply put, oppress people. Maybe people *should* experience a little bit of that "metaphysical spin," if that increased the chances that more people and more communities led "the examined life." Much of Chapter 2 is devoted to this fundamental dispute between EM and CDA as I have found this to be the best way to explain why a close-to-the-text version of Critical Discourse Analysis is a most appropriate methodology for my project. I end the chapter with a discussion of my data: scores of contemporary history textbooks, as well as a handful of seminal works of historiography that have set the general tone of the Romanian historical narrative between the two world wars, during the Communist period, and after 1989.

In *Chapter 4*, I offer the readers a survey of Romanian historiography by way of providing an ideological lineage to the particular assumptions and assertions made in the contemporary textbooks under study. I begin with an account of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century "chroniclers," that is, proto-historians living at the royal courts of the Romanian-speaking kingdoms of Wallachia and Moldavia (which had both been established around the year 1330). It was these individuals, usually rich, educated in Central or Western Europe, and extremely well politically-connected, who "discovered" an object of study that continues to be a genuine obsession of Romanian historiography to this day: the "origins" of the "Romanian people." The chroniclers established the "Latinity" of the Romanians based

on their language, and proclaimed them the “inheritors” of the much-celebrated Roman Empire. All of the chroniclers used these postulations to make a political point, but they differed in their allegiances, and hence in their selection of targets for their weaponized narratives. That heterogeneity largely disappeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the intellectuals of the so-called Transylvanian School enlisted the Romanians’ illustrious lineage in a bitter fight against Hungarian and German historians bent on denying Romanians primacy in Transylvania.<sup>4</sup> According to Neumann (2013), the Transylvanian School centered much of its discourse on a concept of ethnic exceptionalism and exclusivity that still serves as a Rosetta Stone of sorts of contemporary Romanian historiography. The establishment of the Romanian state in 1859 (when Wallachia and Moldavia were united under the same leader) lessened the desperation with which Romanian-speaking historians sought to create the official biography of the Romanian *neam* (kin/nation), and invited a more flexible approach to the question of “roots.” The purely Latin/Roman origin of the Romanians lost some ground to a relatively new competitor: the Dacian (barbarian, anti-Roman) ancestry. As Verdery (1991) documents in her *National Ideology Under Socialism*, the next century would witness a virtual historiographical seesaw of Latinism and Dacianism. In the wake of World War II, Communist totalitarianism dictated a unitary treatment of Romanian history, with the by-now-common tropes of “origins,” “continuity” and “unity” at its forefront. An initial decade of internationalist Marxism made for sporadic efforts to decenter ethnicity from the historical narrative and replace it with class categories, but the general direction of

---

<sup>4</sup> From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Transylvania was an autonomous subject of the Ottoman Empire, who then lost the province to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Until 1918, Transylvania was ruled by Hungarians, with the assistance of Germans and Székelys. The Romanian-speaking peasantry, bourgeoisie and small nobility enjoyed few political rights.

Romanian historiography endured, and was then strongly re-affirmed when dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and his National Communist cronies decreed an end to all historical debates in favor of a strong, unbroken Dacian – Daco-Roman - Romanian lineage. The fall of the Communist regime in 1989 scrubbed the historical narrative of its most strident claims of protochronism, exceptionalism and chauvinism, but left much of its underlying ethnonationalist structure untouched. And so, contemporary history textbooks still devote a significant number of pages to teasing out the inevitable, unidirectional links between the “Getae-Dacians” (that is, “the Romanians’ oldest ancestors”), the “Daco-Romans,” and the “Romanians” who now inhabit Romania and have exclusive moral and legal rights to the country.

Chapters 5 and 6 get down to the business of examining some of the ways in which historiographers have deployed language in order to normalize the idea of one fundamentally-unchanged “nation” moving inexorably through history, from ancient times to contemporaneity. In *Chapter 5*, I seek to account for the first building block of that construction - the “Getae-Dacian” identity category – as I undertake two distinct but related analyses: 1) an analysis of the manner in which Romanian historiographers treat the two ancient texts that contain some of the earliest (and most tantalizing) references to the “Getae” and the “Dacians” (i.e., Herodotus’s *Histories* and Strabo’s *Geography*) with a focus on metadiscursive elements dealing with source attribution and credibility, and 2) an analysis of the language used in Romanian historical treatises and history textbooks to call into (ahistorical) existence a cohesive, homogenous “Getae-Dacian” *neam*. In *Chapter 6*, I continue tracing the textbooks’ treatment of that all-important ethnonational homogeneity, with a focus on three meaningful moments: 1) the (discursive)

transformation of the “Getae-Dacians” into “Daco-Romans” through the process of “Romanization,” 2) the (discursive) “birth” of the “Romanians” through the process of “ethnogenesis,” and 3) the Romanians’ supposed preservation (and strengthening) of their unproblematic ethnic identity in the face of the threat posed by the post-3<sup>rd</sup> century “migratory peoples” who entered the territory of today’s Romania. Together, Chapters 5 and 6 are meant to show precisely how the history textbooks’ Romantic ideology of ethnonationalism (Neumann, 2013) is still being accomplished, despite Romania’s apparent embrace of the ideals of multicultural liberal democracy. As befits a work of Critical Discourse Analysis, I end most sections of these two chapters with a discussion of possible alternatives to the language and framing currently offered by the history textbooks, and, in some cases, concrete recommendations for the textbook authors.

Finally, *Chapter 7* offers larger solutions to the problem of officially-sanctioned ethnonationalism and xenophobia, such as the joint history textbook movement (whereby two or more countries that have engaged in historic rivalries work on one common textbook). The end goal is to tell a *better* story of “Romanianness” than the one that is being told now – a story that finds different ways of speaking of “Romanianness” than as a natural state that exists in this world “the same way the sun gives light, the horse has four legs, or the angles in a triangle add up to 180 degrees” (Ionescu, 1934/2011).

## CHAPTER II

### IDENTITY

The wider goal of this dissertation is to advocate for the re-writing of history textbooks in such a manner as to aid in the construction of a “Romanian” cultural and civic identity that is not predicated on a 19<sup>th</sup> century view of ethnic purity and ethnic supremacy. An explanation of my own view of identity, therefore, is necessary, and that is what I intend to accomplish in this second chapter.

As implied above, I am firm believer in the “constructedness” of all identity, including – and perhaps especially – the “cultural identity” that allows history textbooks to speak of such a thing as “the Romanians.” The constructivist paradigm initially developed in contradistinction to primordialism, which viewed ethnicity as a natural (or divine) *datum* whose key constituent elements were language, territory and strong affective (family-like) bonds. The intellectual touchstones of constructivism are often quoted to be the writings of such scholars as Ernest Renan, who, in his seminal *What Is a Nation?* (1992/1882), speaks of the “nation” as a “daily plebiscite” (a concept later sensationally developed in Michael Billig’s *Banal Nationalism* [1995]), Étienne Balibar, who argues in *The Nation Form: History and Ideology* (2005/1991) that “no nation possesses an ethnic base naturally” but that nations become “represented in the past or in the future *as if* they formed a natural community” (p. 96), Benedict Anderson, whose *Imagined Communities* (1991) posited the creation of nations as a thoroughly modern

accomplishment brought about by institutions such as the map, the museum and the census, and Ernest Gellner, whose *Nations and Nationalism* (2008) significantly enhances Anderson's thesis.<sup>5</sup> In *The Invention of the Jewish People*, Shlomo Sand (2009) aptly summarizes the (some would say cynical) account of nation-building proposed by constructivism:

To promote a homogenous collective in modern times, it was necessary to provide, among other things, a long narrative suggesting a connection in time and space between the fathers and the "forefathers" of all the members of the present community. Since such a close connection, supposedly pulsing within the body of the nation, has never actually existed in any society, the agents of memory worked hard to invent it. With the help of archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists, a variety of findings were collected. These were subjected to major cosmetic improvements carried out by essayists, journalists, and the authors of historical novels. From this surgically improved past emerged the proud and handsome portrait of the nation. (p. 15)

While initially locked in a fierce debate with primordialism, constructivism has by and large vanquished its foe on the scientific battleground. According to Fishman (2002), at least since the days of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, social scientists have overwhelmingly favored the constructivist interpretation of ethnicity. To look for the lone sociologist or anthropologist who insists on the immutability of the *ethnos* would be a futile endeavor, destined to obscure the general consensus rather than to provide it with an alternative. However, that is not to say that constructivism has acquired ideological hegemony, for social scientists are not the only meaning-makers of consequence in our societies. Fishman points to two important institutions where the primordialist love affair with "authenticity, uniqueness, mission and greatness" is still going strong: the

---

<sup>5</sup> Of course, not everyone agrees with the idea that nations are thoroughly modern inventions. For informative treatments of the argument that pre-modern kinship groups were essentially ethnic-groups-in-waiting which, in turn, were the kernels of what would later become full-fledged nations, see the essays in Gillett's (2002) "On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages." In Romanian historiography, Ioan-Aurel Pop's (1996, 1998) work on Romanian ethnic bonds in medieval Transylvania is a prominent example of this argument.

humanities (including history, religion and literature) and mass culture (including media, popular culture and mainstream education) (p. 83). Indeed, my own experiences with the identity narratives that populate the Romanian imagination (from the wildly popular children's tales of the *Povestiri Istorice* [Historical Stories] volumes to Sergiu Nicolaescu's "historical re-enactment" movies, to the countless, and dismayingly popular, "The Truth about the Dacians" websites) are in accord with Fishman's observation. The battle against "blood and soil" notions of group identity is far from over. In Romania, it has only recently begun in earnest, with the rather valiant efforts of the myth-busting historians grouped around Lucian Boia of the University of Bucharest and a few media publications (e.g., *Historia* magazine). I will detail some of those efforts in Chapter 4, and will analyze their results in Chapters 5 and 6.

My own view of ethnonational identity is heavily indebted to the thinking of Stuart Hall, whose essays on the topic manage to be both sophisticated and straightforward, both theoretical and practical, both unabashedly normative and generous. Below, I will trace the contours of Hall's perspective on identity, will next connect it to the wider project of critical pedagogy, and will then end on a relatively close examination of the greatest danger to have emerged lately to constructivist understandings of ethnic identity: the so-called "genome revolution" that purports to, on one level, track the migrations of ancient populations, and, on another level, tell individuals what their "real" ethnic identity is and where their "roots" lie.

#### A. Stuart Hall's Critical Project<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Parts of this subchapter were published in Sibii, R. (2012). Imagining nation in Romanian history textbooks: Towards a liberating identity narrative. In Hickman, H. & Porfilio, B.J. (Eds.). *The new politics*

For quite a while now, Hall argues, the concept of identity has been in crisis mode, under attack from a plethora of intellectuals who have diagnosed (some approvingly, some not) the fragmentation “of the modern individual as a unified subject” (1995, p. 596). Hall identifies four key challenges to the Enlightenment idea that identity’s referent is an integral, stable *thing*, carried somehow and somewhere by all human beings: Marx’s proposition that people “are partly made by the histories that they make” (1996, p. 340), Freud’s work on the unconscious, Saussure’s observation that “one is always inside a system of languages that partly speak us” (1996, p. 341), and the effective dismantling of “grand narratives” executed by the postmodernists (from Nietzsche to Foucault to Lyotard). These “great decenterings” (1996, p. 340) made it increasingly hard for people, scholars or otherwise, to tell a story of a “continuous and developmental unfolding of the self” (Scott, 2005, p. 13) that is internally coherent and is procedurally the same for everyone. In the wake of these earthquakes, what we are left with is more fault lines: between competing ideologies that make equally (in)valid claims on our affective and intellectual attachments, and between competing social blocs that demand our political allegiance.

And yet “identity” continues to stubbornly fight for conceptual relevance. No one seems to believe anymore in the possibility of making clear affirmative statements about it, and yet no one can stop talking about it, if only to denounce its inapplicability. In “Who Needs ‘Identity’?,” Hall (2000) describes this phenomenon as operating with a concept of identity “under erasure” (p. 16). A latter-day Marxist himself (or, perhaps, a

---

*of the textbook: Critical analysis in the core content areas.* Boston: Sense. The editors of the book, as well as Sense Publishers, have given me permission to use that text in this unpublished dissertation without the use of quotations or paraphrase.



Marxist “under erasure”), Hall works to rescue the concept of identity from the twin annihilating fates of Marxist economic determinism and the postmodern deconstruction that would rob it of all material support and reduce it to a completely unmoored “floating signifier.” Reworking Gramsci’s and Althusser’s own rescues of ideology and of its power to “interpellate” the subject, Hall proposes a compromise whereby “identity is not a fixed and permanent entity existing continuously through time but an always unfinished *suturing* together of fragments” which nevertheless “always takes place in relations of power, in relation to institutions, apparatuses, and disciplines” (Scott, 2005, p. 14, original italics). Material conditions do exist and they do greatly influence people’s lives – but not by simply providing them with ready-made, unified identities. Rather, material conditions will favor the relevance of certain “discursive regimes” and not others, and it is through these discursive regimes that meanings are made and stories about “identity” are told (Rojek, 2003, p. 189).

In the ultimately constructivist framework in which Hall works, Foucault’s observation that one should observe the process by which “subjectification” is achieved, rather than the shape of identity at any given time, makes perfect sense. “Identification” – Hall’s preferred term for this concept – is “a construction, a process never completed” whose victories are always tenuous and temporary, and never guaranteed (2000, p. 6). The overall research question of this dissertation, therefore, is not “Who, according to Romanian history textbooks, is a Romanian, and how does that definition square with reality?”, but rather “Exactly how do Romanian history textbooks contribute to the process of ethnonational identification?” In other words, this is not a political economy analysis of the voices that speak and those that don’t in the textbooks or of the distinct

features of the textbook “Romanian,” but rather a discourse analysis of a text that facilitates the creation and advancement of an ideology – that is, of “the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation” that help “Romanians” conceive of their place in the world in relation to Others (Hall, 1986, p. 29).

As I advocate for historical narratives that construct a story of identity (past and present) that is inclusive, open, nuanced, ambiguous, flexible and heterogeneous, I find myself having to grapple with the perennial double paradox afflicting all cultural studies work dealing with questions of identity:

1) Having announced “the collapse of universalizing, predestined paradigms of knowledge and the inefficacy of the imperative to categorize” (Erni, 2008, p. 195), how can we still account for the obvious identifications that people will claim for themselves without falling into a highly patronizing, reductionist, dismissive “false consciousness” argument?

2) Assuming that one feels bound to offer advice, to prescribe a “fix,” so to speak, to the evils of racism and the discourse that enables and enacts them (something that I do indeed try to do in various parts of this dissertation), how can one advocate the discarding, weakening or at least complicating of ethnic and racial identity categories while simultaneously recognizing that such a move is neither immediately possible, nor, indeed, desirable for many members of marginalized communities?

I begin with a response to the accusation that constructivist projects such as mine are built on an old-school-Marxist assumption that we (the “scholars”) know better than them (“the people”) who they *really* are and how critical they should be about their own subject positions. So, do I perceive ethnonational identity to be nothing but a form of

“false consciousness”? In keeping with my preference for nuance and ambiguity, the answer is well, yes and no. In “The Problem of Ideology - Marxism Without Guarantees,” Hall (1986) offers a brilliant escape from the arrogant certainties of the Marxist notions of “truth/science” and “falsity/illusion,” while retaining the right and the ability to pass ethical judgment on various ways of knowing the world:

Is the worker who lives his or her relation to the circuits of capitalist production exclusively through the categories of a “fair price” and a “fair wage,” in “false consciousness”? Yes, if by that we mean there is something about her situation which she cannot grasp with the categories she is using; something about the process as a whole which is systematically hidden because the available concepts only give her a grasp of one of its many-sided moments. No, if by that we mean that she is utterly deluded about what goes on under capitalism.

The falseness therefore arises, not from the fact that the market is an illusion, a trick, a sleight-of-hand, but only in the sense that it is an *inadequate* explanation of a process. It has also substituted one part of the process for the whole – a procedure which, in linguistics, is known as “metonymy” and in anthropology, psychoanalysis and (with special meaning) in Marx’s work, as *fetishism*. The other “lost” moments of the circuit are, however, unconscious, not in the Freudian sense, because they have been repressed from consciousness, but in the sense of being invisible, given the concepts and categories we are using. (p. 37, original italics)

Hall has no appetite for denying the existence of the “market,” since that conceptual category passes the “material consequences” ontological test with flying colors.

Similarly, I have no intention of making the claim that ethnonational identity is “an illusion, a trick, a sleight-of-hand” inflicted upon the masses by unscrupulous leaders. For millions of people, “Romanianness” is, indeed, an unambiguous, inherited and fundamental identity which organizes part of their worldview, influences some of their actions and shapes some of their interpersonal relationships. But the current history textbooks would have us believe that “Romanianness” is the only (or at least the most) adequate explanation for momentous historical events, such as wars and revolutions, and the one subject position that should take precedence over all others. To my mind, a better

account of the motivations and actions of people who lived hundreds years ago must go beyond the circular logic of “They fought the enemy because they were true Romanians; they were true Romanians because they fought the enemy.” Undoubtedly, appeals to ethnonational solidarity played a significant role in determining, say, a peasant to pick up a scythe and go battle “the Turks,” but I find it difficult to believe that some of his other identities (e.g., that of an indentured worker, that of a “man”) had no bearing on his decision. In other words, the story we are given is not necessarily false, as much as it is incomplete.

To paraphrase Hall’s account of the apparent normality of the “market” category, I recognize that the ethnonational “experience” is “*the* most immediate, daily and universal experience” of history for most Romanians (1986, p. 38, original italics). That reality, of course, guarantees that ethnonationalism is the premier, naturalized, taken-for-granted prism through which identity is perceived. Like Hall, I am looking for those concepts “with which to cut into the process at another point, frame another set of questions, and bring to the surface or reveal what the overwhelming facticity of [“ethnonational identity”] constantly renders invisible” (1986, p. 38). My call, therefore, is not for a Communist-style replacing of the strict ethnonational narrative in the textbooks with a strict class narrative (or a gender narrative, or a racial narrative, etc.), but rather for the performance of a “thick description” (Geertz, 1988) of human identity that allows for complementary or alternative explanations of identifications and individual motivations. To give but a quick example, the many battles that Prince Vlad Țepeș (i.e., the famous Dracula) fought during his three reigns on the Wallachian throne cannot all be reasonably explained by a national liberation narrative. A ruthless leader,

the Ottoman-educated Țepeș did not hesitate to ally himself with Turks and Hungarians against rival Romanian-speaking nobility. As such, while ethnonational considerations cannot – and should not – be dismissed out of hand, the story of Țepeș’s struggles for dominion over the Wallachian principality should include, at a minimum, a properly researched account of Țepeș’s personal ambitions and priorities. And, crucially, the identity labels used when telling these stories should appropriately reflect the heterogeneity of the subject positions claimed, imposed and challenged by the protagonists of these events.

I thus approach the “common-sense” idea of ethno-Romanianness with respect and humbleness, knowing as I do that it is extremely important to many of the people whom I seek to reach with this dissertation. But respect for that which is does not, as far as I’m concerned, imply an ethical obligation to renounce persuasion. I genuinely believe in the potential of my project to contribute to intercultural communication and tolerance and, as such I feel obligated to respectfully offer my ideas to others, in the hope that they will find them useful to their own lives.

The circular logic of the self-fulfilling prophecy is perhaps the most maddening aspect of the post-modern understanding of identity – and perhaps the aspect that most accounts for the rejection of hard constructivism in some scholarly and activist corners. There is something radically frightening about the notion that one speaks oneself into existence (or, even worse, that one is spoken into existence by invisible forces), always temporarily and always incompletely. Having long been presented with an authoritative historical narrative that privileged the ethnicity category, I too have internalized a kind of inflexible, strictly limited Romanianness that I have later found very hard to examine

critically and reform. But I see no reason why a narrative that incorporates a more democratic, more flexible Romanian identity cannot complicate the old account and achieve a comparable level of meaning-making power, especially since it would be presented to children who have not yet been subjected to the ethnonationalist storyline.

Having recognized that ethnic and racial identifications are important to many people, and that taking those away (in a more or less gentle manner) might constitute a step suspiciously reminiscent of colonial projects that sought to “civilize” the Other, I would thus like to avoid the mere substitution of one identity category for another, instead focusing on pushing for *choice* and *flexibility*. In *Identity and Violence* (2006), Amartya Sen makes the case for a type of cultural freedom that allows one to “question the automatic endorsement of past traditions” and maximizes one’s ability to choose one’s cultural identities (p. 114). The plural in “identities” is particularly important to Sen’s argument, as he denounces those societal forces that perceive people as belonging to only one salient category (say, “Muslims” or “Indians” or “men”) – an approach which he describes as “the reductionism provided by a solitarist understanding of people” (p. 179). Everybody comes from somewhere, Sen says, but that “somewhere” is never one thing that will inevitably and exclusively determine one’s identity. Identity is intrinsically pluralistic (and, I would add, ambiguous), and there is nothing natural about attempting to streamline it, clarify it and pin it down with the help of categories that live and die by the vagaries of language. Indeed, much of the violence that plagues the world is enabled by the “cultivation of a sense of inevitability about some allegedly unique – often belligerent – identity” (p. xiii).

The emphasis on choice and reasoning in Sen's democratic project does not come at the expense of realism. Sen is fully aware that individuals cannot just be anything and anyone they want to be. It is hardly possible, in today's world, to switch identifications from, say, a rich, conservative, heterosexual male Czech to a working-class, liberal, lesbian female Chinese. But that does not mean that the field of choices is so constrained that one can only be conservative or only Czech. Multiple identifications are always possible, as are differentiated identifications:

It is possible that the often repeated belief, common among advocates of singular affiliation, that identity is a matter of "discovery" is encouraged by the fact that the choices we can make are constrained by feasibility [...], and these constraints would rule out all kinds of alternatives as being nonfeasible. And yet even after that, there will remain choices to make, for example, between priorities of nationality, religion, language, political beliefs, or professional commitments. (p. 30)

A Romanian student might not readily imagine himself as a Chinese. But the awareness that his current Romanianness might historically be a result of an older iteration of Romanianness combined with an older iteration of Hungarianness combined with an older iteration of Catholicism, etc. can, indeed, be facilitated by historical narratives that do not explain all past events through the prism of a clash of civilizations (or ethnic groups, or religious groups). In turn, this awareness will hopefully lead this student to be more tolerant of different contemporary performances of Romanianness.

There is nothing wrong, Sen argues, with identifying with a cultural tradition, as long as that identification comes as a result of a process of reasoning that does not dismiss a priori other cultural traditions as aberrant, irrational or downright evil. Sen does not propose that one should do away with ethnic, national, or religious identity. Nor does he propose that individuals re-invent themselves by first severing all connections to the

cultural tradition in which they have initially been socialized. “Choice,” writes Sen, “does not require jumping out of nowhere into somewhere, but it can lead to a move from one place to another” (2006, pp. 35-6). In part because of my personal experience detailed in Chapter 1, I believe that this journey “from one place to another” is a highly empowering human experience in and of itself, regardless of the destination.

It is this journey that a society’s master narratives (including those put forward by history textbooks) should make possible, if that society is to abide by the democratic ideal. I do not seek to convince Romanian schoolchildren to become Americans or Hungarians (or even better Romanians, for that matter); I seek to convince them that they have a choice in these matters, and that one can be loyal to more than one cultural tradition in more than one way. Furthermore, following Sen, I seek to persuade them that each such tradition (and especially that which we call the Romanian way) is far from monolithic; rather, it is itself a deliciously unstable and ambiguous construct built on a diversity of *Weltanschauungs* (which are themselves built on a plurality of perspectives, and so on). Choice, in other words, is not just possible, but also necessary. There will always be someone who decides which elements of Romanianness are salient at any given time and which are not. It is my goal to take at least some of that decision out of the hands of textbook authors and place it into the hands of the individual student. “It is unfair to children who have not yet had much opportunity of reasoning and choice,” Sen (2006) writes, “to be put into rigid boxes guided by one specific criterion of categorization, and to be told: ‘That is your identity and this is all you are going to get’” (p. 118). My advocacy of a history textbook that presents students with an open-ended national identity narrative that emphasizes potentialities rather than clarities, beginnings



rather than closures, and choice rather than predestination, seeks to minimize that fundamental unfairness.

In *Identity and Violence*, Sen (2006) also touches on the well-intentioned, but nevertheless misguided, attempts by European and American liberals to combat fundamentalist hate-speech while still using its solitarist vocabulary. To the fear-mongering assertion that “All X are violent,” the liberals respond with its “No, *true* X are peaceful” counterpart, thereby perpetuating the logic of singular, one-dimensional, and homogenous demographic categories as the only possible descriptors of human identity. Romanian history textbooks are by no means as racist and as dismissive of the Other as they have been at other times in the country’s history. Indeed, they exhibit more tolerance and understanding towards such traditional Others as the Hungarians or the Ottoman Empire than ever before. But they still do not allow for multiple identifications within the same category (e.g., individuals of mixed ethnocultural backgrounds), multiple identifications across different categories (e.g., individuals for whom their class identity was far more politically salient than their ethnic identity), and changing identifications (e.g., individuals who, at different times in their lives and in different contexts, took on a variety of labels). Thus, they still present the student with a clear, normative definition of Romanianness, rather than enable her to take as much ownership over her own identity as possible.

Stuart Hall does not endorse a version of the identification story that privileges one’s agency (i.e., one’s ability to choose one’s identities in any given context) quite as much as my plea above does. And yet, as will be explained below, he believes in the need for, and the possibility of, intervention. Indeed, as a public (or, to use Gramsci’s term,

“organic”) intellectual, a leftist, and a member of the Caribbean diaspora in the United Kingdom, Hall does not hesitate to propose fixes to ethnocentrism and racism. Those fixes, however, all start with the recognition that the soothing stories we have been told about identity (individual, gendered, racial, ethnic, national, etc.) are at best “one-sided explanations” of the human condition, and at worst “distortions” that perpetuate oppressive power regimes (1986, p. 37). And perhaps the most consequential omission from the classic narrative of identity is its reliance on the Other. Since identity emerges out of discourse and is the result of power dynamics, it is by necessity shaped by that which it chooses to exclude from its constitution, that which is different from it. The story of identity can explicitly address the relationship between “us” and “them” (as Romanian history textbooks do when they cast most historical events in terms of the “Romanians” struggling against their enemies), or it can just imply it (as some textbooks do when they improbably describe the Romanians’ “ancestors” as tall, fair and blue-eyed). The Other, in all cases, is never far from the center of the story, and its presence constantly “destabilizes” the story (Hall, 2000). The two analysis chapters of this dissertation will address the manner in which the Other is marked in, or forcibly erased from, the construction of a homogenous Romanian ethnonational identity category. The final chapter will then call for a recognition of the constitutive Other, and an embrace of its destabilizing effects on the national identity narrative.

Much of Hall’s critical treatment of identity is concerned with what he calls “cultural identities” – national, racial and ethnic subject positions called into existence by and maintained through a variety of specific discourses. To begin with, Hall reminds his readers that we are not born with national, ethnic or racial identities, and that our bodies

are “racialized” and “ethnicized” as we enter language and we make use of the metaphors of identity to make sense of the world around us. As Benedict Anderson (1991) observed, nations are “imagined communities,” not communities where everyone is related to one another and everyone has the chance to interact face to face with, and get to know, everyone else. National culture “functions as a source of cultural meanings, a focus of identification, and a system of representation” (Hall, 2011, p. 615), and the student of national identity must attend to all three components. Hall identifies five constitutive elements of the “narrative of the national culture”: 1) the telling of a story about the “nation” in such venues as history textbooks, literature and media texts, 2) the strategic establishment of junctures in that story that speak to the “timelessness” and “continuity” of “our people,” 3) the creation of the subplot of “tradition,” 4) the development of a “foundational myth,” and 5) the insistence on the “purity” of “our people” (pp. 613-5).

As with all identities, cultural identities are never truly homogenous, and they require a constant act of “forgetting” difference (both in the past and in the present) while at the same time relying on it to mark the boundaries of categories. The only reason that cultural identities such as ethnicity or nation or race seem homogenous is because of the constant application of “cultural power” (p. 617) – the kind exercised through, among other vehicles, history textbooks. However, the repressed diversity of the “nation” always finds a way to bubble up, and a constant effort is required to push it down.

Writing primarily in the British context, Hall does distinguish between “race,” “nation” and “ethnicity” – but barely so. He points out that the story of “nation” is often told as the story of the development-in-history of a dominant ethnic group (the “English” in the case of Great Britain), and that “Englishness” is constructed in opposition to

“blackness,” which, in turn, is an eclectic, always unstable category that subsumes peoples from every corner of the former British Empire. Britain’s own civil rights movement sought to appropriate the label of “blackness” and fashion an ethnoracial identity that would be able to forcefully push back against racist narratives and imagine alternative ways of representing non-White Britons. Such an identity did, indeed, emerge, and it obtained its share of victories, making visible many of the “cultural powers” that worked to position “whiteness” as the normative “invisible middle” of “Britishness.” However, the new identity category was not exempt from the hubris, the internal contradictions, and the external dangers that plague all totalitarian identities. Then, a shift occurred in how people thought of “blackness,” a shift that is “best thought of in terms of a change from a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself” (1996b, p. 442). In other words, while in the first phase of the movement the activists were concerned with providing viable alternatives to the representations of “blackness” permeating British society, in the second phase, the “notion of the essential black subjects” was challenged by intellectuals and artists who had no qualms interrogating the mechanisms that created all identity categories, “white” and “black” alike (1996b, p. 443). The “fiction” that all black people are the same simply because they’d all been subjected to the discourse of racism had been seriously problematized. That, of course, did not mean that essentialized identities and “old school” racism were gone; merely that we now had two parallel processes of contestation: one between dominant “whiteness” and marginalized “blackness,” and another one *within* “blackness.” I see an obvious lesson here for my Romanian project: while, as will be shown in a later chapter, the narrative of “Romanian” ethnonational identity also emerged mainly in

response to political and symbolic erasures (especially in the province of Transylvania, home of the first concerted pan-Romanian movement), the second movement - that is, the effort to productively problematize the newly created identity category - is still in its infancy. The discourse of “Romanianism” has been nearly-hegemonic in Romanian society for at least a century now. Only recently has its supremacy been challenged by the odd history textbook (e.g., Mitu, 1998) and the relatively small group of historians mentioned earlier in this chapter. I, of course, seek to add to that work with the present dissertation.

When addressing the second moment of “blackness” in Great Britain, Hall speaks of a “new conception of ethnicity: a new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses *difference* and which depends, in part, on the cultural construction of new ethnic identities” (1996b, p. 446, original italics). These “new ethnic identities” are to be divorced from “nationalism, imperialism, racism and the state,” are to be conceptualized as flexible and heterogeneous, and, in an echo of Amartya Sen’s pleas, are to be “noncoercive” (p. 447). One should note here that Hall, like Sen, is not advocating for the wholesale elimination of the category of “ethnicity,” but rather its deliberate, radical re-imagining/re-presentation, because “we need a place to speak from” (1996a, p. 349). We can’t – and shouldn’t – ask members of marginalized communities to give up their racial and ethnic identifications, but we can form wide-ranging alliances to engage in what Hall calls “a politics of criticism” (p. 1996b, p. 444).

Hall’s interventionist program begins with the relinquishing of the stories we tell ourselves about the steady, inexorable progression of ethnic/national identity through history. We need to get comfortable with the multiplicity of voices and interests that

negotiate our “cultural identities,” and we need to see the value in that very process of negotiation – in the same way that, politically, we have come to see the value of the process of democratic deliberation, in spite of its infuriating slowness and inefficiency. Putting up with contingency, uncertainty and ambiguity is a small price to pay, considering the proven oppressive effects of the exclusivist narrative of essentialized identities. Scott (2005) further explains Hall’s vision:

Stuart proposes that we take seriously that there is something altogether reductive and *therefore* morally impoverished about the picture of human selves and human interaction that emerges from the one-sided Enlightenment admiration for a sovereign, autonomous self legislating the single good for us all. We stand a chance of flourishing better, he suggests, the more open we can *make* ourselves to our own vulnerability – our own fragile, exposed, receptivity – to difference. This is not multicultural sentimentality. A real ethical labor is required. For Stuart knows that such receptivity entails an ongoing and dissonant practice of working on the self that, as Connolly puts it, resists two foreclosing pressures at once: the normalizing pressure to repress and subjugate otherness, including that contingently disruptive otherness within the self, *and* the vindicationist pressure to transform historical infringements and marginalized dispositions into the ground of a poetics of revenge and a political reversal of subjugations. (p. 15, original italics)

The “strategic contestation” of homogenous, linear identity that Hall advocates can be found in the everyday lives of the millions of diasporic citizens around the world – including Hall (and yes, including myself) – who could offer a model worth considering. Hybrids either by choice or by necessity, the diasporans understand the contradictions, ambiguities and nuances of *both/and*, and have no choice but to engage in a “politics of difference” (Rojek, 2003, p. 89) that allows for diversity while guaranteeing “universal rights and responsibilities” (p. 193).

## B. Critical Pedagogy

True to his Marxist roots, Hall believes that it is primarily the responsibility of the state, given its still impressive control over some of the main venues by which the “systems of representation” are maintained in a society, to enact the “transformative politics” that would destabilize the dogma of essentialized ethnicity (Rojek, 2003, p. 195). Along with mass media, education (which in Romania is tightly regulated by the state, when not directly managed by it) is one of contemporary society’s premier ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 2014/1970) and thus a crucial vehicle through which the hegemony of ethnonationalism can be most effectively challenged. This dissertation focuses on just one aspect of education – the history textbook.

My project is one of critical pedagogy, and, as explained in the previous chapter, its roots are to be found in my personal experience. I was a decent student throughout secondary and high school, but I was a thoroughly unenthusiastic one (and, occasionally, a rebellious one). Much of my free time was filled with reading all manner of books, so the pursuit of knowledge did appeal to me immensely. But the emphasis on rote learning, testing and hostile “interrogations” that defined the educational environment at the time created in me a deep resentment toward schooling in general. Throughout most of my years in school, I had the distinct feeling that, while education was a worthwhile endeavor, what happened to me for seven hours a day was something entirely different from that. I knew something was wrong with the way I was taught subjects such as literature and history – which, outside of the realm of school, were indeed two of my greatest passions – but I could not quite identify the problem. The answer came to me years later in college when I was exposed to pedagogical literature: Romanian schooling

was heavily indebted to what Paulo Freire (2009/1970), a Brazilian educator writing in the '60s and '70s, called "the banking concept of education":

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (p. 53)

The Romanian teacher of my childhood presented him/herself to me as the nearly exclusive possessor of valuable information. I was called to receive that information in a manner prescribed by the teacher, and at a time and rhythm of his/her choosing. History, for example, was a litany of dates, names, events, and "several factors which have precipitated" (as the saying went) such events. My job was to absorb that information and reproduce it when asked, either on a written test or during a (highly aggressive) oral examination. To the banking model, Freire opposes a progressive model of education that calls for teachers to relinquish their stifling control of the pedagogical process and work with their students to create a curriculum that is relevant to their lives and thoughts. Education without liberation from oppression (particularly that aspect of oppression that interdicts critical thinking and creativity) is no education at all, argues Freire. Through *conscientizacao* ("conscientization"), individuals would be able to recognize their enslavement by other people, free themselves at all levels, and regain their place in the world as Subjects. That state is achieved through a pedagogical process that blends theory and practice (*praxis*), privileges problem-posing rather than narrow problem-solving, and, most importantly, insists on *dialogue* among all stakeholders. Curricula should not be imposed on students, but should rather be an expression of their interests ("*generative themes*"). Both teachers and students should be wary of certainties, and should never



cease challenging their own reasoning and conclusions, particularly when it comes to their own identities:

Problem-posing education affirms men as beings in the process of *becoming* – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, men know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompleteness. In this incompleteness and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. (p. 65, original italics)

The banking model of education, Freire argues, indoctrinates students “to adapt to the world of oppression” (p. 56). Had my history teachers worked with a concept of “Romanianness” that was forever “unfinished” and unstable, as both Freire and Hall recommend, I would undoubtedly have been considerably friendlier toward the curriculum. Had they begun their classroom investigation of historical events with a serious consideration of their students’ perception of (and use for) those events, I would have most likely actively connected their lessons to my own rather chaotic reading menu.

While Paulo Freire certainly did not invent critical pedagogy,<sup>7</sup> his writings, particularly *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, are now recognized to be seminal, and subsequent luminaries of critical pedagogy, such as Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Peter McLaren, bell hooks, Ira Shor and Sonia Nieto, have all, in one way or another, been heavily influenced by Freire’s radical pedagogical concepts. In “Critical Theory and Educational Practice,” Giroux (2009) also introduces another major branch in critical pedagogy’s lineage: the Frankfurt School. It was the sociocultural critiques of writers such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse that imbued critical pedagogy’s program of

---

<sup>7</sup> As befits a “founding father” of an intellectual tradition (a label which, incidentally, he greatly resented), Freire received a healthy share of criticism, not only from the Right, but also from the Left – notably from feminists who faulted his overreliance on rationality, his Enlightenment-informed belief in progress, his didacticism, and his fetishization of dialogue (see Kanpol, 1997).

inquiry with a “commitment to penetrate the world of objective appearances to expose the underlying social relationships they often conceal” (p. 27). The “theory of radical pedagogy” that Giroux proposes, is predicated on the critical paradigm’s “dialectical thought” (as opposed to “positivist rationality”), its abiding interest in “historical analysis,” and its commitment to reflexivity (p. 45). Like Freire, Giroux argues that one of the most important roles of education is the reclaiming of one’s identity, not in the individualistic sense, but rather in terms of one’s relationship to the societal centers of power.

Giroux also finds Stuart Hall’s critical program to be entirely compatible with his understanding of critical pedagogy. In “Public Pedagogy as Cultural Politics: Stuart Hall and the ‘Crisis’ of Culture,” Giroux (2000) points to Hall’s commitment to challenging the representations of alterity favored in Anglo-American public spaces, critiquing the manner in which those representations come about, and intervening in that process of creation by providing alternative, more democratic, meanings. Both Hall and Giroux believe that pedagogy is political practice, and vice-versa, and that all those who have the ability to educate the new generations have the duty to interrupt racist narratives. Moreover, it is precisely in those public spheres in which dominant ideologies are most powerfully disseminated and reinforced – such as public schools and their curricula – that a program of critical work is most needed and can be most consequential. “As a performative practice,” Giroux (2000) writes, “pedagogy is at work in all of those public spaces where culture works to secure identities” (p. 354). Moreover, “a critical public pedagogy” in sync with Hall’s ideas

should ascertain how certain meanings under particular historical conditions become more legitimate as representations of reality and take on the force of

common sense assumptions shaping a broader set of discourses and social configurations at work in the dominant social order. (p. 355)

Critical pedagogy is now a highly heterogeneous program of student empowerment, epistemological deconstruction, and ontological inquiry. In all its strands, though, it seeks to improve the lives of students and teachers alike, and, in that quest, it never shirks from partisanship:

Distinct from teaching, which can be likened to strategies and techniques used in order to meet predefined, given objectives, *pedagogy* certainly connotes a value-laden practice that is simulatenously *political* and *practical*. It is political in that it questions what constitutes appropriate or correct knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (cultural capital), and what involves reflection, informed choices, and decisions socially mediated by personal and/or institutional experiences. It is practical in that it acknowledges what the political determines or is emphasized in and out of the classroom. In other words, the practical is bound by the political. (Kanpol, 1997, pp. 80-1, original italics)

My dissertation seeks to destabilize the certainty and exclusivity of the narrative offered by contemporary Romanian history textbooks. I enter pedagogy's terrain with the explicit aim of exposing the "impact of power on curricular privileging" (Yeo, 1997, p. xvii). My analytical apparatus comes to me largely (but not exclusively) from the discipline of Communication and, as such, it works toward a kind of pedagogical vision that Fasset and Warren (2006) call "critical communication pedagogy." Their line of inquiry focuses on the intersections of identity, power and communicative acts.<sup>8</sup>

Much has changed, of course, in Romanian education since my school days. The 1989 anti-Communist revolution began a (hopefully) irreversible process of

---

<sup>8</sup> The authors offer 10 "fundamental commitments" of critical communication pedagogy: 1) commitment to studying everyday communication moments, 2) language as constitutive of social phenomena, 3) identity as constituted through communicative behavior, 4) power as understood through a Foucauldian lens, 5) cultural production, 6) subjectivity and agency, 7) reflexivity understood as "an ongoing effort to call out, to illuminate the (re)creation of our selves, our values, assumptions, and practices" (p. 50), 8) praxis (in the Freirean sense), 9) social critique and advocacy, and 10) dialogue.

democratization across all of Romania's institutions, including education. The country's accession to the European Union in 2007 has brought with it a welcome scrutiny of public discourse, especially in the areas of national sentiment and relationship with "non-Romanian" ethnic and national groups. The banking model of education has been weakened considerably, but is nowhere close to extinct. While the classroom environment no longer resembles a dictatorship, the pedagogical narratives – and in particular those espoused by the textbooks approved by the country's Ministry of Education – are still offered to the students as Truth-full, necessary Knowledge that should not be challenged. Indeed, most aspects of the Romanian education system would greatly benefit from critical interventions. From the abundance of targets, I've settled on the history curriculum in large part because of its immediate and powerful impact on the creation of a normative ethnonational identity category which, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, I consider to be a prime mover in such fratricide massacres as those that occurred in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The conceptual tools provided by critical pedagogy are an excellent fit for my endeavor, as most radical education projects explicitly concern themselves with identifying "a critical and politically just pedagogy framed within postmodern understandings of difference and borders of cultural identity to challenge dominant forms of alienation, oppression, and marginalization" (Kanpol and Yeo, 1997, p. x).

### C. The "Genome Revolution"

As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the primordialist paradigm of race/ethnicity that permeates virtually all contemporary Romanian history textbooks is

predicated on the idea that present-day “Romanians” can trace for themselves an uninterrupted ancestral line through hundreds of generations going back all the way to the “Getae-Dacians.” The unproblematized concepts of “roots,” “continuity” and “heritage” that Stuart Hall critiques in his works on racial and ethnic identity are as present in these 21<sup>st</sup> century textbooks as they were in the textbooks between the two world wars.

Nevertheless, as will be shown in Chapter 4, critical perspectives have been making some inroads into Romanian historiography in the past two decades, aided perhaps by the “crisis of (cultural) identity” that hardly any community has been able to fend off, least of all a community that has recently emerged from a totalitarian nightmare. While constructivism is most definitely not the perspective of choice underlying the narratives presented in the history textbooks, one can still detect an often subtle recognition (explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6) that the “ancestral line” connecting “us” to our “ancestors” is not to be taken absolutely literally: after all, few people have any significant knowledge of who their grandparents’ grandparents were, let alone their great<sup>n</sup>-grandparents. Until recently, one was forced to rely primarily on History’s experts (e.g., historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, historical linguists, classicists) for filling in the enormous gap between Granpa Vasile and Decebalus, king of the Dacians.

However, these experts’ objects of study (e.g., Homeric epics, ancient artifacts, coins and etymologies) are notoriously hard to affix in time and space, and even harder to attribute to specific, clearly-identified human communities. As our increasingly post-modern societies allow for more and more challenges to such grand narratives as “the story of our people,” this dissertation’s stated goal (i.e., to encourage multivocal, “messy” historical narratives that do not rely on essentialist understandings of group identity) seems to be

benefiting from a favorable ideological climate. However, one recent development in the field of historiography is poised to thoroughly scramble this slow progression towards inclusivity and individual agency: “genetic history,” that is, the use of ostensibly scientific information about mitochondrial DNA, Y chromosomes and genome sequencing to buttress (or undercut) claims of indigeneity and unity across time, space and individuals. To put it differently, just when the talk of blood as a mystical substance that controlled one’s ethnoracial identity seemed to be somewhat subsiding, a new kind of biodeterministic talk is emerging: “gene talk,” that is, “the idea that essential truths about identity inhere in sequences of DNA” (TallBear, 2013, p. 4). Genetic difference, which Hall called “the last refuge of racist ideologies,” is making quite the comeback (2011, p. 617).

In the popular imagination, the scales of identity are once again slowly tipping in favor of nature and to the detriment of nurture, and the (never-clear) concept of “ancestry” is also getting a new lease on life. Those who concern themselves with tracking the transmission of genes from one population to another in order to shed light on successive waves of human migration cannot avoid speaking of “ancestors” and “inheritances.” Their scientific pronouncements in these matters are then taken up by non-scientists who press them into the service of personal, ethnic, racial or national historical narratives. While engaged in this process, however, these Annals-of-Human-Genetics-to-History-Channel translators must contend with two Goldilocks challenges, so to speak, both of which make their work vulnerable to fierce ideological challenges:

1) As Royal et al. (2010) put it in their discussion of commercial DNA testing kits, “although the concept of ‘ancestry’ is least ambiguous when it refers to either very

close ancestors (i.e., parents or grandparents) or our most distant ancestors (i.e., the earliest hominids), genetic ancestry tests typically address more intermediate levels of ancestry that are imprecisely defined and identified” (p. 664). What is gained in accuracy of information, in other words, is lost in conceptual clarity. One can easily visualize eight grandparents, and, with some significant historiographic and anthropological help, one might also be able to visualize that one individual who lived 3,400 years ago who is supposed to be a common ancestor of all seven billion people alive today (Jobling, Rasteiro and Wetton, 2016). It’s the midsection of that diamond-shaped distribution (whereby one has a few immediate ancestors, many middle-range ancestors, and then again a few very distant ancestors<sup>9</sup>) that, when properly described, would fill in the gaps between granpa and the barbarian king who sired many children. The dizzying carousel of statistics and probability theory, however, does not make it easy for the lay person to wrap their mind around, say, their 128 ancestors who lived just 200 years ago (Urban, 2015). Not incidentally, the same paradox is mirrored in the wider debates about history and identity, where the irrepressible forces of globalization have (re-)stabilized cosmopolitan, transnational identities as well as communal identities, leaving the “identities in the middle,” that is, ethnic groups and nations, deeply troubled (Hall, 1996a, p. 343).

2) The difference between one person’s DNA and another person’s DNA amounts to 0.1 percent of the entire human genome. Whether this percentage is “small,” “big,” or in any other way “significant” is a matter of interpretation, and those who use this genetic information to make arguments about history generally privilege either a “there’s only one human species” narrative, or a revanchist “races are natural” narrative.

---

<sup>9</sup> This is due to what geneticists call “pedigree collapse” – put simply, inter-cousin mating.

The increasingly visible debates about genetic history (of both individuals and ethnoracial groups) mirror, in some ways, the primordialism vs. constructivism debates mentioned above. In the last section of this chapter, I examine some of these debates, and attend to their implications for what David Reich (2018) calls “a new understanding of human difference and identity” (p. 267).

In the decades since the end of the Second World War, keenly aware of their profession’s role in building up bogus racial taxonomies that enabled (and sometimes even directly justified) genocide, European and American anthropologists have gone to great pains to explain to the general public that their science does not support racist tenets. In 1996, for example, the American Association of Physical Anthropologists published a “Statement on Biological Aspects of Race” in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, in which they flatly announced that “pure races, in the sense of genetically homogenous populations, do not exist in the human species today, nor is there any evidence that they have ever existed in the past.” The statement also nodded towards new genetic discoveries, which have been showing that “the hereditary characteristics of human populations are in a state of perpetual flux.” The anthropologists also make a fine attempt to thread the needle, by acknowledging that racial categories might not be entirely socially constructed:

There is no necessary concordance between biological characteristics and culturally defined groups. [...] However, human beings who speak the same language and share the same culture frequently select each other as mates, with the result that there is often some degree of correspondence between the distribution of physical traits on one hand and that of linguistic and cultural traits on the other. But there is no causal linkage between these physical and behavioral traits, and therefore it is not justifiable to attribute cultural characteristics to genetic inheritance.



Two years later, the American Anthropological Association (1998) addressed the issue of race head-on, making more extensive use of “gene talk.” Pointing out that “there is greater variation within ‘racial’ groups than between them,” the AAA focuses its critique on the “lines of division among biological populations” which have allowed our societies to speak of “Europeans” or “Asians” as if the two categories were inherently and obviously distinct. The AAA also explicitly addresses “present-day inequalities” between “the so-called ‘racial’ groups” unequivocally and exclusively attributing them to “historical and contemporary social, economic, educational, and political circumstances,” as opposed to biological conditioning. Both the AAPA and the AAA statements make use of new genetic findings to reject the proposition that racial categories are an indisputable fact of nature, while at the same time acknowledging that gene variation is correlated with geography, however imperfect and however value-free such correlation might be.

The dangerous dalliance between social scientists and physical scientists in the “blood is heritage” field received a succession of pivotal updates in the 1950s with the description of the DNA double helix, the birth of the subfield of “molecular anthropology” in the early 1960s, population geneticist Luca Cavalli-Sforza’s work on human genetic variation in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Richard Lewontin’s 1972 scientific refutation of racial taxonomies, Svante Pääbo’s work on evolutionary genetics in the 1990s and the 2000s, the publication of the human genome sequence in 2001, and, finally the very recent emergence of “ancient DNA” sequencing, which is now offering scientists a bonanza of insights into the movements of ancient populations (Reich, 2018; TallBear, 2013). At the forefront of that work is David Reich, a Harvard Medical School geneticist whose studies have upended many a consensus about ancient migrations, the

ancestries of various contemporary populations, and, yes, the completely illusory nature of existing racial categories.<sup>10</sup>

One of Reich's most celebrated discoveries attends to the ancestry of Europeans who, in terms of genetics, appear to be the product of the mixing between a relatively small group of "indigenes" and at least three major population groups which migrated to Europe in the past 15,000 years from Africa and the Middle East. A second significant proposition advanced in Reich's work is that neither the pseudo-scientists who see race as being biologically determined, nor the AAA-type anthropologists who forcefully push against any hint that contemporary racial taxonomies might have something beneficial to offer to us are correct in their assessments. Avowedly anti-racist, Reich has nevertheless found evidence in his studies of "ancient DNA" that different "populations" that correlate significantly with geographically-determined racial categories do indeed exhibit "substantial differences" between each other. Reich is acutely aware of the plethora of ideologically-charged interpretations that his discoveries can, and most likely will, give rise to, and he has sought to contextualize his data for the lay person, writing a popular science book titled *Who We Are and How We Got Here* (2018), publishing a much-reviewed op-ed in *The New York Times* (2018), and giving interviews to a myriad other media outlets (in addition, of course, to authoring numerous articles in prestigious academic journals such as *Nature*).

In their increasingly desperate attempts to push back against neo-colonists and white supremacists who use human genome research to further their racist agendas, the

---

<sup>10</sup> Reich's contribution to the creation of an "oligopoly" of genetic laboratories that have cornered the market on the analysis of "ancient DNA" is chronicled in a *The New York Times Magazine* piece titled "Is Ancient DNA Research Revealing New Truths – Or Falling Into Old Traps?" (Lewis-Kraus, 2019). As the title makes clear, the article also casts doubt on the validity of the stories that Reich's paleogenomic work often ends up telling about ancient, as well as living, populations.

new generation of geneticists, including David Reich, insistently point out that their studies prove that all human populations (“races,” “ethnic groups,” etc.) are the result of many waves of migration and can therefore never be described as “pure” anything. To begin with, even though the old consensus about the insignificance of inter-group difference does not hold anymore, it remains true that the overwhelming majority of people’s genetic material is identical:

[T]he striking homogeneity of our DNA actually emphasizes the centrality of individual and group experience in determining who we are. Everyone is the product of a particular human and genetic history. Yet this history is shared as well as unique, universal as well as individual (Olson, 2003, p. 69).

In other words, we are still working with a diamond-shaped distribution of intermediate ancestors that posits both a multitude of great-great-parents who most likely hail from various regions of the world (Royal et al., 2010) and a small number of very distant ancestors who walked out of Africa more than 50,000 years ago.

In *Who We Are and How We Got Here* (2018), Reich points out the anti-racist effects of new “ancient DNA” research when discussing the ground-breaking work of genetics pioneer Luca Cavalli-Sforza (in whose lab Reich apprenticed). Having attempted to map out the field of genetic geography by studying the population distribution of blood types, then proteins, and then, finally, DNA, Cavalli-Sforza had inadvertently reinforced old racial taxonomies when the data he and his team had fed into their computer yielded patterns that corresponded to such sociological groups as “West Eurasians” (aka “Europeans”), “East Asians,” “Native Americans,” “Africans,” and “New Guineans” (p. xii). The results, Reich argues in his book, were correct, in that they confirmed that “the present-day genetic structure of populations echoes some of the great events in the human past” (p. xiii), but also incorrect (or at least unpardonably decontextualized) in that they

implied that populations were characterized by homogeneity and continuity through time. “We now know,” Reich concludes, “that nearly every group living today is the product of repeated population mixtures that have occurred over thousands and tens of thousands of years” and that “[m]ixing is in human nature, and no one population is – or could be – ‘pure’” (p. 268).

In Reich’s view, far from confirming racist canards, when done (and explained) properly, genetic research has much to contribute to our understanding of history. (One poignant example: A 2016 study showed that African-Americans who migrated to the north of the U.S. during the 1900s had more genetic affinities with European-Americans than did African-Americans who stayed in the South. That would indicate that African Americans with lighter skin had a better chance of successfully making the transition from the South to the North [White, 2017]). The problem, as always, is how to solve the Goldilocks challenge of representing both the essential unity of the human species and the incredible diversity that has always been an indelible characteristic of every “ethnic” or “racial” grouping of humans. If, as it seems inevitable, the insights into world history gleaned through “ancient DNA” sequencing make it into national history textbooks (having already taken firm hold of the popular imagination), the professional historians who author those books will no longer have the luxury of treating labels such as “Europeans” or “Romanians” as self-evident descriptors of historical population groups. Recent genetic research, for example, has shown that populations currently inhabiting the Balkan peninsula (i.e., self-identified “Romanians,” “Albanians,” “Macedonians,” “Greeks,” “Italians” and “Turks”) “share a common ancestry with no major genetic barriers and a lack of correlation between genetic differentiation and language or

ethnicity” (Bosch et al., 2006, p. 460), and that the contemporary populations of the Romanian provinces of Wallachia, Transylvania, Dobrudja and Moldavia exhibit genetic affinities to other populations from Southeastern Europe, down to the existence of Southwestern Asian and African genetic contributions (Cocoş et al., 2017). Again, the “unity in diversity” character of such population groups as “the Romanians” cannot – and should not – be ignored by authors of textbooks as they endeavor to tell the highly consequential story of “who we are and how we got here.”

As Reich writes in his book, geneticists like him have no use for claims of ethnic or racial “purity” since their research has shown not only that there is no such thing as “primeval groups” that gave birth to, say, today’s “Romanians” or today’s “South Asians,” but also that the migration picture of the world thousands of years ago was no less complicated than it is nowadays. Moreover, the heterogeneity of a past population does not map onto the heterogeneity of a current population. In other words, the two are diverse in different ways. History textbooks that are willing to grapple with that complexity will, by necessity, have to vigorously challenge the various “origin myths” that nationalists everywhere (whether militant or passive) count on state-sanctioned historical narratives to provide. Carefully quoting data produced by scientists like Reich might constitute one way of showing that “the people who live in a particular place today almost never exclusively descend from the people who lived in the same place far in the past,” thus undermining ethnonationalist fantasies of uninterrupted, pure ancestry lines (Reich, 2018, p. xiii). Indeed, for some years now, popular media outlets have delighted in performing such myth-busting work, with headlines such as these:

- “There’s no such thing as a ‘pure’ European – or anyone else” (Gibbons, *Science Magazine*, 2017)
- “Vikings were never the pure-bred master race white supremacists like to portray” (Downham, *TheConversation.com*, 2017)
- “DNA analysis proves Arabs aren’t entirely Arab” (Khalife, *Stepfeed.com*, 2017)
- “DNA study finds London was ethnically diverse from start” (Ghosh, *BBC.com*, 2015)

For the many reasons explained throughout this dissertation, I am very much in favor of such influential ideological apparatuses as the history curriculum and the mass media attacking ethnonationalist hallucinations head-on, and if genetic history can offer them some ammunition for that purpose, I welcome its arrival on the ideological stage.

However, one’s myth-busting effort must always be tempered by an ethical calculus aptly summarized by Olson (2003), and explained in depth by TallBear (2013) in her trailblazing book, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*: given the colonial atrocities endured by such populations as the Native American tribes in the United States and Canada, what happens when a (predominantly white) new class of scientists purports to have proof that those populations’ origin myths are plainly wrong? How can such a move not be seen as simply a new step in a long process of physical and cultural annihilation of minority groups? For me, the solution to that dilemma is to prioritize work that challenges the self-justifying narratives of groups that hold the most power in society. In the case of Romania, that would mean going after the origin myth of the (self-identified) ethnic Romanians, since they are the ones in

power and since it is their origin myth (and not that of Hungarians, Roma or Germans) that anchors all contemporary Romanian history textbooks.

While integrating genetic science data into the “national” historical narrative offers some obvious benefits, it also runs several undeniable risks. For one, anyone who marshals science when making a case about group identity is obviously implying that science *can* tell us something *true* about identity and, by way of consequence, that ethnic/racial/national identity is not entirely socially constructed. Replacing the old “true story” of, say, Romanian group identity with another “true story” of Romanian group identity (instead of providing multiple, nuanced, alternative stories) is not much progress at all. Secondly, the maintenance of ethnoracial labels by the geneticists all but guarantees that the historical stories they produce will fail to break the hold racist narratives have on the general public. Reich and his cohorts go to great pains to point out that when they say “Europeans,” they do not mean a population that has lived in Europe from times immemorial, unaffected by matters outside the continent, and able to transmit some sort of essential “Europeanness” from generation to generation to the present day. However, they are unwilling to give up the label “European,” believing that more and better explanation of their particular usage of that category will, in time, convince the general public that genetic science disproves racism instead of justifying it. In other words, they think like physical scientists rather than like social scientists who are acutely aware of the singular power of language to frame reality.

In *Native American DNA*, TallBear (2013) points out that the “Native American” identity category is not a natural category that was merely misused by white colonials and was simply waiting for objective scientists to pick it up and remove its racist crust:

But Native American DNA could not have emerged as an object of scientific research and genealogical desire until individuals and groups emerged as “Native American” in the course of colonial history. Without “settlers,” we could not have “Indians” or “Native Americans” – a pan-racial group defined strictly in opposition to the settlers who encountered them. Instead, we would have many thousands of smaller groups of peoples defined within and according to their own languages... (p. 5)

Chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation focus on how the identity categories of “Getae-Dacian,” “Daco-Romanian” and “Romanian” around which the entire historical narrative of contemporary textbooks is structured are inherently problematic, in addition to being rhetorically deployed in dubious ways. In those chapters, I seek to show how these categories have acquired their thing-ness, their homogeneity and their boundaries as a result of deliberate rhetorical work performed by elite Romanian historians, writers, journalists and politicians, with the help of such heuristics as “ethnogenesis” and “Romanization.” (In Chapter 4, I trace the general progression of such myth-making intellectual work in the Romanian language). For now, suffice it to point out that the population groups that are presented in the textbooks as the “Romanians”’ most distant “ancestors” – the “Getae-Dacians” - were constituted as a unitary category by outsiders (i.e., Greek and Roman writers), in very similar ways to how “Native Americans” were named into existence by the white settlers.

Finally, a third critique leveled against the faith that many put in the genetic history narrative has to do with its reliance (however obscured at times) on the notion of “origins.” TallBear (2013) aptly explains this objection with reference to the use of the “Native American” category by geneticists:

Native American DNA as an object could not exist without, and yet functions as a scientific data point to support the idea of, once pure, original populations. Notions of ancestral populations, the ordering and calculating of genetic markers and their associations, and the representation of living groups of individuals as reference populations all require the assumption that there was a



moment, a human body, a marker, a population back there in space and time that was a biogeographical pinpoint of originality. This faith in originality would seem to be at odds with the doctrine of evolution, of change over time, of becoming.

The populations and population-specified markers that are identified and studied mirror the cultural, racial, ethnic, national, and tribal understandings of the humans who study them. Native American, sub-Saharan African, European, and East Asian DNAs are constituted as scientific objects by laboratory methods and devices, and also by discourses or particular ideas and vocabularies of race, ethnicity, nation, family, and tribe. For and by whom are such categories defined? How have continental-level race categories come to matter? And why do they matter more than the “peoples” that condition indigenous narratives, knowledges, and claims?

The answer to this last question is not because favored scientific categories are more objectively true. Privileging the concept of genetic population enables the sampling of some bodies and not others. (p. 6)

The “genetic revolution” of the past few years has impacted historiography in more ways than just by integrating the insights into human migration patterns that Reich and his cohorts have acquired. With their heavy emphasis on lines of “ancestry,” commercially available individual genetic testing kits are also claiming an influential role into people’s understanding of social identity. While scientists such as Reich have no interest in mapping out the ethnoracial pedigree of an individual as an exercise in identity-claiming, the increasing popularity of such genetic testing kits (as well as the manner in which they are contextualized by their sellers) all but guarantee that the dubious mixed use of essentialized ethnoracial categories will continue to impact our historical narratives. After all, when history textbooks speak of “Indo-Europeans,” David Reich speaks of “European” populations, and *23andMe* genetic testing kit guides speak of “European genetic roots,” how is a 10-year-old supposed to understand that “[e]very group is a mixture of many previous groups, a fleeting collection of genetic variants drawn from a shared genetic legacy”? (Olson, 2003, p. 227).

Genetic ancestry test makers have come under increasing criticism from scientists who argue that the science the tests use is by and large sound, but that the interpretations given to the results of those tests – particularly when it comes to group identity claims – amount to what Thomas (2013) calls “genetic astrology.” Most of the criticism is already familiar: the “reification of race as a biological phenomenon” (Jobling, Rasteiro and Wetton, 2016, p. 148), the wink-and-a-nod acknowledgements of probability rather than certainty, the spurious connections made between contemporary ethnoracial groups and ancient populations via putative “homelands,” and the highly subjective emphasis on one ancestry line and one explanatory story to the detriment of all other viable options.

The legitimization of essentialist racial categories initially created by racist ideologies is perhaps the most troublesome byproduct of these genetic tests. The furor set off by the publication of genetic test results by 2019 Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren can attest to that. Eager to respond to President Donald Trump’s assertion that she had misrepresented herself as being, at least in part, Native American, Warren released the results of a test that showed a high probability that she had a “Native American ancestor” some six to ten generations ago, but then rushed to give assurances that she did not consider herself to be a Native American. Once again, TallBear (KimTallBear, 2018) points out the hypocrisy of such attempts to thread the needle:

Elizabeth Warren and genome scientists give lip service to genetic ancestry not trumping tribal definitions of identity. But they get to have it both ways. They know very well that the broader US public will understand a DNA test to be a true indication of Elizabeth Warren’s right to claim Native American identity in some way.

A second insidious byproduct of ancestry tests is the picture that they paint of essentially immobile, homogenous populations that have maintained their genetic and cultural

integrity largely intact over millennia – a picture that geneticists such as Reich denounce as utterly misleading. The “homeland,” a mainstay of every nationalist narrative, features prominently in this picture, as the makers of the kits perform a particularly nifty rhetorical sleight of hand. In their stinging criticism of tests that purport to tell Britons which “tribes of Britain” their ancestors belonged to, Jobling, Rasteiro and Wetton (2016) explain how this works:

The evidence on which these links are made is unpublished and so cannot be assessed, but is probably based on datasets in which particular Y-chromosome types are present at relatively high frequencies in particular geographical regions today. These then become “homelands” for the Y-chromosome types, and a link is made to a past population or tribe identified in written sources and applied uncritically to genetic subgroupings, sometimes supported by attempts to estimate the ages of lineages. In truth, we have very little idea of who the Picts were, and certainly no idea whatever about the kinds of Y chromosomes they carried. (p. 153)

At this point in time, Romanian history textbooks have not in any way incorporated the new “gene talk” permeating the popular media space, but, as will be show in Chapters 5 and 6, the “homeland” connection between ancient and contemporary populations would be immediately recognizable to any Romanian student forced to memorize entire chapters of “The History of the Romanians.”

One final similarity between individual ancestry test results and contemporary narratives of Romanian “heritage”: the selection of one individual and one story to the detriment of many other individuals and stories with the same legitimacy and claim of explanatory power. The results returned by the genetic kits often point to one particular ancestor who is imbued with symbolic significance, as in Elizabeth Warren’s case. Likewise, when performing the work of tracing ancestry lines, the historical narratives proposed by the Romanian textbooks not only privilege certain lineages (e.g., Decebalus,

king of the Dacians → Stephen the Great, king of Moldavia → Alexandru Ioan Cuza, ruler of the Romanian Principalities → “you, the Romanian reading this textbook”), but also omit to even mention that other lineages exist, including some whose meanderings take them to places a Romanian ethnonationalist would like to banish from all memory (e.g., the Ottoman imperial court, Tatar villages in the Crimea, the Buda Castle, or the sands of Numibia). The specter of the “one drop” of undesirable blood has never ceased to haunt us.

In an opinion piece written for NPR.org, philosopher Alva Noë (2016) asks whether one can tell one’s ethnic identity from the DNA results returned to them by an ancestry test company. The answer, she says, is “a qualified negative”:

The truth is, you have your history and your genes have theirs. There is a very large class of different possible human histories that could have produced in you just the genetic code that you have. And, at the same time, there is a very large class of different genomes that you might now have as a result of a single, actual history of your relatives. The bottom line: You can’t read off your identity from your genetic code. (§ 12)

And, I would add, nor should you read your identity from a state-sanctioned, smoothed-out historical narrative of “ethnic becoming” whose glaring omissions, wishful thinking, and stealthy revisionist interpretations of past events adhere to neither scientific rigor, nor rhetorical fair play, nor yet any discernable ethical considerations.

Fishman (2002) pointed out that the 21<sup>st</sup> century reports of primordialism’s death were premature, as mainstream historiography, literature and popular media never followed the lead of social science in taking the “discursive turn.” Now, the “genome revolution” is resurrecting the debate about “meaningful genetic differences among populations” (Lewis-Kraus, 2019) back into the scientific space. In Hall’s (1997) words, the essentialist, biological definition of race and ethnicity was “shown out the front

door,” but, clad in white lab coats, it now “tends to sidle around the veranda and climb back in through the window” (p. 7). In preparation for the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 of the exact manner in which Romanian textbooks put forward an unabashedly essentialist view of homogenous ethnonational identity, the next chapter performs a deep dive into Critical Discourse Analysis, the methodological approach I find to be best suited to help me, to paraphrase Hall (1986), cut into the process of identification and ethnicization at novel points, ask new questions, and propose alternatives.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In chapter 1, I have laid out the research questions this dissertation is concerned with, as well as the reasons why I believe those questions need answers. In this chapter, I will explain exactly how I intend to analyze the stories offered by the Romanian history textbooks that constitute my data.

I begin with an introduction of Discourse Analysis, a family of methodologies that, in Phillips and Hardy's (2002) words,

allows researchers to ask a variety of questions relating to the constructive effects of language – exploring the way in which the socially produced ideas and objects that constitute our 'reality' are actually created and maintained. (p. 63)

I then spend a bit of time introducing Ethnomethodology (EM) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), two often-competing branches of Discourse Analysis, as I will be using, in the next two chapters, some of the tools they offer. Many of the subsequent pages will then be devoted to laying out several debates that have pitted some of CDA's best-known practitioners and theoreticians (e.g., Fairclough, Wetherell, Flowerdew) against CDA critics coming from sociolinguistics and Ethnomethodology. In parsing these debates about CDA's supposed theoretical imperialism, untoward ideological commitment, and lack of adherence to solid methodological standards, I intend to tease out CDA's defining

characteristics, its strengths and weaknesses, and eventually its suitability, as a method, to my own project. At several junctures in this narrative, I address some of the critiques leveled at CDA with brief examples of my own textbook analysis. The chapter will end with a presentation of my data (i.e., history textbooks approved by Romania's Ministry of Education in the past 15 years, as well as a few influential works of Romanian historiography). In the (original) spirit of CDA eclecticism, the overwhelming majority of the units of observation I work with in the two analysis chapters of this dissertation are brief instances of discourse: individual words, word pairs (e.g., a noun or a verb plus a qualifier), and sentences, while the units of analysis will, as mentioned, be drawn from the worlds of both EM and CDA.

#### A. Discourse Analysis

“Over the last 30 years, a revolution of sorts has swept across the humanities and social sciences,” write Phillips and Hardy (2002). “Beginning with the work of linguistic philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1967) and Winch (1958), the idea that language is much more than a simple reflection of reality – that, in fact, it is *constitutive* of social reality – has become commonly accepted” (p. 12, original italics). Sociologists now study how people's communicative practices lead to the creation and maintenance of social institutions such as the family or the school, political scientists study how the distribution of power is negotiated, affirmed and challenged in language, anthropologists are taking a closer look at how communication influences cultural norms, assumptions, expectations and beliefs, and so on. But the recognition that the world as we know it lives and dies in

language also brought forth an unprecedented intellectual challenge to the knowledge producers' claims of truth, objectivity and neutrality:

The linguistic turn in the social sciences recognizes that language is implicated in constructions of knowledge, in configurations of cultures and cultural processes, in power relations, and in relationships among nation-states (including colonialism), classes, ethnic and racial groups, genders, sexual identities, and so on. Language creates categories of in-groups and "others," and privileges particular definitions and ways of knowing. The linguistic turn focuses the attention of social scientists and educational researchers on the language of representation, the use of language to do things, and the nature of the language of research itself. The language used to describe people, places, and actions encodes power relationships and can make hierarchy appear "natural" and "reasonable" and make invisible the pain, suffering, and lack of freedom and dignity people may experience. (Bloome et al., 2008, p. 17)

The very popularity of the thesis that language is constitutive of social events makes it difficult to trace the linear development of the tradition of research now known as discourse analysis (DA). Many of its genealogists would agree, however, that at least two major fields of study have been absolutely crucial to its conceptualization and subsequent operationalization: modern linguistics/anthropology and the Marxist critical endeavor (e.g., van Dijk, 1997, 2013; and Fairclough, 1989, 2003). While contemporary iterations of discourse analysis certainly draw on both traditions, they do not do so in equal measure. It is thus possible to more closely associate one main branch of DA, ethnomethodology, with linguistic anthropology, and the other, Critical Discourse Analysis, with the Frankfurt School's reworking of Marxist social critique.

### B. Ethnomethodology

According to Agar (1994), "[t]he creation myth for modern linguistics" is usually thought to begin with de Saussure, whose theorization of the relationships between different linguistic signs (as well as between the various components of the linguistic sign



itself) laid the foundations for the structuralist paradigm (p. 31). We then pass the torch to anthropologist Franz Boas, who “put Saussure to work in service of the study of culture” (p. 59), and then to Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir whose eponymous hypothesis that “language shaped the world rather than simply reflecting it” (pp. 66-7) still dominates social constructionist discourse, especially in its “weak” incarnation.<sup>11</sup> After a strong philosophical infusion via Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle, language finally takes its rightful place in the anthropological study of communities in Dell Hymes’ (1974) work on the “ethnography of communication.”

In the late 1960s, sociologist Harold Garfinkel published a collection of essays on what he called “ethnomethodology,” a phenomenological, empirical approach to discourse analysis that “takes interest in how the parties to actual tasks, settings, and occasions of everyday life [...] are methodically engaged in producing the order and coherence of their affairs” (Macbeth, 2008, p. 105). An obviously generous program of scholarship, ethnomethodology soon spawned various specialized subfields, such as membership categorization analysis, studies of work and institutions, and conversation analysis (CA). It is the latter, however, which, according to Maynard and Clayman (1991), “has emerged as perhaps the most visible and influential form of ethnomethodological research” (p. 396). CA’s initial proponents, Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, focused their analytic efforts primarily on naturally occurring spoken interaction – an arena where, they argued, one can better observe social order being created (“accomplished”), reinforced and challenged in accordance to the

---

<sup>11</sup> Agar (1994) distinguishes between a “linguistic determinism” interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and a “linguistic relativity” interpretation of it. He describes the latter: “Language carries with it patterns of seeing, knowing, talking, and acting. Not patterns that imprison you, but patterns that mark the easier trails for thought and perception and action” (p. 71).

rules and expectations of the actual speakers (or “members”). The scholars sought to “bracket” their own expectations and assumptions, and interpret people’s symbolic behavior not in terms of ready-made sociological categories and narratives (e.g., “His action is informed by the narrative of patriotism”), but rather in terms of the immediate discursive context (e.g., “His action is informed by his interpretation of what he has just heard from his interlocutor”). The sequential order of situated utterances (and associated communicative acts), therefore, is of utmost importance to CA, as are observed patterns of speech:

Consistent with the CA avoidance of premature generalization and the ethnomethodological focus on action as the locus of knowledge, CA views the empirical conduct of speakers as the central resource out of which analysis must develop. Furthermore, what is said provides not only the data underlying analysis, but also the evidence for hypotheses and conclusions: it is participants’ conduct itself that must provide evidence for the presence of units, existence of patterns, and formulation of rules. To this end, CA searches for recurrent patterns, distributions, and forms of organization in large corpora of talk. (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 236)

### C. Critical Discourse Analysis

While the linguistic roots of Discourse Analysis can in no way be ignored, the transition from the study of language to the study of “discourse” is more frequently attributed to those writers who took Marx’s project out of the pit of economic determinism and into the hugely promising fields of ideological analysis and social critique. Rogers (2003) distinguishes between two types of critical thinkers:

Reproduction theory is concerned with how existing social structures are reproduced through either social or cultural reproduction. Social reproduction theorists (e.g., Althusser, 1971) focus on the reproduction of class structure. Althusser directly addresses the role of schools as ISAs (ideological state apparatuses), as the place where society is reproduced. Althusser argued that ISAs, including schools, are relatively autonomous and reflect state ideology. Ideology in Althusser’s theory is defined as the imaginary relationship of

individuals to their social worlds, which are a reflection of their actions governed by the structure of institutions. [...]

Cultural reproduction theorists (e.g., Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1970, 1977) concern themselves with the way class structures are reproduced through an analysis of the processes and practices, rather than through structural reproduction. [...] Poststructuralists focus on power-knowledge relationships, that is, how they are transmitted and whether people have legitimate access to them. Foucault's (1970, 1977) theory of discourse focuses on the process of transmission of genres of power-knowledge relationships and provides a broad framework for operationalizing how certain discourses become privileged, taken for granted, and seen as natural. Central in understanding the distinction between the two sets of theories is how language, as a cultural tool, mediates the relationship between the individual and the social world. In this model, individual agency and power structures are dialectically produced, transformed, and reproduced. (pp. 5-6)

Critical scholarship is concerned primarily with how individuals and communities make sense of the world around them through the strategic deployment of language.

Recognizing that symbolic power is distributed in every society as unequally as economic power is, the scholars who adhere to the critical paradigm seek to unpack “how social relationships and power relations have been constructed – often unjustly – through language,” and, most often, also commit to find ways “those relationships might be reconstructed on a more equitable and democratic basis” (Bloome et al., 2008, p. 20).

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2005) provide us with a useful list of the “main features of ‘critical’ social science”:

1. A critical engagement with the contemporary world recognizing that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust what is possible.
2. An emancipatory knowledge interest initiated and terminated in flows between theoretical practice and non-theoretical social practices, and anchored in the public sphere.
3. An engagement in explanatory critique directed at both intransitive and transitive objects (i.e., both practices themselves and theories of them), applying a dialectical logic.
4. A recognition of discourse as one moment in the dialectics of social practice, and of changes in discourse as capable of opening up new social possibilities.

5. A 'modest' yet non-relativistic understanding of scientific truth as epistemic gain, where what counts is relative explanatory power and contribution to meeting needs.
6. A reflexive understanding of the historical and social positioning of the researcher's own activity. (p. 35)

When your language-study methodology gets an infusion of critical sensibilities, what you get is Critical Discourse Analysis, an approach that, according to Rogers (2003), "brings a number of theories, specifically social theory and linguistic analysis, into alignment" (p. 146). CDA is an interdisciplinary epistemological and methodological approach that seeks to identify (and sometimes correct) the effects of the strategic deployment of language. "Whereas other qualitative methodologies work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists," write Phillips & Hardy (2002, p. 6), "discourse analysis endeavors to uncover the way in which it is produced. This is the most important contribution of discourse analysis: It examines how language constructs phenomena, not how it reflects and reveals it." Like critical pedagogy, CDA is activist. Norman Fairclough (1989), one of the founding fathers of CDA (which he initially called "critical language study") spoke of his aim of making "a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language" (p. 4), a goal with which I too identify.

This dissertation adheres to the CDA program, but does not entirely dismiss ethnomethodological methods out of hand. Indeed, CDA has traditionally benefited from a robust dialogue with various high-profile conversation analysts who have been able to identify quite a few blindspots in its early heuristics. Below, I trace a few rather heated exchanges between the proponents of CDA and those of CA (among others) in the belief

that this is the most efficient way to flesh out my own take on the merits and weaknesses of CDA.

By far the most persistent critique of critical discourse analysts is concerned with their supposed penchant for conjuring categories and phenomena out of thin air and then magically finding evidence of their existence in the texts they work with. This critique usually has two components: an indictment against CDA's explicitly activist agenda (which supposedly makes it ignore data that does not yield the conclusions it desires, as well as draw conclusions unwarranted even by the stunted data it does end up examining), followed by a denunciation of CDA's unfortunate ambition to marry textual analysis with political-economic insights. Both components of this critique carry a political undertone, insofar as both position CDAs as pseudo-scientists. The latter element (i.e., CDA eschews the hard labor of painstaking text analysis) focuses more on the question of methodological rigor, while the former element (i.e., CDA tends to "judge results according to their political implications as much if not more than their validity" [Hammersley, 2002, p. 253]) focuses more on the question of ideological bias determining one's framing of the research agenda.

In this section, I address this critique with a focus on ideological and methodological issues and without further going into the identity debate. First, I attend to the "theoretical imperialism" critiques advanced by conversation analysts (with an emphasis on the Schegloff-Wetherell debate), and then to the similar critiques coming from non-ethnomethodologist sociolinguists and literary critics (with an emphasis on the Widdowson-Fairclough debate).

#### D. Theoretical Imperialism

However well-intentioned and well-disposed toward the participants – indeed, often enough the whole rationale of the critical stance is the championing of what are taken to be authentic, indigenous perspectives – there is a kind of theoretical imperialism involved here, a kind of hegemony of the intellectuals, of the literati, of the academics, of the critics whose theoretical apparatus gets to stipulate the terms by reference to which the world is to be understood – when there has already *been* a set of terms by reference to which the world was understood – by those endogenously involved in its very coming to pass. (p.167, original italics)

This is the thesis of Schegloff's (1997) "Whose text? Whose context?" article which, since its publishing in *Discourse & Society*, has become the standard for ethnomethodological critique of CDA. Schegloff's argument is deceptively simple: if you want to understand what is happening in an interaction (or, for that matter, in a stretch of written text), you must look closely at the interaction for clues of the participants' own motivations and rhetorical strategies. Where you should *not* look for interpretive solutions (at least not before you undertake a thorough formal analysis of the data) is to scholarly heuristics such as racism, sexism and nationalism. Schegloff does not mean to argue that people's actions in the world are not motivated by – and do not cause – phenomena that could properly be labeled "racism" or "sexism"; rather, he urges social analysts to postpone the labeling of discursive phenomena until after their role has been ascertained from the point of view of the participants. Because "political stances toward discourse," such as CDA, come into data analysis with ready-made categories, which they privilege above all others, they can be rightly – if surprisingly – be described as "positivistic," Schegloff says (p. 167). Conversation analysis, in contrast, offers scholars a way to be "objective" without being "positivistic," a way to avoid "the virtual disintegration of stable meaning and import into indeterminacy": pay heed to how the participants "orient" themselves (a term much favored by ethnomethodologists) to

various discursive constructions, such as “gender” or “ethnicity” (p. 183). Schegloff does anticipate the CDAist counter-argument that there is no way to definitively *know* what the participants’ real orientations are, and that all intellectually honest students of discourse must somehow address the down-the-rabbit-hole nature of explanation and meaning-making. But the argument he offers in response is inescapably self-referential: we know how to label what’s happening at some point in a conversation (e.g., “the practice of using the same words to show one is saying the same thing that one was saying or trying to say earlier” [p. 179]) because we’ve seen the same type of rhetorical move before and we thus know what the participants seek to achieve with that move. Presumably, if one’s co-participants *seem* to intersubjectively interpret one’s utterance as a particular speech act and not another, the analyst would have proof that the rhetorical practices he sees in that conversation are, indeed, “members’ practices of talk-in-interaction, used on behalf of certain projects and linked to certain outcomes” (p. 179), and thus the analytic labels accorded them are “demonstrably relevant” (p. 183). Schegloff does, however, seem to assume that the *patterns* that disparate discursive events seem to coalesce in are natural and universal occurrences which, rather than take shape in the (sociological) imagination of the scholar, are in (and of) the interaction itself, ready to be observed and catalogued. Indeed, this is precisely the point that Wetherell’s (1998) response to “Whose text? Whose context?” revolves around:

The crucial issue here, for Schegloff, is the point at which analysis departs from evident participant orientations and one problem from a critical perspective is that Schegloff’s sense of participant orientation may be unacceptably narrow. We have seen already that in practice for Schegloff participant orientation seems to mean only what is relevant for the participants in this particular conversational moment. Ironically, of course, it is the conversation analyst in selecting for analysis part of a conversation or continuing interaction who defines this relevance for the participant. In restricting the analyst’s gaze to this fragment,

previous conversations, even previous turns in the same continuing conversation become irrelevant for the analyst but also, by dictat, for the participants. We do not seem to have escaped, therefore, from the imposition of theorists' categories and concerns. (p. 403)

There is no escape from (some form of) "theoretical imperialism," Wetherell seems to argue. So let's bring to bear our analytical apparatus as best we can, without circumscribing our approach to the data simply because we can never account for every single potentially relevant "outside-the-data" variable. After all, as Wetherell puts it, "it is not necessary to say everything about the argumentative fabric of a society to say something, and something furthermore which is scholarly, complete, and insightful concerning participant orientations..." (p. 403).

That being said, Wetherell does accept Schegloff's contention that the type of close textual analysis deployed by CA can greatly benefit CDA enterprises, and she proposes "a more synthetic approach" to textual analysis (along the lines of Foucault's "genealogy") that would bring together ethnomethodological scrutiny and post-structuralist insights into the discourse/identity and individual/society dialectics (p. 388). The poststructuralist conceptual tools are supposed to help with explaining why certain utterances/rhetorical moves are enacted by a particular person in a particular context. In Wetherell's opinion, the answers that Conversation Analysis usually provides to the "Why this utterance here?" question are superficial, since they can only (maybe) tell us what a participant meant to achieve with his utterance, and not why he believed that the utterance in question is likely to achieve his goal. One needs to know the answer to this latter question if one is to perform an in-depth analysis of situated discourse.

In his response, Schegloff (1998) accuses Wetherell of misrepresenting the preoccupations of Conversation Analysis as not including sociocultural phenomena such



as those addressed by “feminist commentary” (p. 414). He reiterates his differentiation (and antithetical valorization) of categories-relevant-to-the-participants and categories-relevant-to-the-analyst. In other words, sexism is a relevant analytic category only if the participants show to the analyst that sexism informs at least some of their utterances. Once again, Schegloff fails to explain exactly how this “showing” is done, especially in the absence of explicit acknowledgment of “sexism” in the discussion.<sup>12</sup>

### E. Ideological Commitment

Not to be outdone by the ethnomethodologists, CDA’s traditionalist critics pull no punches when addressing the paradigm’s faults, especially those concerning its political bent. Tyrwhitt-Drake (1999), for example, has no qualms dismissing the CDA as “essentially flawed, based as it is on partial description and political commitment rather than on rigorous analysis and open-minded enquiry” (p. 1082). Indeed, Widdowson’s debate with Fairclough about the worth of CDA is primarily devoted to the question of bias. The first salvo is Widdowson’s publication of a pair of articles demolishing CDA in general, and Fairclough’s work in particular. First, Fairclough’s “Discourse and Social Change” is reviewed in *Applied Linguistics* (1995a) and found to be an ambitious book that not only fails to deliver a cogent analysis backed up by sound theory, but also engages in manipulation “in support of belief” (p. 516). Ironically labeling the work “an impressive display of apparent scholarship,” Widdowson faults it for the “partial” nature

---

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in his first article, Schegloff (1997) makes precisely such a troublesome allowance for analytical divination by induction: “Although in this case this orientation is made overt by the explicit mention of a category term, this is by no means necessary to establish the relevant orientation by the participants which earlier sections of this essay have argued for. Various accounts have been offered of conduct by which orientation to gender (to cite only one common preoccupation of critical discourse analysis) *can be manifested without being explicitly named or mentioned*” (p. 182, my italics). How that “manifestation” is to be read by the analyst (in the absence of such “imperialistic” apparatus as the critical theories of gender identity) is not explained.

of its data analysis. In fact, he even refuses to grant the label of “analysis” to the book due to its supposed lack of a “comprehensive theoretical model” that could sustain whatever it is that Fairclough does with his case-studies. (Widdowson settles on the negatively-connoted “interpretations” [p. 513]). The critic’s main concern, however, is that the work is “committed to a cause, gives priority to relevance and is designed to carry conviction” (p. 513).

The second blistering attack, an article originally published in *Language and Literature* and titled “Discourse Analysis: A Critical View” (2002), makes roughly the same accusations and abounds in uncompromising language. (In his rejoinder, Fairclough [1996] singles out “ideological commitment” and “prejudice”). Here, Widdowson also sketches out the difference he perceives between analysis and interpretation:

As I understand these terms, interpretation is a matter of converging on a particular meaning as having some kind of privileged validity. The point about analysis is that it seeks to reveal those factors which lead to a divergence of possible meanings, each conditionally valid. Whereas analysis recognizes its own partiality, interpretation of its nature must suspend that recognition. Analysts may of course have their preferences, and may subsequently interpret data in one particular way after analysis. Interpreters give priority to their preferences. The argument I shall pursue is that if critical discourse analysis is an exercise in interpretation, it is invalid as analysis. The name “critical discourse analysis,” in other words, is, in my view, a contradiction in terms. (pp. 133-4)

CDAs, Widdowson goes on to argue, look for ideology in texts and – surprise, surprise! – find it exactly in the place they are looking for it, as well as in the shape they are expecting it to have. In reality, what the CDAs “find,” he says, is reflections of their own political commitments having little in common with the interpretations that other people might bring to bear on the same texts.

Fairclough’s (1996) initial response mirrors, to a certain extent, the structure of Widdowson’s articles: it takes him no more than two paragraphs to dismiss his adversary

as either disingenuous in his reading of CDA texts or downright incapable of understanding what CDA is all about. The requisite protestations and professions of surprise out of the way, Fairclough directs his attention to Widdowson's charge that CDA substitutes interpretation (i.e. the squishy, fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants drawing of unfounded and indefensible conclusions) for analysis (i.e., the objective consideration of data undertaken by proper [social] scientists). First, a reworking of the definition of "analysis": "any reasonably systematic application of reasonably well-defined procedures to a reasonably well-defined body of data" (pp. 51-2). By these standards, CDA is clearly "analysis," Fairclough writes. Next, a reworking of "interpretation." In our work as students of discourse, he says, we are dealing with two levels of interpretation: the interpretation of symbolic behavior that everyone engages in for the purposes of comprehension and communication, and the interpretation of people's interpretations by social scientists. This second process, which Fairclough's prefers to call "explanation," involves the investigation of the sociocultural causes and effects of particular interpretations undertaken in particular contexts by identifiable individuals. "[I]t is true that CDA has given particular focus to explanatory connections between texts and social relations of power, and therefore to questions of ideology," writes Fairclough, and it is equally true that "this emphasis [...] reflects the political commitments of [CDA's] practitioners" (p. 50). But "this explanatory emphasis is very different from what CDA stands accused of in Widdowson's article – favouring particular interpretations [...], ignoring alternatives, and construing texts as having unique interpretations" (p. 50).

Is CDA "ideological" in the sense that it is informed by political preferences?

Yes, it is, and unapologetically so, Fairclough writes. But that doesn't mean that CDA, as

both an epistemology and a methodology, need be homogenous and single-minded.

“CDA is emphatically not a political party, and the particular nature of political commitments and strategies of intervention differ widely,” he writes (p. 52). Indeed, it is quite possible for people committed to right-of-center politics to deploy CDA against leftist texts. Then – is CDA “ideological” in the sense that its own discourse aids in the creation and maintenance of fundamentally unjust structures? It might be, insofar as any narrative, including the theories of social science, can work to the advantage of some people and some causes and the disadvantage of others. And by the way, that includes Widdowson’s own theories, Fairclough points out. First of all, Widdowson’s take on discourse presupposes a pre-linguistic subject (a charge often deployed by critical scholars against their ideological opponents). Second of all, avoiding endorsing or denouncing political positions relative to one’s analysis does not make one’s work more fair or more professional – rather, it merely naturalizes the already existing relations of domination. In Flowerdew’s (1999) apt words, “[n]eutrality itself is not the absence of a position, but one position among others, just as an absence of markers of modality in a text or stretch of text [...] does not mean that there is no attitude expressed by the speaker/writer” (p. 1097). According to Fairclough, Widdowson is working within a classical understanding of science as an entirely objective practice; little wonder then that he would have such a negative reaction to a method that not only proclaims its ideological commitments (CDAs would say “recognizes” or “admits” them), but also seems to anchor its interpretive work in them! Widdowson and Fairclough are not, of course, the first or the last pair of scholars to address each other over the science-ideology chasm. The debate between positivists and postmodernists continues to rage;

compromises have, however, been forged by many thinkers (see, for example, Stuart Hall's [2000] nuanced take on the continued usefulness of the concept of "identity" referenced in the previous chapter).

Widdowson's "Reply to Fairclough" (1996), published in the same issue of *Language and Literature* as Fairclough's own Reply, further distills the debate to one crucial question: How can CDA be a legitimate mode of scientific inquiry when the interpretation/explanation CDAs undertake is usually informed by their own reception of texts rather than by interviews with the actual text producers and the audiences who consume the text? If all the analyst has to go on is his or her own gut feelings, little wonder that we end up with only one (very clever, very seductive) interpretation of the data, despite CDA's proclaimed commitment to polysemy.

While Fairclough (1996) does not write up yet another Reply to specifically tackle this accusation, he has already addressed the question (albeit somewhat in passing) in his initial response. The book initially critiqued by Widdowson, *Discourse and Social Change*, was built on the assumption of "diversity of interpretations of texts," he writes (p. 50). He acknowledges that some CDA texts might not do justice to this heterogeneity, but that is a fault of the individual authors, rather than a structural weakness of the CDA paradigm. In and of itself, the "no alternative readings" critique is, without a doubt, a legitimate one, but Flowerdew (1999) sees in it but a convenient strawman. Responding to Tyrwhitt-Drake's (1999) evisceration of his CDA study (1997) along similar lines as Widdowson's treatment of Fairclough's book, Flowerdew argues that his critic "either fails to notice or ignores the hedging, modality and alternative interpretations" that he offers in his paper (p. 1090). The conclusions of his CDA study he says, are but

“tentative suggestions,” not “hard and fast claims” (p. 1090). Flowerdew accuses his critic of trying to judge him according to “positivistic criteria” (p. 1091). That’s a mistake, he says, because social science (including that which studies language) simply has to accept “ambiguity, imprecision, probabilistic interpretation and diversity of opinion” (p. 1091). If discourse analysis is not to fall into “dull formalism,” it must deal in “implicature, not facts,” he argues (p. 1091).

Fine, comes the traditionalists’ rejoinder, let’s say you do in fact offer several alternative interpretations, without going the imperialistic route and telling people which is the correct one. But then how is the reader supposed to decide what was actually happening in the texts under study? Flowerdew has a nuanced answer to this challenge, too. There are situations where one simply cannot find a reason to assign a higher value to one interpretation rather than to another, he says. In those situations, the writer should indeed say so in the paper, and the reader will simply have to assume the responsibility for her own value judgments. In other situations, however, some readings of the data are more *plausible* than others, and, when that happens, the writer should once again say so. And that’s where the difficult task of persuading the reader begins. The first step is transparency: “explain how the data were collected and selected and provide an adequate description of the context needed for the interpretation” (p. 1094). Then draw the readers’ attention to the fact that your take on the data is confirmed, at least in part, by the work of other researchers examining other case-studies. (Here, Flowerdew adds an identity politics twist to his argument: if one’s paper has gone through the academic peer review process, its conclusions are probably legitimate. (In other words, “my Ph.D. is as good as yours, so don’t dismiss my scholarship!”)). Finally, in a move whose whiff of

condescendence would no doubt infuriate Widdowson, Flowerdew does recommend running one's interpretations by the very people who generated the texts under study - even though, he says, this strategy might sometimes prove useless due to people's unwillingness to cooperate with a scholar who critiques them.

Despite Fairclough's and Flowerdew's highly articulate defenses of CDA's defining sense of mission and of the rigorous scholarship it brings to bear on its data, the question of bias does cast a large shadow over their work. Unless, of course, one heeds Toolan's (2002) advice to completely annihilate the problem by renouncing all vestiges of traditional scientific values altogether (i.e., especially the affection for "scientific objectivity"):

But there is an inevitable tension in such [CDA] work, work which involves a negotiation or even a compromise between critique and science, that is, between commitment and rationality. Those who deny any such tension (as Fairclough does in his *Language and Literature* [1996] reply to Widdowson) tend to assert that "partiality" at one level – the level of reaction, of political allegiances and investments – is and can be held quite separate from impartial, objective, rational argumentation in discourse analysis, which all operates at a separate level. But why or how we can trust a teller who bears such a tale, in which we are assured that the speaker's commitment is on another plane from their rational analysis? On what grounds could we be persuaded that affiliation at one level can and should be acknowledged, but that this in no way affects impartiality of description and explanation at another level? I think these claims are neither plausible nor necessary for CDA. It is far preferable to concede that you cannot analyse or write about power, hegemony and dominance without yourself potentially being implicated and compromised by the powerful and hegemonizing turns of your own discourse... (pp. 223-4)

To Stubbs' (2002) observation that CDAs should not get off the hook simply by admitting every now and then that they might be influenced (or downright guided) by special interests, Toolan would say that CDAs should not be on the hook in the first place. The "hook" - that is, the imperative to be objective - belongs to the traditional

social science that CDA was from the start meant to battle, and so its very existence should be forcefully challenged.

#### F. Methodological Standards

Some 15 years after the debates mapped out above were published, Critical Discourse Analysis is as established a methodology as Conversation Analysis is. Indeed, when Widdowson writes another CDA critique in 1998, he acknowledges as much. This time, he takes on Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1995), as well as two other seminal CDA books: Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard's (1996) edited *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* and Hodge and Kress's (1993) *Language as Ideology*. Interestingly enough, in the beginning of his article, Widdowson adopts a considerably more peaceful tone, calling CDA "linguistics with a conscience and a cause" and its mission to expose the discriminatory use of language "obviously a just and urgent one which warrants support" (p. 136). While in his earlier articles, Widdowson had been openly derisive of the influence that Fairclough's texts were beginning to exert in the world of language analysis (calling his work "a new ideological orthodoxy" [1996, p. 57] that forces others to try "keeping up with the linguistic Jones's" [2002, p. 131]), his subsequent book review concedes that CDA "has struck a chord" in the academia (p. 136). The review does mostly consist of unforgiving criticism of CDA's faulty theory of language and less-than-rigorous methodology ("a kind of *ad hoc* bricolage" [p. 137]), but the grudging respect Widdowson accords the paradigm is telling. In 1995, CDA might, indeed, have been the new kid on the block, a product of the "linguistic turn" referenced earlier in this paper, but by 1998 it was an established mode of inquiry. Now, in 2019, it



is impossible for any sociologist, anthropologist or psychologist to ignore the constructivist power of language, in the same way that even the most committed neo-liberal cannot ignore the Marxist critique of structures that breed inequality, or the most committed Marxists cannot ignore Foucault's nuanced take on the nature of "power." If CDAs were once able to get away with superficial text analysis and simplistic sociocultural theories simply because they could claim to be working on the cutting edge of language study (as Widdowson, Schegloff, Stubbs, Hammersley and Trywhitt-Drake, among others, seem to think), that is certainly not true anymore. CDA's hard-fought legitimacy has brought with it a new level of scrutiny from one's audiences and fellow scholars. As such, as I embark on my own CDA endeavor, I must give some account of my own take on the best ways to validate a work of critical analysis.

I begin by addressing the traditional sociolinguists' charge that CDAs use themselves as a measuring stick for evaluating their data and their analytic tools. While I do not exclusively rely on my own "intuitions" (*apud* Widdowson), my own experience with Romanian history textbooks and, in a larger context, with the identity-seeking process does inform every aspect of my research: the framing of my research questions, the selection of data, and the theoretical apparatus which I bring to bear on that data. In my Master's thesis (Sibii, 2007), a rhetorical ethnography which sought to identify the most salient prototypes of "Romanianess" (i.e., those "images" around which the narrative of Romanian identity is most frequently built), I have also relied rather heavily on my own sense of analytic relevance and accuracy. The rather lengthy text I quote below was a part of my justification for this rhetorical move:

[Ethnographer Clifford] Geertz (1973) believes "culture" to be an "acted document" that can be deciphered and made sense of. It should then come as

no surprise, says Geertz, that the “reading” of the cultural text is like the reading of any other manuscript, that is, fraught with “ellipses, incoherences, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries” (p. 10). By way of consequence, the student of culture can hardly expect to ever discover the “Truth of the matter.” Geertz makes that fact perfectly clear in a sentence which has drawn the ire of numerous critics and which has found its way in virtually every denunciation (as well as the subsequent defense) of “interpretive ethnography”: “Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape” (p. 20). It is with this statement that Geertz abandons the illusory search for the “Truth” in favor of a more feasible search for “truths” (i.e., assessments of situated, temporary “structures of signification”), and it is through this statement that Geertz undertakes “epistemological commitments to uncertainty, ambiguity, and messiness” (Wedeen, 2002, p. 726). Interpretive social science (ethnography included) is *self-validating*, insofar as, according to Geertz, “it is not against a body of uninterpreted data, radically thinned descriptions, that we must measure the cogency of our explications, but against the power of the scientific imagination to bring us into touch with the lives of strangers” (p. 16). [...]

Attempting to judge interpretive analyses by the same standards as one would judge a chemistry experiment (i.e., evaluating it in terms of the values of “predictability, replicability, verifiability, and law-generating capacity”) is a misguided proposition, at best, and a dangerous distraction, at worst. But that does not mean that interpretation cannot be held to certain qualitative standards. “There is no reason,” Geertz writes, “why the conceptual structure of a cultural interpretation should be any less formulable, and thus less susceptible to explicit canons of appraisal, than that of, say, a biological observation or a physical experiment – no reasons except that the terms in which such formulations can be cast are, if not wholly nonexistent, very nearly so” (p. 24). Decades after [Geertz’s] *Thick Description* was published, these formulations of explicit canons of appraisal are no longer “nonexistent.” The new rules, however, do not posit external standards (e.g., comparison with “a body of uninterpreted data, radically thinned descriptions”), but rather internal ones: argumentative cohesion, adherence to a code of ethics, fairness to one’s object of study and informants, genuine concern with one’s own biases and rhetorical moves, constant evaluation of the integrity of one’s project, etc.

The standards have not been eliminated; they have merely been modified. Instead of being judged based on its perceived ability to “mirror” a preexisting, stationary “reality,” the quality of an interpretive ethnographical text is to be measured with a more realistic yardstick: “The truth of these new texts is determined pragmatically, by their truth effects, by the critical, moral discourse they produce, by the ‘empathy they generate, the exchange of experience they enable, and the social bonds they mediate’” (Jackson, 1998, qtd. in Denzin, 1998, p. 514). [...]

An interpretive text is a conversation, rather than a monologic lecture; it is speculative rather than authoritative; engaging rather than objectively removed; explanatory rather than determining; complicating rather than simplifying. (pp. 34-7, original italics)

As my adoption of some ethnomethodological values and tools suggests, I do believe that a discourse analysis that involves the critical reading of a text should take the time to scrutinize the actual rhetorical choices made in that text, all the way down to the word level. And, wherever possible, I will seek to validate my reading of specific units of text by calling on other discursive elements provided by the immediate context (or, in Schegloff's words, the "proximate context"). However, as Wetherell (1998) points out, Schegloff's "gold standard" of "empirical demonstrability" (and replicability<sup>13</sup>) is absolutely not the only legitimate criterion for qualitative scholarship (p. 405). Argumentative cohesion (Wetherell, 1998, and Geertz, 1988), plausibility (Wetherell, 1998, and Flowerdew, 1999), fairness (Geertz, 1988), reflexivity (Geertz, 1988), transparency and intellectual honesty (Flowerdew, 1999; Geertz, 1988), "truth effects" (Jackson, 1998), sensitivity to the constitutive power of language, and the ability to "incorporate historical and contextual understandings" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 80) are all elements of a scholarly ethic that informs my work.

This being said, I believe that all CDA work needs to explicitly address, in some fashion or another, the problematic link between textual elements (e.g., words, word order) and their ideological interpretation. Stubbs' (2002) critique of CDA on this account cannot be ignored:

---

<sup>13</sup> In their overview of CDA sub-genres, Phillips & Hardy (2002) waste no time in disposing of the traditional scientific standard of repeatability: "[T]he idea that the results are 'repeatable' [...] is nonsensical when one is interested in generating and exploring multiple - and different - readings of a situation" (p. 80).

On the one hand, a text is seen as a series of traces left by the processes of production. On the other hand, these traces may be ambiguous. A commonly cited example is that an agentless passive has no self-evident ideological reading: it may be used manipulatively to conceal human agency, but it may be used because the human agent is irrelevant, or obvious to everyone from background knowledge, or already known because previously mentioned in the text, or it may simply be used to make the sentence shorter. (pp. 205-6)

Below, I will address this critique in some detail, and will then provide an example of analysis that seeks to account for Stubbs' concerns.

To Stubbs, only the first option (manipulation) betrays an ideological subtext; he seems to treat the others as “neutral” choices born of objective reasons: logic (background/previous knowledge, relevance) or observing the rules of good writing (shorter sentence). To my mind, however, each one of these alternatives is built on several assumptions that make it inescapably ideological.

The “everyone” in “obvious to everyone from background knowledge” is clearly assumed by Stubbs to be members of the same community (otherwise they wouldn't share the same “background” of signification). Indeed, as I will show in this dissertation, the authors of Romanian history textbooks often seem to assume a homogenous readership of little “Romanians”: that is, individuals who already possess most of the necessary traits of “Romanianness” (notably the Romanian language and some knowledge of the geopolitical importance of the Middle East-Europe region), but are still in need of some finishing touches (i.e., the acquisition of a sense of ethnocultural ancestry).

Likewise, the “previously mentioned in the text” alternative speaks of choices that are anything but “neutral.” Yes, an agentless sentence that follows a sentence that explicitly mentions the agent is very likely to be comprehended by the reader in the way

desired by the author (i.e., as having the same agent as the first sentence). But the repetition of the agent in a series of consecutive sentences (e.g., “Charles the Great waged wars in Germany, Italy and Spain... The battles waged in Spain against the Arabs (the Moors) by Charles... Charles became the Pope’s protector...”<sup>14</sup> [Băluțoiu & Vlad, 2012, p. 152]) can be seen as emphasizing that agent’s importance. And the naming of different agents in consecutive sentences (e.g., “Trajan established Dacia as one province. To protect it from barbarian attacks, the Romans built castros, earth mounds and defense ditches. Subsequently, the emperor Hadrian divided the province...”<sup>15</sup> [p. 108]) can signal a variety of actions which come together in some way or another, perhaps as qualitatively similar actions or as taking place during the same period of time. (In the case of the example offered above, it seems important for the authors to identify the emperors under whose rule – and, one assumes, by whose order – Dacia was administratively reorganized, while the fortification of the province is attributed generally, to the “Romans” – assumingly all Roman emperors who wielded control over it). And, as Flowerdew (1999) notes, the *absence* of a marker of modality does not indicate the lack of authorial attitude. As such, even when one is able to establish that the reason why the agent is missing from a sentence is because the author has made sufficient mention of the same agent in previous sentences, one should not give in to Stubbs’ “Nothing to see here, folks! Move along!” exhortation.

---

<sup>14</sup> “Carol cel Mare a purtat războaie în Germania, Italia și Spania, lărgind considerabil hotarele statului său. Luptele purtate în Spania împotriva arabilor (maurilor) de Carol... Carol a devenit protectorul papei de la Roma...”

<sup>15</sup> “Traian a stabilit ca Dacia să fie o singură provincie. Pentru a o apăra de atacurile barbarilor, romanii au construit caste, valuri de pământ și șanțuri de apărare. Ulterior, împăratul Hadrian a împărțit provincia în două...”

The “human agent is irrelevant” option begs the questions, “Irrelevant to whom? Irrelevant in relation to what?” The answers to these questions will land one in hot, ideological waters. To wit, the answer to the first question will speak to one’s assumptions about one’s readership, while the answer to the second question will bring one back to the issue of “background knowledge” that I addressed above.

Finally, the “to make the sentence shorter” option not only encapsulates assumptions about literacy and “good form” (e.g., modern American English speakers favor the easy comprehensibility of brief sentences over the esthetic and affective import of multi-clause sentences), but also invites that old CDA question, “Why now?” (as in, “Why deprive *this* sentence of its agent in the service of brevity?).

I exemplify the points I raised above by analyzing an agent-less block of text that opens a chapter called “The Ancient Orient” in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook (Băluțoiu & Vlad, 2012):

In the Orient, a form of social and political organization that exists to this day appeared for the first time in history: the state.

*THE NEED FOR THE APPEARANCE OF THE STATE*

The state appeared because it was necessary to coordinate people’s efforts at producing material goods and because the relationships between the social classes and categories had to be regulated. (p. 25)<sup>16</sup>

The grammatical subjects in this text are easy to determine. In the first paragraph, it is “a new form of social and political organization.” The second paragraph is not a complete sentence and does not have a grammatical subject. The third paragraph contains three sentences with three subjects: 1) the state, 2) a cataphoric “it” referencing “to coordinate

---

<sup>16</sup> “În Orient a apărut pentru prima oară în istorie o formă de organizare socială și politică existentă până în zilele noastre: statul.

NECESITATEA APARIȚIEI STATULUI

Statul a apărut deoarece era necesar să se coordoneze eforturile oamenilor pentru producerea de bunuri materiale și fiindcă trebuiau reglementate relațiile între clasele și categoriile sociale.”

people's efforts," and 3) "the relationships." It is considerably more difficult, however, to determine the *agents* who are at work in these sentences. This is, of course, where my own critical discourse analysis of the data comes in, with its ubiquitous hedges, uncertainties and ambiguities. Why did the textbook's authors choose to depict an institution which exists solely in the minds of humans (i.e., "the state") as a *thing* that "appeared" (from where? onto where?)? Human beings are mentioned only once in this text, as logical subordinates to the state (which "coordinated" their "efforts"). In Stubbs' words, there is no "self-evident ideological reading" to these lexical and syntactical choices, so let's consider his options once again.

Are the authors trying to manipulate their young readers by "conceal[ing] human agency"? If that was the case, what would be the purpose of this concealment? To my mind, one purpose might be buttressing of the idea that the state is a natural phenomenon, brought about not by humans (whose motivations are often contradictory, incomprehensible or simply unfortunate), but rather by the (unnamed) forces of Nature or History. The ethnocultural categories around which this history textbook is built (e.g., "Dacians," "Romanians," "Arabs") is closely connected to the concept of the nation-state, as the former are represented as developing within the geographical and ideological confines of the latter. To naturalize "the state," therefore, is to work toward naturalizing the ethnocultural category as well. Conversely, to discuss how human beings came to build "states" is to discuss the choices they've made, which, in turn, is to imply that *other* choices could have been made.

A CDAST who is only interested in confirming his biases by finding in the text traces of precisely those (and only those) ideologies that he has already decided are at

work there would end his analysis here. As a CDAs who prizes diversity of interpretation, however, I will consider other options. First, in the spirit of fairness, I must note that it is indeed possible to find evidence that my reading of the data presented above (i.e., manipulation through naturalization of categories) is wrong, or, at the very least, incomplete. Five pages before the “Need for the State” section, another block of text – situated at the end of the chapter on “Humanity’s Prehistory” - seems to trouble the assumption that the state is the only way to organize a community:

#### CONTEMPORARY PRIMITIVE POPULATIONS

Nowadays, in some isolated regions of the globe (Brazil, Central Africa, Indonesia, etc.), there live populations who lead a life that is similar to that of the prehistoric human. They use carved stone tools, [and] have no knowledge of agriculture and trades. Their lifestyle is studied by scholars who have derived conclusions about the life of prehistoric humans. (p. 19)<sup>17</sup>

This mention of “primitive populations” tells us that, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are groups of people who are not organized in “states.” This conspicuous (if brief) inclusion could indeed weaken the naturalization hypothesis. What we are not, however, explicitly told is how come that these populations exist at all, given that the state was supposed to have arisen as a “necessity.” Do these groups of people not need any coordination of their “efforts to produce material goods”? Do they not possess social classes that need regulating? (Or do their social classes live in such harmony that no regulating is necessary?) Interestingly enough, one of the homework questions listed at the end of the chapter asks the students to come up with their own answer: “Why do you think that

---

<sup>17</sup> “POPULAȚII PRIMITIVE CONTEMPORANE

În zilele noastre în anumite regiuni izolate ale globului (Brazilia, Africa centrală, Indonezia etc.), trăiesc populații care duc o viață asemănătoare cu cea a omului preistoric. Acestea folosesc unelte de piatră cioplită, nu cunosc agricultura și meșteșugurile. Modul lor de viață este studiat de învățați care au desprins concluzii privind viața oamenilor în preistorie.”



primitive populations have remained in existence to this day in various corners of the globe?” (p. 19).<sup>18</sup>

Once again, one could stop the analysis here and conclude that the naturalization hypothesis does not stand. Or one could continue interrogating the text in search for clues about the authors’ take on the meaning of the existence of these pre-historic-like communities. Not surprisingly, I choose to continue the combing. Thus, I note that the context in which these communities are discussed is one of “human progress.” “Pre-history” is presented as not just a temporal predecessor to Antiquity, the Middle Ages, Modernity, and Contemporaneity (all listed in a “Historical Epochs” section in the textbook’s first chapter, “Introduction to the study of history”), but also as a time when the human lifestyle was qualitatively inferior to that of subsequent epochs. For starters, the very taxonomy of eras comes to us with an explanation that “the historical epochs represent periods that are differentiated based on a series of characteristics (economic, social, cultural) which showcase the progress of human society” (pp. 8-9, original emphasis).<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the chapter on “Humanity’s Prehistory” is rife with references to “progress,” “development,” “evolution” and “revolution.” As humans made their way through prehistory, we are told, their brains became “bigger and more complex,”<sup>20</sup> they acquired the capacity for thinking, using language, and working, and their quality of life improved tremendously (p. 12). (We are also told that, during the early stages of

---

<sup>18</sup> “De ce credeți că s-au menținut până astăzi populații primitive în diverse colțuri ale globului?”

<sup>19</sup> “Epocile istorice reprezintă perioade care se deosebesc între ele printr-o serie de caracteristici (economice, sociale, culturale) ce exprimă progresul societății omenești.”

<sup>20</sup> “mai mare și mai complex”

Prehistory, “humans lived like animals, in small groups based on biological relationships [parents – children]...” [p. 17]).<sup>21</sup>

In the absence of blunt judgment calls in the text under study (e.g., “...And that is a good/bad thing”), I must rely on circumstantial evidence when I argue that words such as “progress,” “civilization” and “(re)evolution” are positively connoted in contemporary Romanian culture, while words such as “primitive,” “isolated,” “like animals” are negatively connoted. I can, of course, observe that the positively-connoted words occur in proximity to each other, that they tend to describe the same thing (i.e., modernity), and that they are usually used in opposition to the negatively connoted-words, thus satisfying, after a fashion, Schegloff’s (1997) call for internal validation of one’s interpretations. In the end, however, as the CDA proponents discussed above argue, there is no way to *know for sure* that a word is positively connoted or that a text omission is proof of ideology at work. Widdowson’s (1998) disapproval notwithstanding, I do recognize, make full use of, and admit to my own “intuitions” when making the connection between data and ideology. I have myself studied from Romanian history textbooks during my schooling in Romania, and have closely followed cultural (and curriculum) debates in that country for more than a decade. As such, I see no reason why I should not use my own experience to verify some of my interpretations of the data. Unlike Widdowson and other CDA critics, I do not believe that said interpretations can be totally objective (assuming I observed proper scientific methods when analyzing the data), since – as CDAs will never tire reminding us – meaning is always situated: it is always *someone’s* meaning, and it is thus a product, at least in part, of that someone’s particular understanding of the world around

---

<sup>21</sup> “Timp de milioane de ani, oamenii au trăit asemeni animalelor în mici grupuri constituite pe baza legăturilor biologice (părinți-copii)... ”

her. That, however, does not mean that anything goes – that every interpretation is as plausible as the next one. As Flowerdew (1999) argues, “[s]ome implicatures are more easily read than others” (p. 1091). Were I to argue that the authors of the textbook discussed above did frame the rise of the state institution as a historical inevitability because they believe that humans naturally prefer to be told what to do rather than figure it out for themselves, I would rightly be taken to task for proposing an interpretation that has no observable support in either its “proximate context” or its “distal context.”<sup>22</sup>

Since the Băluțoiu and Vlad textbook’s account of the rise of the state is wrapped in the language of “progress,” one might deduce that they see the state as being a felicitous development in human affairs. Indeed, as de Jasay (1985) notes, most theories dealing with the nature of the state are built on the assumption that it “helps [some] people in the pursuit of their good” (p. 16). The liberal democrats argue that the state was developed in order to keep the peace, safeguard the individual’s freedoms, and optimize the management of the “common good.” The Marxists argue that the state developed by the elites as a tool of class oppression. Both theories are hinted at in the Romanian textbook. (“The state appeared because it was necessary *to coordinate people’s efforts at producing material goods* and because the *relationships between the social classes and categories had to be regulated*” [Băluțoiu & Vlad, 2005, p. 25, my italics]). We are not explicitly told whether the coordination of production benefitted everybody or just some people. We are, however, told something about the nature of those class relationships the authors also mention: the very next section in the book, titled “Classes and Social Categories,” speaks of the “privileged class” of aristocracy and the “difficult situation” of

---

<sup>22</sup> Schegloff’s CA terms, as described by Wetherell (1998).

slaves who “could be sold on the market like they were objects” (p. 25).<sup>23</sup> Thus, while the state is deemed to have been “necessary,” we are offered an ambiguous take on its righteousness. Because of the rather loaded slave-as-object observation, I read the above-quoted phrases as an indictment of the type of class society in existence at the dawn of the state. What is not clear to me, however, is whether the “regulation” that the state brought with it ameliorated the “difficult situation,” worsened it, or left it unaffected. As such, I cannot tell whether, from this point of view, the state is deemed to be a *desirable* development.

De Jasay does not feel the need to choose between the two explanations of the origin of the state, as he accepts both as theoretically valid and, indeed, complementary:

“The origin of the state is conquest” and “the origin of the state is the social contract” are not two rival explanations. One deals with the origin of the state in real time, the other with logical deduction. Both can be simultaneously valid. Historical investigation may establish that, to the extent that we can learn about such things, most states trace their pedigree to the defeat of one people by another; more rarely to the ascendancy of a victorious chief and his war gang over his own people; and nearly always to migration. At the same time, widely available axioms will also help “establish” (in a different sense of the word) that rational people, in pursuit of their good, find it advantageous to subject themselves to a monarch, a state. Since these two types of explanation of the state deal in unrelated categories, it is no use trying to relate them or accord priority to one over the other. Nor is it sensible to infer that because states have come into being and flourished, it must have been rational for people who pursued their good to subject themselves to them – otherwise they would have put up more of a fight before doing so. (p. 15)

In any case, says de Jasay, it is virtually impossible to ascertain whether humans actually *prefer* to live in states, if only because, in most cases, individuals are not in a position to make an informed choice between the state and its opposite, the “state of nature”:

---

<sup>23</sup> “CLASE ȘI CATEGORII SOCIALE [...]”

Clasa privilegiată era cea a aristocrației... [...] Cea mai dificilă era situația sclavilor [...]. Pierzându-și libertatea, ei erau lipsiți de orice drept, putând fi vânduți în târguri ca niște obiecte.”

People who live in states have as a rule never experienced the state of nature and *vice versa*, and have no practical possibility of moving from the one to the other. It is often an historical anachronism and an anthropological absurdity to suppose such movement. (p. 18)<sup>24</sup>

De Jasay himself seems to endorse a more agnostic take on the origin of the state:

[T]heories that people in general (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), or the ruling class (Marx, Engels), mount the political arrangements that suit them, need be approached with much mistrust. Conversely, the view (Max Weber's) that historical outcomes are largely unintended, deserves a *préjugé favorable* as the more promising approximation to many of the relations linking state and subject (p. 20).

Seen from this perspective, the account that Băluțoiu & Vlad offer in their textbook can be said to be informed primarily by the liberal democratic perspective, with perhaps a drop of classical Marxist class struggle theory. What is utterly ignored is the theory that de Jasay seems to suggest: that the state might well be an accident of history, rather than an absolute necessity. Political scientists tend to favor the theory that the state came into being because people clamored for it, de Jasay says, because “it is intellectually comforting to find coherent reasons for believing that we actually need what we have” (p. 33). Since my project values critical thinking over “intellectual comfort,” I will predictably recommend that the authors of the textbook drop the language of necessity.

As mentioned earlier, one of the effects of such a move would be the denaturalization of

---

<sup>24</sup> Like the Romanian textbook authors, De Jasay also mentions isolated groups of “Indians” who seem to feel no need to adopt the institution of the state. But that’s not because they are “primitive,” says de Jasay; rather, they have no desire to surrender their individual freedom to an authority figure: “The American Indian people studied by [Pierre] Clastres typically live in the state of nature, a condition which has little to do with the level of technical civilization and everything to do with political power. Their chiefs can exhort but not command, and must rely on oratory, prestige and liberal hospitality to get their way. [...] There is no apparatus among them for enforcing obedience and the Indians would not dream of voluntarily contracting to obey, though they may choose to agree with the chief on a case-by-case basis.

Theirs are, according to Clastres, true affluent societies, easily capable of producing surpluses but choosing not to do so, a two-hour working day being sufficient amply to provide for what they consider adequate subsistence.” (pp. 18-9)

the state institution – a first step towards the denaturalization of the nation-state, and, eventually, of the ethnonational category itself.

But I would go a little further and challenge the very notion of the “state.” What is the “state”? According to Max Weber’s classical definition, the state is an entity that has a monopoly on the use of physical force in a society (Politics as Vocation, 1919, ¶ 3-4). If Clastres’ observations of “American Indian people” (see above footnote) are accurate and “pre-historical” people do not submit to a central authority, then Weber’s definition would indeed be useful in drawing a distinction between pre-historic, state-less people and ancient people who possessed states. If, however, his observations are invalid (say, if the “American Indian people” do submit to a leader and grant him or her a monopoly on the use of force), then the only distinction that still makes sense is that between small communities (perhaps Băluțoiu & Vlad’s prehistoric “small groups constituted on the basis of biological relationships”) and large communities (i.e., above the level of a tribe). In this situation, the state appeared during the transition from Prehistory to Antiquity largely due to labor diversification and specialization, which, in turn, were brought by the surplus in food produced by newly-invented agriculture. As mentioned above, Băluțoiu & Vlad seem to nod in the direction of both perspectives, as both the optimization of production and the regulation of human relationships are listed as driving forces behind the emergence of the state institution. In these conditions, I would recommend that the authors replace the language of necessity with language that makes it clear that a “state” is a sociolinguistic construction, not an actual “thing” that was waiting in the wings of history for humanity to “discover” its “need.”

## G. Data

My data consists of 36 contemporary history textbooks. Of these, 9 are meant for the fourth grade, 1 for the fifth grade, 3 for the sixth grade, 4 for the seventh grade, 1 for the eighth grade, 4 for the ninth grade, 4 for the tenth grade, 8 for the eleventh grade, and 2 for the twelfth grade. Their publication years range from 200 to 2016. Each textbook has, at one time or another, been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in classrooms.

Since my analysis is supposed to yield insights into how the authors of textbooks organize the available historical testimonies and historiographical work into a clean, linear, untroubled narrative meant to strengthen the student's ethnonational identity, I tend to focus, in this dissertation, on those chapters in which ethnic groups are featured prominently (rather than, say, individuals such as kings and presidents, or events such as the creation of the United Nations). More specifically, the majority of my analysis in the next two chapters will draw on two types of chapters, present in all textbooks under examination: 1) the chapter dedicated to the so-called parents of the Romanian nation, the Dacians and the Romans, and the "ethnogenesis" of the Romanian people, and 2) the (sub-)chapter dedicated to other ethnic groups' contributions to the Romanian nation (particularly the contributions of the "migratory peoples" who are nowadays seen as the ancestors of all of Romania's neighbors). Stubbs (2002), ever reliable for his ability to point out CDA's weaknesses, argues that, in much CDA work

there is very little discussion of whether it is adequate to restrict analysis to short fragments of data, how data should be sampled, and whether the sample is representative. Often data fragments are presented with no justification at all that they are representative. (p. 209)

I do not, of course, analyze all history textbooks that have been published in Romania after the 1989 Revolution. I did make a concerted effort to cover all majors publishing houses, textbooks (in some edition or another), and school grades. I am also not able to analyze the entirety – or even the majority of – the text included in these books, as that would necessitate many more hundreds of pages of analysis. My decision to focus on just two chapters in as many textbooks as I could find in bookstores was driven by the desire to drill down on those bits of text that deal most explicitly with identity categories.

I translate all textbook content from Romanian into English. That, of course, presents an unavoidable complication, best summarized by, once again, Stubbs (2002):

An additional problem of data presentation arises with some work which is done on translated texts. One view might be that presenting data only in translation is an extreme form of decontextualization, which means that readers who have no access to the original language must put up with a severe loss of information. [...] On the other hand, if analysis is in fact possible using only translated texts, then this implies that fine details of the text are, after all, not relevant to ideological analysis. Compare the problem of Whorf arguing that Hopi grammar embodies a world-view, but then explaining perfectly clearly – in English – what this world-view is. Again the conclusion seems to be that CDA is uncertain about which features of language use (words? discourse structure? repetition?) have an effect on habitual thought. (p. 210)

Stubbs is fundamentally correct in observing that doing CDA work on translated texts will always suffer from a certain degree of decontextualization. But the problem can be mitigated. At the conceptual level, most critical discourse analysts these days have adopted a “soft” version of Sapir-Whorfism, rather than a “hard” one, so the “loss of information” must not be that “severe.” Furthermore, Romanian and English are both Indo-European languages which have been greatly influenced by Latin, including at the level of vocabulary (where much of the “naming” happens), so a faithful (if at times somewhat awkward) translation from one language into the other should offer the reader



enough guarantee that the analysts is not seeing linguistic/cultural phenomena where there are none. In the interest of instant accountability, throughout my two analysis chapters, I provide all original Romanian-language textbook quotes in the footnotes.

Another potentially serious limitation of a work like the one I'm embarking on in this dissertation is the lack of triangulation of textual analysis with a reception study.

Another of CDA's most reliable critics explains:

The producers and consumers of texts are never consulted. Thus, no attempt is ever made to establish empirically what writers might have intended by their texts. Their intentions are vicariously inferred from the analysis itself, by reference to what the analyst assumes in advance to be the writer's ideological position. Nor is there any consultation with the readers for whom the texts are designed. Their understanding is assigned to them by proxy, which in effect means that the analysts use the linguistic features of the text selectively to confirm their own prejudice. (Widdowson, 1998, p. 143)

Predictably enough, various CDAs (see, for example, Flowerdew, 1999) have countered with the observation that validating one's own analysis of a text against the interpretation of other readers is not always necessary or useful. If surveyed, would the intended audience of the history textbooks (i.e., schoolchildren) give honest, thoughtful answers? Would they even be aware of the effects the textbook discourse might have on their perspective on the world, given that to work ideologically means to make one perspective seem natural, normal, logical – and thus making any alternatives to it unconceivable? Nevertheless, while this dissertation will not incorporate an audience reception segment, I do plan, in subsequent work, to add to it either with observation of classroom teaching or with interviews and surveys of the textbooks' intended audience.

As has been briefly explained in Chapters 1 and 2 and will be addressed in more detail in later chapters, I believe that the linear, unambiguous, unitary narrative that most Romanian history textbooks put forth is highly problematic for (at least) two reasons. A

story that presents “Romanian identity” as essentially finished soon after the Aurelian Retreat (with no significant contributions from the dozens of ethnic groups that passed through, or settled, in the area in the hundreds of years since) is a story that discourages the contemporary inclusion of people whose native language is not Romanian into the “nation,” and it is a story that discourages the constant peaceful negotiation that different ethnic/cultural groups must undertake in a democracy. Also, such a story provides fodder for radicals whose “Paradise Lost” version of Romania’s past inevitably coincides with their admiration for “decisive” strongmen (like the Dacian Decebalus) who are capable of leading their “nation” to the top of the world to the detriment of “rapacious” Others. What I will propose in subsequent chapters is a Critical Discourse Analysis of that narrative, as well as a subsequent complicating of that narrative (through the generous use of metatext) that would allow for, and explain, some of the ambiguities, paradoxes, reversals, and general heterogeneity that characterize the stories of “nations” and their countless constitutive individual stories.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The history of the Romanian state is short, dating from either 1859, when the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia chose the same leader for themselves and thus began a process that would end in less than a decade with the complete legislative, political and economic union of the two Romanian-speaking lands (the “Small Union”), or from 1918, when the new entity was joined by the province of Transylvania (the “Great Union”). But the issue of Romanian national identity, as Katherine Verdery (1991) points out at the beginning of *National Ideology Under Socialism*, “has a long history, stretching back to at least the mid-1700s” (p. 27). This dissertation chapter will trace the manner in which Romanian-speaking historiographers tackled the thorny issue of Romanian identity, along with its ancillary dilemmas (e.g., the Romanians’ “roots,” their “Europeanness,” their “civilizational” worth), throughout the last three centuries.

I begin with a survey of the “chroniclers,” widely quoted as Romania’s “first historians” of sorts, who had picked up on the fact that the language spoken by the

peasants and some of the aristocracy of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania sounded awfully close to Latin, and, having been familiarized with the scholarship of Catholic and Protestant medieval Europe during their studies abroad, wrote the oldest surviving manifestos of Romanian identity. Their preoccupation with the question of the Romanians' origins, and in particular with the Romanians' alleged Roman lineage, has remained the North Star of Romanian historiography to this day. I then move on from the "chroniclers" to the Transylvanian School – a collection of Romanian-speaking intellectuals in the Hungarian-dominated province of Transylvania who, in their quest to advocate for the social and political emancipation of the Romanian population in that land, abundantly employed historical discourse in their writings with an emphasis on, once again, the Romanians' noble Roman origins. This "constructivist" stage of historiography (in which, according to Mihăilescu [2015], historians undertook no less a task than nation-building) gave way, after World War I, to a "classical" stage characterized by an effort on the part of rapidly-professionalizing scholars to capture history, to use Leopold von Ranke's catchphrase, "as it truly was." Their avowed objectivity, however, never overtook their Romantic tendencies to glorify the (Romanian) ethnonation as a singularly meaningful agent of history whose self-fulfillment was, at the same time, both vulnerable and unavoidable. The post-World War II Communist takeover of the country brought with it a rather unambiguous ideology that saw historiographers as necessary servants of the state and its political leaders. After a brief period of "Marxist internationalism" in which a half-hearted attempt was made to obfuscate ethnic categories from the historical narrative, as well as a subsequent period of

relative freedom to write whatever one wanted to write, Communist historiography firmly established itself as a thoroughly nationalist endeavor.

The overthrow of the Communist regime in 1989 removed the historians' formal obligations to state ideology, but did not significantly change historical discourse. Having finished the main text of her seminal book on Romanian cultural politics just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Verdery (1991) notes in her conclusion that the nationalist intellectuals who had thrived during the "national Communist" era had been quick to join every single one of the emerging political forces, which made the long-time observer of Romanian politics rightly prophesize that it was "unlikely that the national idea will disappear from Romanian culture in the post-Ceaușescu era" (p. 318). Indeed, the history textbooks that I analyze in the next two chapters testify to the resilience of Romanian historiography's obsession with finding (and defending) an ethnocentric, self-aggrandizing definition of "Romanian identity."

#### A. The Chroniclers

"Today the word 'historian' brings to mind a history professor," writes Sarah Maza in *Thinking About History*, "but that association is comparatively recent, going back less than two centuries" (p. 119). Until the 1800s, the task of recounting historical events was undertaken almost exclusively by men who either were rich, were political or church leaders, or worked in state or church bureaucracies. The earliest historical narratives that focused on the territories of the three principalities where a majority of the population spoke Romanian (Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania) were produced by scribes or clergymen acting under the order of kings. Predictably enough, both in terms of

the views on the nature of history that prevailed during the Middle Ages and in terms of the power dynamics that yielded these narratives, the so-called “chronicles” of times past focused primarily on the lives and deeds of the “great kings” of the land, especially Stephen the Great (reigned 1457 to 1504 over Moldavia) and Michael the Brave (reigned 1593 to 1601 over Wallachia and, for a few months in 1600, also Moldavia and Transylvania). All of these early chronicles were most likely written in Slavonic, the official language of Romanian Orthodoxy for more than six centuries, but none has survived in the original.

The beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw a paradigm shift in the “historiography” of the Romanian lands along four main trajectories. Firstly, the Romanian language, spoken by the masses, began replacing Slavonic in all types of written documents, including letters, official records and chronicles, although the Cyrillic alphabet was retained and the spelling of words varied considerably from writer to writer. Secondly, the historical narratives “were no longer products of the sovereign’s court, but were drafted by boyars<sup>25</sup> for the boyars, the gentry and townspeople,” as Communist historian Vasile Maciu and his colleagues put it (Maciu et al., 1964, p. 18). Thirdly, kings and princes were no longer exclusively praised in the chronicles, and were also often joined by another historical protagonist: the state itself. And fourthly, the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century chroniclers introduced what would prove to be perhaps the most enduring trope in Romanian historiography: the so-called “Latin idea,” that is, the idea that the “Romanians” were the direct successors of the Roman colonists brought to Dacia by Emperor Trajan after the 101-102 and 105-106 “Dacian wars” that saw the incorporation of the territory into the empire.

---

<sup>25</sup> A pan-Eastern Europe term for feudal nobility.

Lucian Boia (2001) points out that, before the 1600s, the Moldavian and Wallachian chroniclers showed virtually no interest in what happened on the territories in question before the founding of the two states. Whatever scholarly connection existed between contemporary Romanians and their language on one hand, and the Romans and Latin on the other was the work of foreigners, especially individuals who were familiar with the Latin language, the history of the Roman Empire, and, crucially, the culture of the “Turkish Christians” (as the Christian Orthodox people dominated by the Ottoman Empire were often called in Western Europe). By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, Romanian historians such as Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin in Moldavia and Constantin Cantacuzino in Wallachia, as well as Moldavia’s scholar-king Dimitrie Cantemir (usually described in Romanian historiography as a *sui generis* case) began writing and circulating seminal works making the case that the Romanians of all three principalities had common roots in the Roman colonists of Dacia. This second wave of chroniclers was composed of individuals who were not only intimately connected to political power, but also possessed significant cultural capital, having been educated abroad (in Poland, Italy or Austria) alongside other rich young men for whom fluency in Latin, familiarity with the European literary and philosophical cannon, and preoccupation with ancient lineages was the norm.

The nature of these chroniclers’ arguments and the polemical style in which they were presented were in large part determined by the geopolitical environment in which they were operating:

The context of early efforts by Romanians to define their national identity was the fierce competition for empire-building among the Habsburgs, Romanovs, and Ottomans. Each empire bordered one of the three regions – Transylvania and the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia – that were eventually joined to form contemporary Romania. Their competition drove them collectively to centralize and consolidate their rule (a project that in the Habsburg case entailed attempting

religious homogenization) in hopes of prevailing over the other two empires in the southeast European buffer zone. The impetus to centralize culminated in one or another eighteenth century “enlightened absolutism.” [...]

In the fate of the Romanian lands one could see the progress of inter-imperial rivalries as the Ottomans lost Transylvania to the Habsburgs and the Principalities entered a Russian orbit (though formally under Turkish rule until 1877/1878). Yet many changes of fortune interrupted this secular trend. Despite substantial differences in their environments, Romanian elites in the three regions were challenged in similar ways and responded similarly also: they appealed to or allied themselves with stronger external powers against their tyrannical overlords. This often involved siding with one of the three contending empires against another, a strategy pursued by each region’s elite as a whole or, sometimes, by one fraction of it against another. Representations of Romanianness came to play an important part in these alliances. (Verdery, 1991, pp. 30-31)

Like the “national historians” that came after them in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the 17<sup>th</sup> century chroniclers were acutely aware of the ideological and political significance of historical narratives, and wrote their accounts with the more or less explicit aim of rallying the Great Powers of the day to the cause of the Romanians suffering under the domination of the Ottomans (including the Romanians of Transylvania until 1699). The “Roman heritage” idea was a most effective rhetorical weapon in that respect, as it was rather easily supported with linguistic arguments (though not so with historical and archaeological proof), as well as easily decoded as a claim to Western European civilization. Having arrived rather late to the game, the chroniclers of the Romanian-speaking territories wasted no time in aggressively pushing back against foreign historians who proposed alternative origin stories that did not allow for an uninterrupted Roman colonists-to-Romanians trajectory. Their writings, therefore, tend to adopt a polemical tone, with professions of outrage and withering sarcasm aimed at the Romanians’ detractors.



The chronicler who opens Romanian historiography's "official" list of historians is Grigore Ureche (c.1590-1647), a Moldavian boyar who at one time held a station equivalent to that of a contemporary minister of internal affairs.<sup>26</sup> Called "the creator of the truly national Romanian historiography" by Adolf Armbruster<sup>27</sup> (1993, p. 204), Ureche is credited with having written *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* ("The Chronicle of Moldavia") in Romanian,<sup>28</sup> a book in which he unequivocally claims a common, Roman/Latin origin for the Romanians in all three lands (without however insisting too much on this proposition, in stark contrast to his successors). As a young man, Ureche had studied in Poland, a Catholic center of learning which at the time conducted most of its scholarly activities in Latin and was thus much more connected with the contemporary European intellectual life than was his native Moldavia. There, Ureche had become familiarized with the ideas of the Renaissance humanists who had resurrected the study of classical antiquity, including Roman history. Moreover, the Polish aristocracy, whose sons Ureche went to school with, had embarked on a sustained effort to trace its noble heritage all the way to the ancient Roman Senate. As Ungheanu (2005) puts it, early on in his studies it would have dawned on Ureche that while his Polish colleagues had very little to work with in this genealogical endeavor, a speaker of Romanian hailing from a former Roman province like himself would have a considerably easier time connecting the dots.

---

<sup>26</sup> In American parlance, Secretary of Homeland Security.

<sup>27</sup> All direct quotes from Armbruster are my translation from the Romanian.

<sup>28</sup> Pecican (2008) does note that some Romanian scholars have recently cast doubt on both the paternity of the text and the fact that it was originally written in Romanian.

Upon returning to his homeland, Ureche wrote *The Chronicle*, a synthesis of various Polish, Slavonic and Latin manuscripts he had come into contact with. As mentioned, the Roman heritage of all Romanians, regardless of state, is unambiguously asserted there, but Ureche does not show any interest in a possible political merger of the three principalities based on the populations' shared kinship. As Boia (2001) points out, the concept of the "nation state" was "foreign to the spirit of the age," and thus a recognition of the linguistic bonds among the three principalities did not imply, as it did later, aspirations of unity (p. 129).

The narrative does not entirely follow the sequential model of earlier chronicles, as Ureche wishes to do more than communicate the events of the past; rather, he has a story to tell about the rise and (in his view) contemporary decadence of Moldavia (Ungheanu, 2005). According to the chroniclers, the state had reached its peak during the reign of Stephen the Great, who had managed to keep himself on the throne for almost 50 years and had at various times vanquished Ottoman, Hungarian, Polish and Tatar armies (while also losing a crucial war to the Turkish foe). However, owing to his status as a boyar writing at a time when his Polish counterparts had secured for themselves the right to effectively rule the state to the detriment of the king, Ureche tempered his appreciation for Stephen the Great's military and political qualities with pointed criticism of his cruelty and autocracy (Boia, 2001; Maciu et al., 1964; Ungheanu, 2005):

According to the same author, even the victories of the great ruler contributed in the end to the exhaustion and decline of his country. It is a historical interpretation which upholds, clearly enough, the project of a boyar oligarchy better able to run the country than a single man, but it also, I repeat, shows the application of free judgment to one of the great figures of the past.

What is striking in the modern period is the attenuation, and sometimes even renunciation, of such critical assessments with acts of power being justified through the prism of the higher interest of the nation. The prince knows what he is

doing and what he does is good for the country: this argument, explicit or implicit, gains more and more ground. Paradoxically, Grigore Ureche proves to be closer to a liberal spirit than the modern historians. (Boia, 2001, p. 196)

That “liberal spirit” of Ureche’s is also in evidence in his discussion of the Romanian language. He notes in his *Chronicle* that much of its vocabulary is derived from the Latin, but he quickly adds that the language spoken by the Romanians is, naturally, “not pure, but blended with the neighbors’ languages” (Ungheanu, 2005, p. 19).<sup>29</sup> In fact, “everything” in the Romanian lands is a blend, since many people(s) have crossed the territories over the centuries, and many have also settled there. As Boia observes above, this multiculturalism *avant la lettre* would not be in evidence in the writings of Ureche’s 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century successors.

The chronicler’s more immediate heirs, however, Miron Costin (1633-1691) in Moldavia and High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino (c.1640-1716) in Wallachia, still allowed for a measure of ambiguity, uncertainty and debate in the project of historiography. Costin, in particular, is seen in Romanian historiography as a faithful continuator of Ureche’s project, having come from a nearly identical background (nobleman, high-ranking state official, speaker of Latin, with anti-Ottoman and pro-Polish views) and having followed up on Ureche’s *Chronicle* with his own account of the history of Moldavia between 1595 to 1661. His interest in the question of origins, however, far exceeded that of Ureche’s, as he wrote no fewer than three books dealing with the common heritage of all speakers of Romanian. Two of the books were written in Polish and were meant to advertise the Romanians’ noble roots to the Polish aristocracy, and, through it, to the West, as well as to call for its help against Ottoman dominance.

---

<sup>29</sup> All direct quotes from Ungheanu are my translation from the Romanian.

In his genealogical endeavor, Costin went into considerable more detail than Ureche, and drew on a wider bibliography (Ungheanu, 2005). The story he told, however, was by now familiar: everything starts with Emperor Trajan who conquers Dacia and settles it with colonists, many of whom stay behind after the Aurelian Retreat around the year 271 A.D. With the Dacians having been practically exterminated by Trajan's troops, those Roman colonists become the first acceptable ancestors of the Romanian people. A considerable portion of Costin's writings is dedicated to refuting the theories of contemporary historians who proposed different origin stories – including, interestingly enough in light of subsequent Romanian historiography, the theory that the Romanians are the result of a Daco-Roman synthesis (Ungheanu, 2005).

Costin's work in Moldavia overlaps with that of Constantin Cantacuzino in Wallachia. Cantacuzino had been educated in Padova and Istanbul, and lived for most of his adult life at the very center of the country's intellectual and political activity. He held the position of High Steward (that is, the head of the state bureaucracy), created one of the best contemporary maps of Wallachia, contributed to a comprehensive Romanian translation of the Bible, and, of course, wrote an (unfinished) *History of Wallachia* ("Letopisețul Cantacuzinesc"), which, despite its title, sought to cover the history of the Romanians in all three lands. Cantacuzino's critical use of sources was a step up from that of Costin's, and his argumentation, particularly when engaging in the by-now traditional exercise of refuting the origin stories peddled by foreign historians (mostly Greek and Hungarian), is considerably more methodical and thorough. In terms of the origin myth, Cantacuzino's innovations consist of his partial rescue of the Dacians (who are now seen as an integral part of the Romanian "ethnogenesis") and the emphasis on

the *continuity* of the Romanian people on the territory of former Dacia/Geția (Armbruster, 1993; Pecican, 2008; Maciu et al., 1964; Ungheanu, 2005). Like Miron Costin before him, Cantacuzino was executed by the Ottomans for attempting to bring his homeland closer politically to the Western powers.

Finally, the man who closes the “golden age of medieval Romanian culture” (Armbruster, 1993, p. 229) is Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), a consummate scholar and, briefly, the leader of Moldavia (like his father and brother before him). Having spent much of his youth in Istanbul as a virtual hostage of the Ottomans, Cantemir became not only a fluent speaker of Turkish, but also an exquisite connoisseur of Ottoman history and culture. His history of the Empire (published in English, French and German after his death) would later attract the attention of Voltaire who offered it as a favorable counterexample to contemporary silly, fantasy-riddled accounts of the Turkish lands, as well as the attention of famed British historian Arnold Toynbee who called it “perhaps the first history of the Ottoman Empire written by an Ottoman subject in the western manner” (qtd. in Vaida, 1983, p. 39, original English). Cantemir also wrote philosophy and logic treatises, a novel (considered, by some, to be “Romanian literature’s first novel” [Pecican,<sup>30</sup> 2008, p. 104]) and works of theology, as well as Ottoman music that eventually entered the Turkish canon. Upon acceding to the throne of Moldavia, the prince quickly established ties with Peter the Great’s Tsarist Russia, in an attempt to weaken Ottoman control. In 1711, the Ottomans prevailed over a joint Russian-Moldavian army, and Cantemir was forced to flee to Peter the Great’s royal court, where he spent the last decade of his life as the Tsar’s confidante.

---

<sup>30</sup> All direct quotes from Pecican are my direct translation from the Romanian.

It was in Russia that Cantemir wrote his most famous contributions to Romanian historiography: a historical, ethnographic and geographic monograph of Moldavia (*Descriptio Moldaviae*, finished in 1716), and an account of the origins of all Romanians (*A Chronicle of the History of Romanian-Moldo-Vlachs*, written between 1719-1722). Both works were requested by the Berlin Academy (of which he had been elected a member in 1714), a development that Armbruster (1993) points out is a first in the Romanian territories, where historians had previously learned from foreigners about the Romanians' Latin/Roman roots, instead of the other way around.

Following in the footsteps of Miron Costin, Cantemir affirmed the essential Latinity of the Romanian language and the Roman heritage of the Romanian people, who, for the Moldavian scholar-prince, included not only the Romanian-speaking people in the three provinces, but also the Romance-speaking "Vlachs" to the south of the Danube. Throughout his writings, however, Cantemir seemed to oscillate between two apparently contradictory impulses: on one hand, he was keen to emphasize the purity of the Romanians' origins and their preeminent right to the territories in which they constituted a majority (particularly in the context of the geopolitical and identity wars that he too was involved in, like his predecessors), but on the other hand, he was also a humanist thinker writing on the cusp of Enlightenment and, as such, was an adversary of overly mythologized historical narratives.

The first impulse is evident in the short shrift he gave to the Dacians who were, he argued, exterminated by the Romans, as well as in his insistence on the purely Roman origin of the colonizers who were supposedly drawn only from the city of Rome (and the wealthy families of the capital at that). The second impulse is also in evidence, however,

in his surprisingly nuanced treatment of ethnic identity as, at least in part, an ideological construct. Thus, in his history of the Ottoman Empire (in which he most likely did not have as much of a personal stake as in his chronicles of Moldavia), he declared himself in agreement with Isocrates who said that he who has acquired the Greek education (*paideia*) can be deemed to be a true “Greek,” regardless of his actual ethnic group. The Ottoman sultan, therefore, could also be a Greek, if he was well-educated and of high moral standards. It is this “generous” attitude towards the worth of culture, Vaida (1983) argues, that allowed Cantemir to write objective, even sympathetic, works about Islam and the Ottoman Empire (p. 41).<sup>31</sup> Moreover, *Descriptio Moldaviae* is well known to this day to historically literate Romanians for its biting criticism of the Moldavian people, whom Cantemir accused of ignorance, arrogance, drunkenness and immorality. Historiography, for Cantemir, had to be an honest, transparent endeavor, and his varied sources were laid out critically, especially when making an important argument related to the origins and continuity of the Romanian-speaking population. According to Vasile Pârvan, one of Romania’s best-known historians of the modern era, the prince had all the makings of a great historian, on par with his French and Dutch contemporaries, but was never quite able to produce a truly scientific work of historiography (Zub, 1994, p. 23).

It is Cantemir’s privileging of the Romans to the detriment of the Dacians, as well as his strong rejection of origin stories that would place the Romanian “ethnogenesis” outside the borders of contemporary Romania (usually somewhere to the south of the

---

<sup>31</sup> In his book about genealogical efforts in medieval Romania, Filip-Lucian Iorga (2013) notes that the Cantemir family fashioned for itself a Tatar ancestry leading all the way to Tamerlane. However, Dimitrie Cantemir’s son, Antioch Cantemir, seemed to have no problem also claiming a Moldavian identity, as well as a Russian identity (having been a subject of Empress Anna of Russia, the half-niece of Peter the Great). This kind of “cosmopolitan openness,” Iorga writes, “will not be possible a century later, when [the question of] origins too was placed in the service of building the nation” (p. 77, my translation from the Romanian).

Danube), that made the prince-scholar an explicit major influence on the group of intellectuals who are most frequently described in Romanian historiography as the (ideological) founding fathers of the modern Romanian state: the “Transylvanian School” (end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

### B. The Transylvanian School

The Transylvanian School consisted of several Enlightenment-animated, Romanian-speaking thinkers (usually teachers, historians, philologists and theologians) who, in both their writings and their educational and political activity, pushed for the emancipation of Transylvania’s Romanian population which had suffered a law-inscribed subservient status, far below that of the principality’s three politically dominant “nations”: the Hungarians (particularly the Hungarian nobility), the Saxons (Germans), and the Szeklers. Led by Samuil Micu (1745-1806), Gheorghe Șincai (c.1753-1816), Petru Maior (c.1756-1821) and Ion Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820), the Transylvanian School represents the coming of age of Romanian nationalism, an ideology which the School sought to teach to the masses through formal education, as well as through books and newspaper articles written in a highly accessible language.

The period in which the Transylvanians were active was one of intellectual and political ferment in all three Romanian principalities. At the beginning of the century, Moldavia and Wallachia had become politically dominated by a group of Ottoman-supported Greek princes and high-level bureaucrats known as the “Phanariots” (after the Greek district in Istanbul called the Phanar), who brought with them both the trappings of modern society (e.g., administrative and legislative reform, academies of high learning



and the arts, etc.) and massive corruption (prompted in part by the princes' need to quickly pay off their Ottoman overlords). In Transylvania, increasing numbers of Romanian-speaking middle-class (and occasionally upper-class) young men acquired an education in the West and returned to the principality with a strong sense of their ethnic membership and of the injustices visited on their fellow Romanians. Their activism found a receptive audience, as Maciu et al. (1964) explain:

The intelligentsia, formed mainly during the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the tradespeople, quite numerous in some towns, the minor office workers and the gentry who had bourgeois interests – all of these sections of the population were discontented with prevailing conditions and longed for changes that would enable them to hold stronger positions in economic, social, political and cultural life. This was, in substance, their programme laid down in a written statement of 1791, known under the name of *Supplex libellus Valachorum*,<sup>32</sup> advocating equality of rights with the other nationalities for the Rumanian nation of Transylvania, which formed a majority in that country. (p. 31)

Historiography in Romania was at the time still not truly institutionalized and professionalized. If the German-speaking lands had a dozen university chairs of history by 1800, the Romanian territories had to wait until the early 1860s to get a university in Iași and one in Bucharest. Even after that, one could not expect much from the new history departments:

Until almost the end of the [19<sup>th</sup>] century, it was not the chairs of history that would promote the norms of the erudite and critical school which characterized contemporary European historiography. Unconstrained by such a discipline, historiographical romanticism had free rein (Boia, 2001, p. 52).

The learned men of the Transylvanian School therefore had little competition among the Romanian-speaking elites when it came to charting the Romanian story.<sup>33</sup> They also

---

<sup>32</sup> Latin for “Petition of the Romanians.” The *Supplex* was written by, among others, Samuil Micu and Petru Maior, and was sent to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II, ruler of Hungary (and other lands). The petition failed to earn Romanians an improvement of their status in the principality.

<sup>33</sup> Boia (2001) notes that the “more cosmopolitan products of the Phanariot period” in the other two principalities could have offered a more reasonable perspective on the crucial question of Romanian roots

operated under more urgency, given their politically subservient position in the principality. That position was increasingly being ideologically justified by various Hungarian and German scholars with historical narratives that downplayed (or dismissed entirely) the Romanian contribution to Transylvanian society across the centuries. In these conditions, the Romanian intellectuals found it necessary to hitch their scholarly and educational programs to an explicitly political agenda. In their urgent pleading for the emancipation of the Romanian population, they reached for a variety of arguments: demographics (the number of Romanians in Transylvania was superior to the number of Hungarians), economics (Romanian peasants produced a great deal of wealth in the principality), and, of course, history. Standing on the shoulders of Miron Costin and Dimitrie Cantemir, the leaders of the Transylvanian School further built up the “Latin idea,” investing it with a sophisticated critical apparatus that marshaled a larger variety of sources and genres<sup>34</sup> than ever before.

In response to the foreigners who belittled the Romanians’ degree of “civilization,” the Transylvanian School offered a story of noble origins that saw the Romanians as direct successors of Trajan’s Romans, with no input whatsoever from the Dacians. To the foreign historians who claimed that the Romanians had arrived in Transylvania only after the Hungarians and the Szeklers, they offered a story of unbroken continuity that saw the Romanians as the original – and eternal – rightful owners of the land. And to the Romanian-speaking people of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia,

---

(that is, a perspective that did not completely exclude the role of the Dacians in the Romanian “ethnogenesis”) (p. 86). Verdery (1991) also notes the existence of a small contingent of Wallachians and Moldavians who favored the Dacians (p. 33). But “[t]he Romanian national movement” of the early 1820s latched tightly onto the “Latin idea” and effectively vanquished its Romanian competition for the time being (Boia, pp. 87).

<sup>34</sup> Maciu et al. (1964) enumerate “narration, diplomacy, archaeology, philology and ethnography” (p. 36).

they offered a story of unity based on common ancestry, history and language – but not necessarily religion, as, notably, the leaders of the School were members of the Greek-Catholic (“Uniate”) Church,<sup>35</sup> not the Orthodox Church. Gheorghe Șincai’s *Chronicle of the Romanians and Other Nations* (1811), for example, is the first work in the national historiography where “Romanian history is no longer recounted separately by states or provinces (Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania), but according to strictly chronological criteria” (Boia, 2001, p. 131).

The ideas of Enlightenment, as well as the fact that they themselves were members of a minority church, clearly imbued the School’s leaders with a certain sense of tolerance and flexibility in all things religious. (Petru Maior, for example, explicitly challenged the concept of papal authority). However, the same was generally not true of their view of ethnicity. Their works argued forcefully for the purity of the Romanian *neam* (“kin”), both as a historical diagnosis (“The Romans begat the Romanians. End of story”), and as an aspirational national program (“Romanian blood shouldn’t mix with foreign blood”) (Neumann, 2013). The only notable exception is Ioan Budai-Deleanu who allowed for a more complicated narrative of “ethnogenesis” – one that did not entirely eliminate the Dacians, or the Germans, or the Slavs (Pecican, 2008; Maciu et al., 1964). Like Dimitrie Cantemir before them, the intellectuals of the Transylvanian School found it necessary to combine the openness to alterity fostered by their educational background, erudition and humanistic convictions with a rather inflexible ethnicist perspective of both the past and the future of the Romanian lands.

---

<sup>35</sup> The Uniate Church is in full communion with the rest of the Catholic Church but uses “Eastern” liturgical traditions, similar to those of the Orthodox Church. Conservative Romanian Orthodox ideologues consider the Uniate movement to be an attempt by the Hungarian Catholic Church to destroy the Orthodox Church in Transylvania.

### C. Historiography in the New Romanian State

As noted above by Verdery (1991), throughout the modern era, the Romanian elites' "representations of Romanianness" were generally a direct result of the ideological struggles that ran parallel to the military and diplomatic struggles between the three Romanian-speaking principalities and their powerful neighbors. While Transylvanian politics from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century greatly favored the emergence of a type of Romanian nationalism centered on the purity of the Romanians' Latin roots, the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century made different ideological demands on historiography. After a series of independence-seeking revolts in 1821 and 1848, the Romanian leaders of Moldavia and Wallachia were able to join the two principalities into one political entity in 1859 under Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, who was later succeeded at the head of the "Romanian United Principalities" by Prince Carol of the Prussian royal family of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

This momentous change in the political life of Romania was doubled by an equally momentous change in its high culture and education, as the Latin alphabet officially took the place of the Slavonic Cyrillic script (Verdery, 1991, p. 35). In historiography, the Latinists lost some ground, as the need to secure the respect, sympathy and help of the European Great Powers lessened once the Romanian state (*sans* Transylvania) became a reality. A "Dacianist" current began gaining prominence, modeled in significant part on the French rediscovery of their own barbarian ancestors, the Gauls. To some of the intellectual and political leaders of the young Romanian state, the Dacians represented an old, proud people who, in their brave battle against a mighty

Empire, lost their independence but not their dignity, and were thus an appropriate ancestor to have in the era of emergent, vulnerable nation-states. Dacian ancestry also preserved intact the Romanians' claim of continuity in the territory roughly located between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea, a claim that was still politically expedient given that the Romanians of Transylvania were still under Hungarian dominance and their historians were still battling alternative Hungarian and German theories about the origins of the Romanian people. Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu (1838-1907), a professor of Comparative Philology at the University of Bucharest and an amateur historian, is perhaps the most representative figure of those changing times. Boia (2001) summarizes his most consequential views, which enjoyed wide currency in the Romanian-speaking world of the era:

In his later works – the most important of which is his *Critical History of the Romanians* (1873 and 1875) – Hasdeu strove to highlight the value of the old Romanian civilization, the strength of the Romanians in the Middle Ages, and the political continuity from Dacia, through the Roman Empire, to the Romanian principalities. While he was an opponent of pure Latinism and argued for the importance of the Dacians in the Romanian synthesis, he tried to minimize the importance of the Slav element in the Romanian language and in old Romanian culture: although he was a Slavacist he was also a Bessarabian,<sup>36</sup> an opponent of Russia and a partisan of Latin solidarity. (Boia, 2001, p. 53)

Verdery (1991) calls Hasdeu “the ‘father’ of scientific folklore in Romania” and credits him with bringing “general acceptance of the Daco-Roman position on origins, widely held ever since” – a position that is, indeed, still very much present in virtually every contemporary Romanian history schoolbook (p. 36). According to Boia, though, despite

---

<sup>36</sup> Bessarabia is a region to the northeast of contemporary Romania that, for much of its modern history, was a part of the historical province of Moldavia. Between 1812 (the end of the Russo-Turkish War) and 1947 (the end of World War II), parts of the region switched hands numerous times between Moldavia/Romania and Tsarist Russia/USSR. Bessarabia is now part of the sovereign Republic of Moldova.

the widespread interest in historical narratives in Hasdeu's time, Romanian historiography still had to wait a little while longer to enter an era of genuine professionalization. He places that moment in the 1890s, when A. D. Xenopol (1847-1920), a professor of Romanian history at the University of Iași, began publishing his works on the theory of history, as well as on the general history of the Romanians.

Before he became a candidate for the position of "father of Romanian historiography," however, Xenopol was just one of the representatives of the *Junimea* ("The Youth") generation, so named after the eponymous literary society that shook up the intellectual life of the new Romanian state with a powerful critique of its attempts to build Western-style institutions in form, but not in actual content. Led by a 28-year-old Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917), the *Junimea* intellectuals delivered public lectures, administered schools, created curricula, published a large variety of literary and political material, and generally "denounced in mostly coherent fashion literary pretension, political hypocrisy, and easy social optimism" (Hiemstra, 1987, p. 42). Ideologically, the young men of *Junimea* were

exponents of a modern-style conservative doctrine, inclined not to traditionalism but to the gradual, organic evolution of Romanian society along the lines offered by the Western model. The key to their philosophical, political, and cultural conception was *evolutionism*; they did not believe in reactionary immobilism, but nor could they accept liberal voluntarism. They believed in the necessary solidity of a construction that could not be improvised. They felt no need to refer to the past, either to uphold their privileges like old-style conservatives or to radically change Romanian society by invoking fictive historical models like the liberals. They could look at the past with detachment, and this in itself was a very important change of paradigm, something quite new in the nineteenth-century Romanian context! It has remained to this day the only notable attempt in Romanian culture to detach the present from the past, to bring current problems under discussion without the obsessive need to refer to real or imagined historical precedents. (Boia, 2001, p. 54, original italics)

Firmly convinced that historiography must be objective and methodologically rigorous, per the prescriptions of the German school that dominated the era, the Junimists recruited young Romanians who had studied abroad, and looked for others who could also be sent to Germany and elsewhere to acquire the Western “spirit” (as opposed to its institutional forms alone). Xenopol was one of these individuals who, with the financial help of *Junimea*, studied in Germany, where he took courses from famed historian Leopold von Ranke. While in Berlin, Xenopol began formulating his powerful views on history and national culture, increasingly coming into conflict with Maiorescu’s disdain for imported “forms” and the overall mediocrity of all things Romanian. Upon returning to the united Romanian principalities, Xenopol continued his relationship with *Junimea* (although relations continued to be tense with the society’s founders), but also branched out on his own, establishing in 1872 his own intellectual circle where he would entertain discussions on Romanian history – a subject that the Junimists had not been very interested in (Hiemstra, 1987, p. 74). By 1878, Xenopol had freed himself of any affiliations with *Junimea*, and began publishing books of history and historiography.

In the tradition of virtually every Romanian historian mentioned in this dissertation chapter, one of Xenopol’s highest-profile works (to the extent that it is still the work that is most commonly cited in contemporary Romanian history textbooks) is a book in which he refutes the theory endorsed by Austrian historian Eduard Roesler that the Romanian *ethnos* formed to the south of the Danube and cannot therefore claim Transylvania as one of its original homelands. Another highly acclaimed book, the multi-volume *History of the Romanians from Trajan’s Dacia* reinforced the narrative according to which “the Romanians and their ancestors had been living in Transylvania

continuously since Roman times” (Hiemstra, 1987, p. 3). Hiemstra (1987) summarizes Xenopol’s historiographical legacy:

Despite the criticism of his peers and the inattention of his successors, Xenopol had provided Romanian nationalistic historiography with a greater measure of respectability, especially with the general public; he had imposed discipline on romantic nationalism, strengthening its appearance of validity to generally educated Romanians. By the time of the First World War, a strong sense of national identity had become entrenched as an intellectually respectable mentality among Romania’s literate classes. (p. 6)

Preoccupied with every aspect of historiography, Xenopol also had much to say about how history should be taught in schools, as well as how history textbooks should be conceived. The point of the science of history, according to him, was to “make us understand the current situation of each individual people and of humanity in general” (qtd. in Zub, 1995, p. 5).

#### D. The Professionals

Fairly secure in their new Romanian state, the men who dominated the intellectual scene at the turn of the century increasingly turned to autochtonism as the most politically viable ideology - that is, to an outsize emphasis on the specificity and superiority of national culture as opposed to cosmopolitanism and even to “European culture.” The tsunami of the First World War swept away much of the old European order, and the life of the young Romanian state was unavoidably and radically altered. Between 1918 and 1920, upon the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, the Kingdom of Romania acquired Transylvania, as well as the previously Russian-dominated provinces of Bessarabia and Bukovina, nearly doubling its territory. The dream of virtually every Romanian-speaking historian since the Transylvanian School onwards had been attained:



a single state for all Romanians. (One complicating factor: the new territories also included sizable minority populations of Hungarians, Germans, Jews and others<sup>37</sup>).

Culturally, too, Romania was undergoing radical changes:

Universal suffrage and the agrarian reform of 1921, which meant the almost complete dismemberment of large properties, brought about a radical change in the rules of the social and political game. Meanwhile, there had been considerable growth in literacy and in the extent of involvement in the cultural process. Western influence continued to be active, but its impact on a much expanded public opinion could not match its seductive appeal to the restricted elite of former times. In the political sphere, nationalist discourse became much more profitable than the invocation of foreign models. Politics had entered the phase of the “masses.” (Boia, 2001, p. 61)

Like elsewhere in Europe, the “masses” came increasingly under the sway of various charismatic populists, culminating with the appeal exerted by outright fascists who dreamt of a “Romania for the Romanians” with ethnic identity as the most important determinant of one’s belonging to the nation. Naturally, historiography did not escape the tight embrace of politics, and the professions of historian, journalist and politician were by and large interchangeable in interwar Romania.

By far the most influential historian of the time was Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), whose prolific activities earned him a spot in the pantheon of Romanian “founding fathers” as the “spiritual father of Romanian nationalism” (Mungiu-Pippidi, 1999, p. 54). Iorga was equally well-known for his historiographic work and his high-profile tenures as prime minister under King Charles II, as the Minister of Public Education and Worship, and as the co-founder of a nationalist party. His works of history promote the ideal of an agrarian, Christian Orthodox, ethnically homogenous Romanian nation (or “race,” as he often called it) living in the maximalist territory of “Greater Romania,” within a Europe

---

<sup>37</sup> According to Verdery (1991), ethnic minorities made up 8 percent of the population of prewar Romania, while in “Greater Romania” they made up 28 percent of the population. The Hungarians of Transylvania alone made up 8 percent of the population of the newly enlarged state.

driven to progress by the work of distinct, though neighborly, nations. “He is referred to as the ‘creator of nationalism in Romania,’” Oldson (1973) writes, “in that he took an unconscious state of mind and raised it to the level of a cultural-political doctrine” (p. 485).

While he was undoubtedly animated by strong nationalistic, ethnocentric and anti-Semitic feelings, in both his historiographical and political activities, Iorga was able to nuance his views on the role of minorities in the Romanian state. On occasion, he allowed that ethnic and religious minorities can and should be able to live alongside Romanians in Romania, and that their rights should be respected by the majority – but only “once they admitted the preeminence of the Romanians in the Romanian national state and once these minorities agreed to follow the laws determined by the government” (Oldson, 1973, p. 480). Exactly where Iorga stood in terms of the old “blood and soil” identity paradigm was, therefore, not always clear, his many writings and pronouncements constituting sources of inspiration for a wide range of Romanian ideologues, both in his time and nowadays (Boia, 2001; Mungiu-Pippidi, 1999; Neumann, 2013; Oldson, 1973). His views on the origins of the Romanian people, however, are clearer: he accepted the by-now traditional concept of a synthesis of the Dacian and Roman *ethne* while minimizing the Dacians, both in terms of their numbers and their role in creating the Romanian language and identity (Boia, 2001, pp. 93-4). Iorga was assassinated in November 1940 by members of the Iron Guard, a fascist political movement that had just come to power in Bucharest a few months before.

Despite the aforementioned blending of the professions of historian, politician and journalist, during the stormy first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Romania did have a few

historians who eschewed politics altogether. Predictably enough, the most prominent of these individuals earned himself yet another “father of” moniker: “the father of Romanian archaeology,” Vasile Pârvan (1882-1927). A former student of Iorga’s, Pârvan considerably upped the game of Romanian historiography bringing to it a rigorous, German-inspired methodology that favored meticulous examination and triangulation of historical sources. A prolific author, he published in 1926 his best-known work, *Getica: A Protohistory of Dacia*, in which he provided the most comprehensive treatise on the Romanians’ “earliest ancestors” to date. His impressive training and scholarly ability to evaluate ancient archaeological and literary sources are evident on virtually every page of *Getica*. That is not to say, however, that his work is not tributary to the nationalist Romantic ideology so dominant in his time. Indeed, many of the conclusions he derived from his study of the traces that the “Getae-Dacians” left behind (in the ground or in the literary accounts of the likes of Herodotus) can now be easily connected to what Boia (2001) calls “the national-autochtonist and even Orthodoxist ideology” of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Romania (p. 66) and Verdery (1991) simply calls “indigenism” (p. 49): the “Getae-Dacians” description as an idealized “people of peasants,” their monotheism, their moral superiority, etc. (see also Alexe, 2015). It was Pârvan’s *Getica* that, according to Boia (2001), represented the Dacians’ true coming of age:

The work of Pârvan, a historian respected for the solidity of his documentation (both literary and archaeological) and considered to be unassailable from a methodological point of view, established the Dacian factor in a position from which, practically speaking, it could not be dislodged. It was possible to go further than the conclusions of the great archaeologist, much further even, but none of the ground won for the Dacians would henceforth be given up. They now appeared as a numerous and powerful people, the forgers of a remarkable civilization, and alone among the Thracian peoples in being the founders of a state. (p. 95)

For Pârvan, like for his teacher Iorga, the ideological safeguarding of the “nation” was the “supreme goal” of historiography (qtd. in Zub, 1995, p. 6).

In the years just before and just after the beginning of World War II, the rise of the Guardists and of their fellow travelers (including intellectuals of international renown such as Mircea Eliade and Emil Cioran), followed by the Romanian participation in Germany’s invasion of the Bolshevik-led USSR, removed the training wheels from the nationalist doctrine that Iorga had pioneered. As elsewhere in Europe, the far right dominated the Romanian ideological and political scene, with politicians, journalists, college professors and clergymen saturating the public space with virulently anti-Semitic, Orthodoxist, “Romania for the Romanians” messages, almost always justified with appeals to history. The Iron Guard, for one, squarely built its fascist ethos on the Dacian foundation myth:

Ethnic purity - whether in the Latin or the Dacian version – belongs to a traditional tendency in Romanian culture, but the stronger accent put on *race* and *blood* cannot be separated from the context of 1940. At a time when the Nazis were claiming the superiority of the Germanic race, the exponents of the Romanian nationalist Right were not shy of invoking a similar model. All the more so as, between the Germanic tribes and the civilization of the Dacians, the reference to earliest times might even be to the Romanians’ advantage. (Boia, 2001, p. 100)

#### E. The Communist Period

The end of the Second World War found Romania on the losing side and an easy prey to the victorious Soviet Union whose troops went on to occupy its territory until as late as 1958. After a couple of years of tumultuous cohabitation with other political forces, the Soviet-backed Romanian Workers’ Party (which would later be renamed the Romanian Communist Party) established full control over the Romanian state, forcing

King Michael into exile and making quick work of all other political rivals. After violently resolving a series of internal struggles, the Party turned its attention in 1947 to the state's ideological apparatus. The historiography-related institutions did not, of course, escape scrutiny. The Romanian Communists did not have to reinvent the wheel – decades before, their Soviet counterparts had already shown the way to remaking a country's intellectual life in their own image (Rura, 1961). Numerous high-profile Romanian historians were deemed to be tainted by “reactionary” ideas and were imprisoned, forcibly retired, or sidelined. Works of historiography were purged from libraries and bookstores (including Iorga's and Xenopol's books). University history departments were reorganized, and their history institutes were placed under the control of the national Academy. Young or amateur historians who embraced Marxist-Leninist theories (e.g., “historical materialism”) were given prominent positions in the academia, the Ministry of Education, and in research centers (Murgescu, 2000; Matei-Popescu, 2007; *Raport Final*, 2006). It was the vice-president of the newly-reformed Academy, however, who would have the greatest impact on Romanian historiography for decades to come: Mihail Roller (1908-1958).

In 1947, Roller, a Moscow-educated, former Communist “illegalist” with scant historiographic credentials, coordinated the writing and publication of a new history textbook that was hailed as “the first Marxist synthesis of Romanian history” (Constantiniu, 2007, p. 23).<sup>38</sup> “Roller's textbook,” as it later became known, was aimed at 11<sup>th</sup> graders, and it had no fewer than 700 pages. Its narrative followed the classical Marxist teleological periodization scheme (primitive society, slave-holding system, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, Communism), and, like most other Eastern Bloc

---

<sup>38</sup> All direct quotes from Constantiniu are my translation from the Romanian.

historiographies of the time, it presented Russia/the Soviet Union as the country's preeminent benefactor throughout the centuries. This was apparent even in its treatment of the previously settled question of the "ethnogenesis" of the Romanian people where Roller's text heavily privileged the Slavic ethnic component, to the detriment of other ethnic groups (especially the Romans, now perceived as representatives of a corrupt, imperialistic "West"). The issue was not given too much importance, however, as the Communists tended to focus on other "foundation myths" than Trajan's Dacian wars: "[r]evolts and revolutions, the founding of the Communist Party, the Grivița strike and the liberating action of 23 August 1944" (Boia, 2001, p. 101).

Most importantly, though, the textbook replaced ethnicity with class struggle as the true key to human history, a shift that manifested itself in the rewriting of all armed conflicts as battles between haves and have-nots, rather than between Romanians and foreigners (Constantiniu, 2007; Papacostea, 2006). While other Eastern European historiographers had also been tempering the ethnonationalism previously pervasive in their schoolbooks in keeping with the officially internationalist character of Communist doctrine, Maciej Górny writes in *The Nation Should Come First* (2013) that nowhere else in the region "did the relapse of interwar 'internationalism' in historiography reach as far as it did in Romania of the 1950s" (p. 256), as Roller's textbook seemed to completely reject "the idea of the nation as a subject of historical research" (p. 255).

While the Roller school of historiography was explicitly devoted to the Marxist-Leninist dogma, many contemporary historians note that neither Roller's textbook, nor the subsequent Communist textbooks and treatises betray a sophisticated understanding of Marxist theory, preferring instead a form of "primitive, aggressive Marxism whose

goal was to Sovietize Romanian historiography and, through it, the nation's past"

(Constantiniu, 2007, p. 227) (see also Antohi, 1995; Murgescu, 2000; Popa, 2016).

Indeed, some writers go as far as to characterize the Marxist-Leninist concepts sprinkled throughout the Party-approved history narratives as constituting no more than a veneer underneath which the old nationalist ideas lived on. The cohabitation of Marxism and nationalism is in full evidence, once again, in the treatment afforded to Romania's "ancient history":

A common practice was to make references at the beginning or at the end of an article/book to the Marxist and Stalinist doctrine, the bulk of the text being constructed in a traditional manner; in other publications there were no references at all to the Marxist or Stalinist philosophy. Therefore, in the Romanian historiography the image of the Roman province of Dacia, in the years 1945-1960, was dominated by the traditional concept of continuity of the autochthonous population after the Roman conquest and its Romanization, the first step towards the birth of the Romanian nation. This image was altered only superficially by the second concept – the slavery and the liberation struggle of the population from the province, a product of the Soviet historiography. In fact, this concept was also "nationalized" by stating that the slave population was composed only of autochthonous Dacians. (Matei-Popescu, 2007, p. 288, original English)

The second phase of Communist historiography started in the late 1950s. In 1956, the First Secretary of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, embarked on a policy of "de-Stalinization," condemning the "abuses" committed by his predecessor, releasing political prisoners from labor camps, and easing the Party's draconian control over the arts and the media. Over the next decade, the so-called "Khrushchev thaw" also made itself felt in the Soviet Union's foreign relations, as Khrushchev announced a policy of "coexistence" with the Western powers, and allowed the Eastern Bloc satellites more control over their societies than they'd had since the end of World War II. Romania's leadership had already been chafing under the Soviets' economic and political directives, and Prime Minister Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had, for

some years, been engaged in a delicate process of putting some distance between his government and the Russians. The shift in Soviet priorities brought about by Khrushchev allowed Romania, too, to begin a timid process of societal reform.

In 1957, following a conflict with Gheorghiu-Dej, Mihael Roller lost his influence over the direction of Romanian historiography. He died the following year. The era of Soviet-friendly historiography was drawing to an end. Gheorghiu-Dej, too, died a few years later, and was followed at the top of the Romanian Communist Party by Nicolae Ceaușescu. The new regime allowed for an improved supply of consumer goods in stores, as well as for the rehabilitation of previously marginalized public figures, including authors whose works had been banned (such as Xenopol and Iorga). In 1968, Ceaușescu publicly condemned the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia, thus signaling a supposed break with the Communist behemoth – a decision that met with significant internal approval. Historians, too, were able to breathe a little easier, as the regime had not yet decided what to replace Roller's Marxist-Leninist vision with. Boia (2001) describes the period:

National values began to be rehabilitated and reintegrated in Romanian culture, while nationalist excess was not yet the order of the day. Historians were able to benefit from the same openness, which allowed them the luxury of introducing a degree of nuance and even, up to a point, diversification into their interpretations. It is significant that towards the end of this period no less than three syntheses of national history appeared, which, while not radically different, nevertheless presented certain differences of interpretation. (p. 74)

One of those syntheses, which will be analyzed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, was written by Andrei Oțetea, a Sorbonne-educated professional historian whose so-called “national” group had clashed with Mihail Roller and his faction during the 1950s.

Roller's downfall had meant Oțetea's rise to prominence. As Murgescu (2000) explains,



he was the right historian at the right time, as he possessed a combination of three credentials that was virtually unique among the historians of that era: he had leftist affinities dating back to the interwar period, had had been classically trained in the historical sciences, and his sincere preoccupation with the question of “Romanian identity” matched that of the new regime. In his *History of the Romanian People*, published in 1970, Oțetea sought to balance Marxism and nationalism while providing a historical account that would be “accessible to everyone” – a “one-volume work, with no footnotes [and] no bibliography,” akin, in many ways, to a textbook (Constantiniu, 2007, p. 324). Compared to its predecessors, Oțetea’s book treaded somewhat lightly on the major obsessions of Romanian historiography: the origins question, the purity of the Romanians, primordialism/protochronism, the Romanians’ relationship with their neighbors (particularly the Slavs), etc.

The openness that had allowed for such nuanced narratives, however, came to an end by 1971, when the regime finally made up its mind: historiography was to be pressed into the service of a profoundly nationalistic ideology. Buoyed by the popularity of his 1968 condemnation of the Soviet Union, Ceaușescu began building for himself and for Romania the image of a maverick, and unadulterated nationalism was the ideology that best fit the new mold. Verdery (1991) details the events that led to this paradigmatic shift:

In 1971, following a visit to North Korea, China, and North Vietnam, Ceaușescu’s “July theses”<sup>39</sup> inaugurated what has been called his “mini-cultural revolution,” with renewed emphasis on socialist realism and attacks on intellectuals who failed to fall into line. In addition, the 1971-1975 Five-Year Plan recentralized the economy and renewed the massive levels of investment of earlier quinquennia.

[...] By abandoning a mode of control based on material incentives and shifting to symbolic-ideological ones, the Ceaușescu leadership saved itself from the decentralization of power inherent in many technocratic reforms. Moreover, it

---

<sup>39</sup> A speech delivered by Nicolae Ceaușescu on July 6, 1971.

increased the relative weight of humanist and cultural intellectuals over technical ones. That is, because there was no reform of the Romanian political economy, engineers, economists, and enterprise managers lost some influence over the apparatus whereas historians, writers, and philosophers – the linchpins of ideological and symbolic creation – gained relative to them. This is not to say that the former were now inconsequential but only to insist that the policies Ceaușescu adopted implicitly created a privileged role for a cultural elite. From their capacity to produce persuasive images of the social world would come the symbols for his rule. (p. 107)

The third and last phase of Communist historiography had begun. It would last until (at least) December 1989 when Ceaușescu's regime was overthrown.

The main protagonist of history was, once again, the (ethno-)nation, having reclaimed its preeminent place from class struggle. The 1974 *Programme of the Romanian Communist Party for the Building of the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society and Romania's Advance Toward Communism* (that is, the ideological mission statement put forth by the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party) made a muddled attempt to explain how the country's rediscovery of nationalism fits in with Marxism:

[T]he formation of nations and of independent national states represents an objective necessity, a determining factor of the fast economic and social progress of the peoples. That is why, communists, the revolutionaries, the progressive forces have the duty to unabatedly campaign for the consolidation of the nations, of the national states standing for their free and independent development. (p. 146, original English)

and

The nation and the independent national state, on one hand, and the solidarity and cooperation between the socialist countries, proletarian internationalism, on the other hand, are two facets of socialist construction which far from excluding one another, are, on the contrary, in a close dialectical unity. (p. 149, original English)

and

Communists are in duty bound to fight both against narrow nationalism, against the policy of national isolation and against cosmopolitanism, hegemonism and chauvinism, against the negation and underrating of the role of the nation and of the national state. (p. 150, original English)

And, finally, for a confusing grand finale:

In the stage of mature Communism the gradual disappearance of the national states will be reached, some essential differences among nations will disappear, but the nation will continue to exist as a distinct entity, with its own organization, keeping its specificity. (p. 150, original English)

Towards the middle of the 1970s, the run-of-the-mill nationalism of the Ceaușescu regime increasingly took the distinctive form of protochronism, that is, an ideology that stressed Romanian exceptionalism and Romanian “firsts” (such as the invention of many literary genres that would later come of age in the West [see Verdery’s, 1991, chapter on the topic]). As Boia (2001) persuasively argues in his *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, Romanian historiography had long been obsessed with the question of origins, and was thus ideally positioned to provide the protochronists with a rich variety of “first” and “oldest” designations. Once the historians’ main task became the identification of the oldest possible roots of “Romanianess,” it didn’t take long for the Iron Age Dacians to make a comeback. The subsequent obsession with the “noble barbarians” who inhabited “Romania” since times immemorial – an obsession alternately called “Dacomania,” “Thracomania,” “Dacism” or “Dacopathy” – permeated virtually all levels of Romanian intellectual life: literature, cinema, music and, of course, history and history education. Interestingly enough, however, while Daco-centric narratives were increasingly finding their way into textbooks, professional historians such as Oțetea were not at the forefront of the Dacian movement. Rather, amateur historians such as the dictator’s brother, General Ilie Ceaușescu, and the millionaire emigré (and former sympathizer of the far-right) Iosif Constantin Drăgan sponsored the production of mountains of literature that, in defiance of basic historiographical methodology, extolled the “Daco-Getae-Thracians” going as far as crediting them with thousands of years of unchallenged dominance over much of

Europe and, on occasion, even the rest of the world. Much of that literature continues to be in circulation in Romania (see, for example, Drăgan, 2000; Ioniță, 2008; Vlăducă, 2012; also see Alexe's [2015] withering critique of the contemporary "Dacopathic" movement).

Alongside the recovery of ethnocentrism and of the Dacian element, late Communist historiography also emphasized the independence of all (proto-)Romanian political entities throughout all historical eras, and traced a genealogical straight line from the "Getae-Dacian" kings (Burebista, Decebalus) to the medieval Romanian-speaking kings (Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Vlad the Impaler) to Nicolae Ceaușescu himself, whose personality cult grew by the late 1980s to rival that of any other dictator in the world.

#### F. The Case of the Treatise of Romanian History

The project of a mammoth *History of the Romanians* was first proposed in 1955, at the Second Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, around the time of Roller's fall from grace. It soon ran into trouble, as the Party ideologues who controlled the effort at the time found the ideological imperatives of making the Communist Party the principal agent of Romania's modern history to be beyond their historiographical abilities (Papacostea, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). The project stagnated until the '60s, when the new leadership had another go at it. Four of the planned ten volumes were published between 1960 and 1964, covering the period between "prehistory" and 1878 (the year of the so-called Romanian War of Independence). Beyond that year, the historians were unable to

come to any semblance of agreement on the main coordinates of the historical narrative (Boia, 2001).

As mentioned above, the end of Romania's flirtation with openness at the beginning of the 1970s came with a determined effort on the part of the Communist regime to take full control of Romanian historiography. By 1975, the ruling elite was ready to re-start work on the treatise. Once again, ten volumes were planned out. Once again, the project failed – and this time not even one volume made it to print. According to Boia (2001), “[t]he pure, hard Dacianism of the Party and military historians came up against the more balanced position of the university historians and professional archaeologists” (pp. 81-2). According to Constantiniu (2007), however, it was personal rivalries more than anything else that doomed the endeavor.

Less than five years after the 1989 overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime, the reformed Academia Română (Romanian Academy) announced plans to re-resuscitate the *History*. According to Niculescu (2007), those plans acquired urgency after 1996, when the pro-European parties that governed the country introduced alternative high school-level history textbooks,<sup>40</sup> and the Academy, dominated by individuals whose ideological inclinations favored the opposition parties, decided it needed to fight against what it saw as overly liberal historical narratives. In 2002, amid much fanfare, an updated four-volume treatise was published, only to immediately run into controversy, as historians uninvolved with the project identified multiple inaccuracies, recycled bits of the propaganda-infused Communist narrative, and instances of plagiarism and misattribution (Papacostea, 2002a, 2002b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007).

---

<sup>40</sup> See below for more details on the famous “alternative textbooks.”

In *Archaeology and Nationalism in The History of the Romanians*, Gheorghe Alexandru Niculescu (2007) delivers a blistering critique of the manner in which the Academy's updated volumes continued to pay heed to the "imperative of nationalism" (p. 128), despite the coordinators and authors promising at various points throughout the books that the *History* will have been written "with a sense of proportions, in the spirit of unfaltering respect for the historical truth, *sine ira et studio*"<sup>41</sup> (Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Vulpe, 2001, p. xix). Niculescu notes that the Academy authors distanced themselves from the Communist-era obsession with the primacy and exceptionalism of the "Getae-Dacians," but sees in that a mere attempt to differentiate between "good" and "bad" nationalism without ever considering a true alternative to the nationalist paradigm. The next chapter in this dissertation will examine the treatise in more detail.

#### G. History Education after 1989

The overthrow of Ceaușescu's Communist regime in December 1989 brought to every aspect of Romanian society what one could describe as either freedom or chaos – or both at the same time. Like everybody else, the historians were now free to say and write whatever they pleased, as they no longer had to observe the Party's directives. A reckoning was clearly needed in the field of historiography, given its recent active contribution to the creation and maintenance of a murderous ideology. Indeed, Murgescu (2000) recounts that merely days after Ceaușescu was executed on December 25, 1989, a group of scholars calling themselves "The Romanian Committee of Free Historians" issued a call for the cleansing of Romanian historiography (understood as a denunciation of the falling regime's "national Communist" ideology) and a comprehensive reform of

---

<sup>41</sup> "Without anger and fondness" – a saying coined by Roman historian Tacitus.

historical education. However, the Committee's manifesto failed to make much of a practical impact, Murgescu notes. While certain institutions and certain individuals experienced either a rise or a loss in fortunes, the substance of the mainstream historical narrative did not change much at all:

[W]hile Roller's theories were like a foreign body to a large portion of [Romanian] society, which explains their weak impact, the nationalist historiography of the Ceaușescu era had the advantage of directly responding to expectations created by [Romanian] nationalist historiography as early as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Murgescu, 2000, p. 37)<sup>42</sup>

Much as it reviled its previous Communist leaders, Romanian society did not clamor for a genuine paradigmatic change in national ideology, and the writers of the country's official history did not feel much pressure to make a clean break with the traditional "ethnogenesis"-continuity-unity-exceptionalism narrative.

That changed in 1997, when Romanian historiography received a shock that it has arguably still not recovered from: the publication of Lucian Boia's *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (a book that I use profusely in this dissertation). A professor of history at the University of Bucharest, Boia specialized in the Romanian imaginary – that is, the manner in which Romanians have imagined themselves into existence and continue to perform symbolic labor in order to maintain their self-image. *History and Myth* devoted a chapter to each of the three traditional pillars of Romanian historiography ("Origins," "Continuity" and "Unity"), as well as a chapter each to the Romanians' historical relationship with the Other, the Romanians' ideal leader figure, and post-'89 historiography. The book was an immediate success, setting off numerous written and televised debates generally defined by vitriolic reciprocal accusations of lack of patriotism, treason, Communism, fascism and ignorance. Historian Ioan-Aurel Pop, long-

---

<sup>42</sup> All direct quotes from Murgescu are my translation from the Romanian.

time provost of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj and, since 2018, the president of the Romanian Academy, went as far as to write a 400-page<sup>43</sup> book rebuttal (2014) to Boia's *History and Myth*. He spelled out his main concerns in the foreword:

The critique of nationalism and of Communism at the level of Romanian historiography, while entirely necessary and justified, should not lead to the destruction of perennial Romanian values, to the dissemination of dismay and of uncertainty, to the endemic hate towards any home-grown product, from [written] works to individuals, from ideas to edifices, from morals to ideals. Unfortunately, this is precisely what professor Lucian Boia's works do! A mere glance at the reaction of some youth, on Facebook, in the "avantgarde" magazines (to use a euphemism), in some circles of "advanced research," is sufficient: barely out of their adolescence, not at all well-read, [these young people are] lured by the above-mentioned historian's lofty pages [which are] written flowingly, [are] attractive, easy to read, and in appearance argued logically, [and] they fall easily into ecstasy. They never consult the works of the Chroniclers, of Cantemir, of Micu, Şincai or Maior, of Bălcescu and Kogălniceanu, of Onciul or Panaitescu, of Giurescu or Oţetea, of Dragomir or Prodan, or of Iorga, especially the "nationalist" Iorga! Thus influenced, the youth reject the past entirely, disparage their predecessors, languish in the oppressive present, and show no interest whatsoever for the uncertain future. (pp. vi-vii)<sup>44</sup>

While Pop's diagnosis of gullibility, intellectual laziness and overall ignorance is, in my opinion, entirely unwarranted, he was certainly right in recognizing Boia's appeal to young people. His (numerous) books are best-sellers throughout the country, and one can by now safely identify an entire "school" of young historians whose research program is heavily influenced by Boia's myth-busting stance.

Vintilă Mihăilescu's (2015) taxonomy of Romanian historiography lists Boia's "deconstructivist" school as merely the next-to-last "wave" of Romanian historians to date: the last one is made up of young scholars whose approach to history is less driven by an attempt to build or to tear down something (e.g., a myth or an identity category) as

---

<sup>43</sup> Pop's book is considerably longer than Boia's. It follows Boia's structure to a T, and provides a rebuttal to virtually every single claim Boia makes (while generally employing more words than him in each chapter and subsection).

<sup>44</sup> All direct quotes from Pop are my translation from the Romanian.



it is by a desire to understand what life was like in the past. These new historians are empathetic, and they study things like the diseases that have plagued the Romanian peasant, the peasant family's traditional diet, the everyday life of the Roma slave, and so on. Mihai Maci (2015) agrees with Mihăilescu that a new wave of historians is quietly, but firmly leaving its imprint on Romanian historiography, and further fleshes out the profile of this group of scholars. The new historians are clearly influenced by the *Annales* School which has been shaking up the discipline of historiography since the early 1930s with its emphasis on mentalities and social history to the detriment of heroic, evential history,<sup>45</sup> but there's something else too that's noteworthy about them: they are led by women. To Maci, "the feminine sensibility towards detail and nuance" is in clear evidence in many of the post-Boia works of historiography worth reading (§ 5).

#### H. The Textbooks

The ideological battles waged by historians would perhaps be of less consequence to society if they did not affect a most crucial element of the country's ideological state apparatus: the history textbook. Indeed, the post-'89 life of the Romanian history textbook mirrors the trajectory of the post-'89 debate over historical scholarship: a somewhat brief period of confusion, followed by a few years of relative quiet, followed by a scandal in the mid-'90s, followed by a status quo characterized by unprecedented ideological heterogeneity.

In December 1989, the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education were faced with a dilemma similar to the one that had confronted their Stalinist predecessors in 1947: while

---

<sup>45</sup> For a comprehensive survey of the *Annales* School, see Burke's (2015) *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-2014*.

it was clearly necessary to do *something* about the existing history textbooks that put forward a narrative friendly to the previous regime, in the absence of new textbooks (which would take a while to write, publish and distribute), what exactly *could* be offered to the millions of schoolchildren in the way of historical education? First, students were instructed to rip out the picture of Ceaușescu that adorned the first page of all textbooks in the country.<sup>46</sup> Then, a few months later, the Education Ministry made the infelicitous decision to re-publish a textbook written by historian P.P. Panaitescu at the time of the Second World War. Boia (2001) recounts the amusing circumstances which caused that decision to backfire:

[Panaitescu's textbook] was withdrawn in the end in response to a wave of protests. Its incompatibility with recent research was the reason invoked, but the real motive was the *type of discourse*, which was quite different to that practiced by national-communist mythology. Although it was published in a period profoundly marked by patriotic spirit (the sixth edition, reproduced in 1990, dates from 1943, from the time of the war and of Antonescu), and although Panaitescu had let himself be seduced by the Legionary ideology (which could not be accused of a lack of nationalism!), the textbook is striking for its demythologizing attitude. The author situates the formation of the Romanian people on both sides of the Danube, draws attention to the Slav influence in the Middle Ages, treats Vlad Țepeș as a degenerate, does not accept that Michael the Brave had a national consciousness, insists on the nineteenth-century French influence, and so on – all the points which we do not find in the new textbooks introduced in 1992 to 1993, which show an inclination to sacrifice critical spirit with ease in favor of autochtonism and the old mythical clichés. (pp. 229-30, original italics)

With the publication of new (nationalist-lite) textbooks in 1992-1993, it looked like the field of history education was finally entering a period of stability and (semi-)consensus. But it was (fortunately) not to be: in 1995, Romania officially applied to become a member of the European Union, and a year later the E.U. Parliamentary Assembly adopted a Recommendation detailing its vision of history education:

---

<sup>46</sup> Matei-Popescu (2007) likens this episode (which, like him, I too have experienced in 1989) with a similar one from 1947, when students were instructed to rip out the photograph of King Michael from their textbooks.

14.1. [H]istorical awareness should be an essential part of the education of all young people. The teaching of history should enable pupils to acquire critical thinking skills to analyse and interpret information effectively and responsibly, to recognise the complexity of issues and to appreciate cultural diversity. Stereotypes should be identified and any other distortions based on national, racial, religious or other prejudice;

14.2. [T]he subject matter of history teaching should be very open. It should include all aspects of societies (social and cultural history as well as political). The role of women should be given proper recognition. Local and national (but not nationalist) history should be taught as well as the history of minorities. Controversial, sensitive and tragic events should be balanced by positive mutual influences. (Parliamentary Assembly, 1996)

The same year, Pârâianu (2005) recounts, the successor party to the Communists, the Social Democratic Party, lost the elections for the first time since '89, in favor of a coalition of parties that claimed interbellum (non-Communist) roots. After a series of white papers and bureaucratic battles, the stage was set for what came to be known as the “alternative textbooks scandal” of 1998. For the first time in many decades, the Education Ministry relinquished its monopoly on textbook production, asking publishing houses to create their own texts and then compete for the Ministry’s approval. More than one textbook per discipline per school grade was to be allowed, should the Ministry’s experts find that multiple textbooks fulfilled the basic requirements spelled out in the curriculum.

When the newly approved history textbooks landed on school desks around the country, they were met with a tsunami of outrage. The most contested among them was Sorin Mitu et al.’s 12<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook, which, its critics claimed, was unpatriotic, given its penchant for “de-mythologizing” and “de-essentializing” and its treatment of the Romanian nation as an “invention” (Szakács, 2007). Many saw Boia’s influence in this particular textbook, although Boia himself claims no contact whatsoever with the textbook authors in the introduction to the second edition of his *History and Myth in*

*Romanian Consciousness* (2001). Professing no intention of ever writing his own textbook, Boia also declared himself rather satisfied with the general direction in which the new textbooks were going:

The approach has now changed in at least three essential aspects. Factual ballast has been given up in favor of a synthetic treatment, problematized and open to discussion with the pupils; there is a more pronounced accent on civilization, culture, and mentalities than on events and personalities; and recent history is given an appreciably greater weighting in comparison to earlier periods. (p. 20) Since that pivotal 1999 moment, not much has changed with regards to the history textbooks available to Romanian schoolchildren (or, for that matter, with regards to the bitter disputes surrounding the historical narrative), despite several momentous geopolitical changes undertaken by Romania in the past two decades (especially its 2004 accession to NATO, and its 2007 accession to the European Union). The textbooks on the market now are by and large devoid of the gross stereotypes and obvious anachronisms that characterized their predecessors from both the interbellum and the Communist periods. Nevertheless, ethnicity is still perceived as *the* key to the history of the Romanian-speaking lands, and the us-versus-the-Other logic still pervades virtually all sections of the textbooks, from those devoted to the history of the “Getae-Dacians” and the Romans to those devoted to the fortunes of post-1989 Romania.

The next two chapters of this dissertation will examine in considerable detail parts of the narratives put forward in dozens of contemporary history textbooks, in an attempt to tease out the exact manner in which these narratives construct an ethnocentric, exclusivist (and, in my view, ultimately harmful) “Romanian identity.” Chapter 5 focuses on analyzing how history textbooks, as well as some of the historical treatises discussed above, prepare the ground for that notion of “Romanianness” by assembling an ancient homogenous “Getae-Dacian” identity category. Chapter 6 focuses on the almost universal

use in history textbooks of the metaphors of “birth,” “parents,” and “family” when describing the constitution in time of the Romanian ethnic group (i.e., the “Romanian ethnogenesis”). With these two analyses, I seek to show precisely how a xenophobic, normative concept of “Romanianness” comes to be taken for granted by Romania’s schoolchildren, as well as propose concrete changes to how the narrative of “becoming Romanian” is written in history textbooks.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **ANALYSIS I**

I began this dissertation with an account of philosopher Nae Ionescu's influential writings about "Romanianness" in the early 1930s. I traced in particular the distinction he operated between being "a Romanian, pure and simple" (that is, someone of Romanian ethnicity whose first language was Romanian and whose religion was Orthodox Christianity) and being a "good Romanian" (that is, a loyal citizen of Romania whose ethnicity was nevertheless not Romanian and whose religion was not Orthodox Christianity). Ionescu claimed to admire the latter's service to the country but argued that he had no choice but to exclude him or her from the community of true Romanians because ethnic, racial and religious identities are ordained by God, cannot be changed, and are incompatible with one another.

As detailed in the preceding chapter, such essentialist understandings of identity are by no means outliers in Romania's ideological history. The most illustrious member of the generation preceding Nae Ionescu's, Romania's "national poet" Mihai Eminescu, had also published countless journalistic articles examining the question of "Romanianness," and had come to a similar, if somewhat more charitable, conclusion: to be a "Romanian" can only mean speaking Romanian and being an ethnic Romanian.

Unlike Ionescu, he did allow for a measure of constructivism in his conceptualization of national identity, as he declared himself willing to accept individuals “of other origins” (read: individuals who were born and raised in non-Romanian speaking households) on condition that they assimilate thoroughly, “without rest” (Antohei, 1999, p. 126).

The term that Eminescu often chose to use when describing this process of assimilation into Romanianness was “Dacianization” – a reference to the label often given by Romanian historians to the population(s) living in (parts of) the territory of current-day Romania for a period lasting roughly between the Hallstattian Iron Age and the Roman conquest in the early 100s A.D. As mentioned in earlier chapters, virtually all strands of ethnocentric, essentialist worldviews in the pantheon of Romanian ideologies reach deep into the history of the territories situated between the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube and the Black Sea for various elements that can be assembled into the master narrative of an old, continuous and homogenous “Romanian identity” that is fundamentally the one laid out by Nae Ionescu in his far-right newspaper.

The replacing of the Romanian “ethno semantics” (Neumann, 2013) with a narrative that allows for the diversity of identities that have historically inhabited the “Romanian space” (and which, of course, continue to call it their home), begins with a critical analysis of the constitutive elements of that semantics. This first of two analysis chapters, then, examines exactly how a homogenous “Getae-Dacian” category is created in a series of history textbooks and history treatises whose authors were profiled in the preceding chapter. This examination will focus in equal measure on the undesirable rhetorical maneuvers undertaken by the writers in their quest to forcefully homogenize and unite the “Getae-Dacians” (such as the strategic decontextualization of key passages

from literary sources), and their more felicitous discursive choices that exhibit a measure of comfort with ambiguity and polysemy (such as the review of competing interpretations of one word or one sentence).

In the next section of this chapter I will conduct an analysis of five treatises and 17 textbooks, and will look at the manner in which Romanian historiographers disclose and evaluate (or don't) their sources – more specifically, two of the sources on which a large part of the “Getae-Dacian” historical narrative has traditionally rested on: Herodotus's *Histories* and Strabo's *Geography*. A second analysis section will focus on the manner in which the same texts choose to *name* the “Getae-Dacian” population, in many cases building the very foundation of “the fiction of a uniform population inhabiting the Romanian national territory” (Niculescu, 2007, p. 139). At the end of each of the two analysis sections, I will list a series of ten recommendations for future textbook authors aimed at creating texts that stimulate the students' critical thinking abilities and productively trouble the ethno-nationalist narrative of Romanian history.

#### A. Sources: Transparency and Evaluation

As detailed in Ch. 4, the project of writing a comprehensive narrative of the “Romanians” history long predates the creation of the modern state of Romania, as various learned men of the Romanian-speaking provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania made sporadic attempts at bringing together bits and pieces of regional history, archival documents, and linguistic and archaeological discoveries into one clean story. The emergence of the Romanian-speaking principalities, and then the sustained efforts on the part of political and cultural elites to merge those entities into a nation-state



meant that the search for a common historical narrative had to continue. That quest did not abate during the identity-churning years of Fascist and Communist dictatorship, nor did it lose much steam since the 1989 overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime. The previous chapter offered a somewhat detailed survey of the transformations undertaken by Romanian historiography for the past couple of centuries. Below, I analyze several specific works of Romanian history, each one representative of a major period in pre-1989 Romanian historiography, as well as several history textbooks. In keeping with my commitment to critical pedagogy detailed in the first two chapters of this dissertation, the main question that I ask of these texts is whether they are transparent about “the way knowledge is produced and deployed” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 10).

The way I see it, the immediate goal of critical pedagogy is to stimulate the students’ critical thinking abilities. (In the longer term, of course, the exercise of critical thinking should contribute to the creation of peaceful, just and democratic communities of informed citizens). Many contemporary educational institutions (and virtually all “liberal arts” schools) profess to be looking for ways to develop their students’ critical thinking, but exactly what the concept entails is rarely made clear. I take my own cues from one of the most-prominent definitions that do exist: the “Critical Thinking” evaluation sheet developed between 2007 and 2009 by faculty from more than 100 universities working under the aegis of the Association of American Colleges & Universities. The creators of the rubric provide a hierarchy of using “evidence” in the process of “critical thinking” that ranges from “Benchmark” (lowest level) to “Capstone” (highest level), as follows:

- 1) Benchmark: “Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.”
- 2) Milestones: “Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.”
- 3) Milestones: “Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.”
- 4) Capstone: “Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. (AAC&U, 2009)

According to this rubric, the most important element of critical thinking is the manner in which one deals with information one has received from an outside source. Does one seek to identify the entire source chain that produced that bit of information? Does one question the rhetorical situation that determined the specific shape of this or that argument or judgment call? What does one *do* with the information one has received from that outside source? Does one add or subtract anything from the original piece of information when relaying it to one’s own audience? Does one tell one’s audience where the original piece of information came from, and why the original source was deemed trustworthy? What makes an “expert” an expert? These are the questions that I ask of the Romanian history textbooks in this chapter, as my analysis here will deal primarily with how the authors present their sources of information to their readers. More specifically, while the textbook narratives rely on a large number of sources,<sup>47</sup> I will focus on the two written sources that anchor virtually every textbook’s rendition of the “Getae-Dacian” story: Herodotus’s *Histories* and Strabo’s *Geography*.

---

<sup>47</sup> In “From reliable sources: An introduction to historical methods,” Howell and Prevenier (2001) lay out the most common taxonomy of historical sources as follows: 1) written sources (narrative/literary sources, diplomatic/judicial sources, and social documents), 2) oral sources, 3) material sources (e.g., graves, dwellings, vases, jewels, coins).

## 1. Herodotus's *Histories*

As mentioned above, Romanian historiography has traditionally put much stock in the few lines in Herodotus's work that mention the Thracians and the Getae. Book V of *Histories* has this to say about the Thracians:

The population of Thrace is greater than that of any country in the world except India.<sup>48</sup> If the Thracians could be united under a single ruler in a homogenous whole, they would be the most powerful nation on earth, and no one could cope with them – that, at any rate, is my own opinion; but in point of fact such a thing is impossible – there is no way of its ever being realized, and the result is that they are weak. (Book V, pp. 311-2)

In Book 4, Herodotus describes the Getae as “the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes,”<sup>49</sup> and gives a brief account of their curious religious beliefs and customs (p. 272). The Getae make their first appearance in Herodotus's text – and, by way of consequence, in world history as we know it - in the context of an incursion that the Persian king Darius undertook around 514 B.C. against the Scythians of the Eurasian steppes:

Before he reached the Danube, the first people he subdued were the Getae, who believe that they never die. The Thracians of Salmydessus and those who live beyond Apollonia and Mesembria, known as the Scyrmiadae and Nipsaeans, surrendered without fighting; but the Getae, who are the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes, offered fierce resistance and were at once reduced to slavery. The belief of these people in their immortality takes the following form: they never really die, but every man, when he takes leave of this present life, goes to join Salmoxis, a divine being who is also called by some of them Gebeleizis. [...]

---

<sup>48</sup> As translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt in a 1954 edition. A.D. Godley's 1920 translation renders that first sentence as follows: “The Thracians are the biggest nation in the world, next to the Indians.”

<sup>49</sup> A.D. Godley's 1920 translation renders that phrase as “the bravest and most just Thracians of all.”

I myself have heard a very different account of Salmoxis from the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea. According to this, he was a man like anyone else, and lived in Samos, where he was a slave in the household of Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus. He subsequently gained his freedom, amassed a fortune, and returned to his native country of Thrace, where he found the people scraping along in great poverty and hardship, and with hardly a thought in their heads. [...] For my part I neither put entire faith in this story of Salmoxis and his underground chamber, nor wholly disbelieve it; I think, however, that Salmoxis lived long before Pythagoras' time. In any case, whether there was once a man of that name, or whether he is a local god belonging to the Getae, I have now had enough of him, and will resume my story. (Book IV, pp. 272-3)

Romanian-language scholarship on Herodotus is limited, and historians with knowledge of ancient Greek and deep familiarity with the literary techniques of the ancient bards are indeed very few. That is not to say, however, that they are inexistent. Zoe Petre, a former dean of University of Bucharest's Department of History, published in 2004 a thorough critical analysis of the ancient literary sources that address the Getae and the Dacians, including Herodotus and Strabo.

Herodotus's work, Petre reminds us by way of introduction, is but tangentially concerned with the Getae, and when he does write about them, he presents them as supporting cast to the real heroes of history: the Greek city-states of his time and their nemesis, the Persian Empire. The less than illustrious role played by the Getae in the *Histories* is obvious from both the sheer scarcity of references and the author's rather disdainful final word on Salmoxis (and his tribe in general): "I have now had enough of him, and will resume my story."<sup>50</sup> However, as will be shown below, while contemporary Romanian history textbooks almost never fail to use the *Histories*' "most manly/bravest" quote, they almost never bother to place it in context, even to the limited extent to which I have done so above. According to Petre, the Romanian historiographers' habit of plucking the Getae quotes out of the main text and making much hay of them in their

---

<sup>50</sup> A.D. Godley's 1920 translation: "let the question be dismissed."

own historical narratives is always likely to lead to the misconception that the Getae received a lot of attention from the “father of history,” perhaps because of their uncommon bravery and righteousness.

While the Getae are dealt with summarily by Herodotus, the Thracians – a category of barbarians that supposedly included the Getae – do receive a little more attention. Herodotus was writing at a time when, in the face of the serious existential threat posed by the First Persian (Achaemenid) Empire, the Greek-speaking world was acquiring, for the first time, “a distinct common identity, not so much ethnic, as political and cultural” (p. 9).<sup>51</sup> In this context, the Thracians described in the *Histories*, Petre argues, represent a “paradigm of proximal Otherness” – neither absolutely wild like the nomad war-like Scythians, nor civilized like the city-building, sea-faring Greeks. Their in-between-two-worlds nature allows them to embody various pairs of opposite qualities, such as cruel but also “most law-abiding,” brave but also deceptive and “with hardly a thought in their heads,” which Petre interprets as downright “stupid” (p. 71). This, then, is the context in which we should read the “most manly/bravest and law-abiding/just” characterization that Herodotus bestows on the Getae.

Petre further notes that the Greek historian used the term *andreiotatoi* (“most manly/bravest”) throughout his saga for other peoples or individuals who, like the Getae, had chosen to engage in an unwinnable battle with a vastly superior enemy. Whether Herodotus admired this attitude or thought it foolhardy is unclear. As for the “most just/law-abiding” element (*dikaiotatoi*) of this most famous quote, Petre again points to Herodotus’s use of the Thracians/Getae as a prototype for a certain type of barbarian who adheres to extreme kinds of behavior codes approaching asceticism. “When I state that

---

<sup>51</sup> All Petre quotes are my translation from the Romanian.

the *athanatizantes* Getae are a figure of the Greek imaginary involving the Other,” Petre concludes, “I do not claim that the constitutive elements of the Greek tradition dealing with the Getae are made up, but only that these elements must be carefully and methodically extracted from the web of arguments in which they are integrated, without being forced to say more than they actually say.”

A second observation that authors of history textbooks should pay heed to is that Herodotus’s *Histories* is not a clean narrative, but rather a mesh of genres and texts. In his chapter in Trzaskoma and Smith’s (2013) *Writing myth: Mythography in the ancient world*, R.L. Fowler cautions us that putting Herodotus’s work in context is not the easiest thing, for there’s a scarcity of information as to exactly how (or even exactly when) the “father of history” went about researching and composing his *Histories*. However, “where points of contact can be identified it is clear that Herodotos [sic] was in the thick of things, intellectually speaking,” Fowler assures us, adding that “[w]e may be sure that for almost every statement that Herodotos makes, however seeming-innocuous, there was a Greek prepared to contradict him” (p. 1). Herodotus is primarily concerned with the past wars between the Greeks and the Persians, Fowler writes, but

since the boundaries between disciplines were porous if they existed at all, he found it easy to make room for topics of many kinds – scientific, medical, philosophical, theological, political, ethnological: these could all be grist for his mill. These are labels more recent readers attach to his discussions; for Herodotos, it was all *historia*, “inquiry,” albeit organized around a stated focus. (p. 1)

For all his extensive use of tales from the heroic past passed down to him by others, Herodotus differs from his raconteur predecessors in his methodology: instead of telling his story in “fragmentary citations, or rather summaries” and “being brief, dogmatic, and lacking argument or alternative points of view,” he actually “cites sources

and weighs up alternatives” (p. 18). Moreover, he distinguishes between two categories of readers: people who can confirm his stories because they’ve been to the places he’s talking about and have seen the things he’s describing, and people who have not. His willingness to “foreground[d] the process of information gathering and dissemination” sets Herodotus apart from earlier mythographers, and provides us with an early example of a historian using plenty of metalanguage in order to gain the trust of his readers.

Fowler devotes most of his chapter to analyzing one instance in the *Histories* where Herodotus uncharacteristically chooses to ignore a controversy that he was most likely aware of, instead giving his readers a matter-of-fact, simple assertion. When Herodotus writes about the Kabeiroi, “mythological creatures associated with mystery cults especially on the island of Lemnos and in Boiotian Thebes” (p. 3), he flatly tells us that the rites surrounding them came to the Greeks from the Samothracians. That origin, however, was a matter of dispute in Herodotus’s time, as was the Kabeiroi’s real name. Herodotus might well be right in his attribution of the Kabeiroi to the Samothracians, but “the interesting thing is that he advances this identification *as if uncontested*” (p. 8, original italics). Fowler sees two potential explanations for this. One is that Herodotus “is trying to slip it by his readers” (p. 8). The other, which Fowler favors in light of Herodotus’s proven comfort with addressing meaningful controversies, is that the ancient writer simply doesn’t think that getting the gods’ name (and hence their origins) is all that important, as “in this particular context, differences of opinion were expected and acceptable: it didn’t matter what you called them” (p. 8). The Greeks knew that people call things by different names, and weren’t that concerned with pinning down the one, correct name. “The choice of this or that name (or this *and* that name) might be

determined by context and nuance,” says Fowler. “[I]f we could recapture all of those, we would be able to see how targeted deployment of the various names and associated semantic fields in writers like Euripides or Demosthenes assisted their rhetorical purposes” (p. 19). Both Herodotus’s “carelessness” with names and Fowler’s emphasis on the importance of “context and nuance” to contemporary rhetorical analysis come in handy when I call, in the later part of this chapter, for textbook authors to do their best to provide their readers with the context in which the “Getae-Dacians” were identified in these earliest of historical narratives.

Given the diversity of views and interpretations that Herodotus clearly engaged with in his *Histories*, it comes as no surprise that many of the episodes he narrates are shot through with metalanguage. In “Narrative surface and authorial voice,” Carolyn Dewald (1987) identifies over 1,000 instances where Herodotus intervenes in the story in one of four roles: “first as an onlooker, a presence who assumes no responsibility for the narrative but responds to it passively, almost as a reader would; second, as an investigator, telling about his eyewitness explorations; third, as a critic, evaluating the likelihood of some phenomenon he recounts; and fourth, as a writer, busy putting into narrative order the material before us” (p. 154).

Like Petre and Fowler, Dewald points out that Herodotus’s *Histories* were far from a clean, linear historical narrative where “one event appears to lead logically to the next,” as were, say, Thucydides’s accounts (p. 148). Instead, Herodotus’s work could best be described as “stitched together, uneven, a construction that gives every sign of having been laboriously assembled” (p. 148). That lack of seamlessness, combined with the frequent authorial interruptions, makes for a difficult reading experience. However,



Dewald believes the seemingly inchoate narrative flow is very much deliberate: Herodotus is keen on showing his readers exactly how difficult it has been for him to “tame” the *logoi* that he’s acquired from personally interviewing sources, observing events, or compiling pieces of the great Hellenic epics that predate him. “Like Menelaus on the sand of Egypt,” Dewald writes, “he struggles with a fearsome beast – and wins” (p. 147). Herodotus’s insistence on explaining to us the process by which his information was acquired, as well as his explicit evaluations of the trustworthiness of the information he’s conveying (two techniques which I, of course, strongly recommend that contemporary history textbook authors use in the interest of stimulating critical thinking in their students) are meant to “thwart any tendency we might have had to fall under the spell of the *logoi* and to treat them as straightforward and unproblematic versions of past events” (p. 167). The sources of his information, Herodotus often points out, are invested in certain versions of the past, and not others, and that naturally precludes any chance of objectivity.

The metalanguage by which Herodotus intervenes in his own narrative is very much in evidence in the Getae paragraphs. The anecdote about the Getae’s god, Salmoxis, is introduced with the authorial “I myself have heard.” Herodotus’s stated source – “the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea” - is more trustworthy than the mere hearsay of epic sagas, but less so than events observed in person. Indeed, we are soon told exactly what Herodotus thinks of the information about Salmoxis having been a slave of the famous Pythagoras: “For my part I neither put entire faith in this story of Salmoxis and his underground chamber, nor wholly disbelieve it; I think, however, that Salmoxis lived long before Pythagoras’ time.” As with the Kabeiroi’s gods,

Herodotus does not seem to think it terribly important to further explore the matter and identify the one true version of events, perhaps because of his obvious awareness of the constructed nature of all historical narratives.

As mentioned above, neither Petre, nor Fowler (nor I, for that matter) seek to claim that Herodotus's accounts are fantastic, and thus entirely unreliable. The use of the Getae quotes in a Romanian history textbook is indeed quite warranted, since they represent the first known reference to this tribe. However, simply extracting the "most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes" quote (as well as one or two others, such as the "who believe that they never die" reference) and presenting it to schoolchildren as an uncomplicated, definitive, authoritative assessment of their "ancestors" is neither warranted, nor pedagogically useful, particularly since Herodotus himself makes it a point to problematize many of the assertions he conveys to us and to remind us that, in Dewald's (1987) words, "the narrative surface is itself an artifact" (p. 150).

## 2. Strabo's *Geography*

The second most quoted source of information about the early Getae and Dacians is the Stoic philosopher Strabo, whose *Geography* yields a lot more details, anecdotes and timelines about the Romanians' premier "ancestors" than Herodotus's *History* (although one can easily argue that the Getae once again get short shrift, given the ratio between the few paragraphs that discuss them and the rest of the Stoic's tome). In Romanian historiography, Strabo tends to come into the picture with one or more of the following four quotes from the *Geography*:

Now the Greeks used to suppose that the Getae were Thracians; and the Getae lived on either side of the Ister, as did also the Mysi, these also being Thracians and identical with the people who are now called Moesi... (Book VII, 2, p. 175)

As for the Getae, then, their early history must be left untold, but that which pertains to our own times is about as follows: Boerebistas, a Getan, on setting himself in authority over the tribe, restored the people, who had been reduced to an evil plight by numerous wars, and raised them to such a height through training, sobriety, and obedience to his commands that within only a few years he had established a great empire and subordinated to the Getae most of the neighbouring peoples. [...] To help him secure the complete obedience of his tribe he had as his coadjutor Decaeneus, a wizard, a man who had not only wandered through Egypt, but also had thoroughly learned certain prognostics through which he would pretend to tell the divine will; and within a short time he was set up as god (as I said when relating the story of Zalmoxis). The following is an indication of their complete obedience: they were persuaded to cut down their vines and to live without wine. However, certain men rose up against Boerebistas and he was deposed before the Romans sent an expedition against him; and those who succeeded him divided the empire into several parts. (Book VII, 11, pp. 211-3)

But there is also another division of the country which has endured from early times, for some of the people are called Daci, whereas others are called Getae – Getae, those who incline towards the Pontus and the east, and Daci, those who incline in the opposite direction towards Germany and the sources of the Ister. [...] But though the tribe was raised to such a height by Boerebistas, it has been completely humbled by its own seditions and by the Romans; nevertheless they are capable, even to-day, of sending forth an army of forty thousand men. (Book VII, 12, p. 213)

The Marisus River flows through their country into the Danuvius, on which the Romans used to convey their equipment for war; the “Danuvius” I say, for so they used to call the upper part of the river from near its sources on to the cataracts, I mean the part which in the main flows past the country of the Daci, although they give the name “Ister” to the lower part, the part which flows past the country of the Getae. The language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae (Book VII, 13, p. 215)

Early in his “Mythography” chapter, Fowler (2013) compared Herodotus’s treatment of the Kabeiroi to Strabo’s, and found the latter to have done a considerably better job at conveying to his readers his contemporaries’ disagreements on the topic. “He begins by referring to the plethora of contradictory writings available on the subject [...].

He is able easily to show that the overlap of characteristics and confusion or disagreement about names began quite early in the tradition,” Fowler writes (pp. 4-5). Strabo first offers a thinker’s take on the gods, and then, “revealing his primary source, Strabo reports that Demetrios of Skepsis (Demetrios fr. 61 Gaede; second century BCE) empathically disagreed with this opinion” (p. 5).

Like Herodotus, Strabo was a trailblazer. His *Geography* is different from other contemporary works purporting to describe the world, primarily in its productive mixture of different genres: geography, history, ethnography, and, as L.E. Patterson points out in another chapter in the same *Mythology* book, mythography. As in Herodotus’s case, some of what Strabo wrote about was based on personal observation or, in the case of such elements as origin myths, were recounted to him by the locals he had interviewed during his travels. “Strabo often used these stories as source material to help form a picture of why a location was significant,” Patterson explains. “That is not to say that he himself necessarily believed the story to be true, but he felt that omitting it would render the narrative incomplete,” at times even going “into rationalizing mode and reconcil[ing] local tradition with the stronger evidence he had from written sources, especially Homer” (p. 204). When he thought himself to be on particularly shaky ground with a statement of fact, he found a way to make it clear to the reader that the assertion belonged to a source of his, not to him, and he couldn’t vouch for its veracity.

Interestingly, Strabo was explicitly critical of many of the myths of the populations that he wrote about. But, at the same time, he recounted plenty of them, sometimes apprehensively, sometimes unquestioningly. His treatment of Homer’s narrative, which he draws on profusely, is illustrative in this regard, as Strabo “struggles

to separate the wheat from the chaff, as far as Homer's trustworthiness is concerned" (p. 208, footnote 20) without completely discarding the bard's fantastic tales. Strabo actually explains to his readers the reason why he even bothers with these myths: 1) because people love a good story and are more likely to read something informative if it is spiced with heroic anecdotes, and 2) because some myths (though not all) are important to the local populations and should therefore be conveyed to those who want to understand the world. In the end, Patterson says, "Strabo's normal mode of operation was to separate reliable myths from untrustworthy ones" (p. 210), and his method for assessing which is which is familiar to us: triangulation, plus caveats and warnings to his readers:

To get around these difficulties, with both Homer and the other equally problematic sources, Strabo often turns to a simple criterion: what agreement can he find in his various sources? Where consensus was reached, Strabo feels confident that he has arrived at the truth, and where it is lacking he is compelled to sort out the variants and reject the less plausible, or perhaps even throw out the entire discussion [...]. He makes his almost formulaic declaration at 8.3.9 C341 as he discusses the alleged kinship of Epeans and Eleans: "the early historians say many things that are not true, because they were accustomed to falsehoods on account of the use of myths in their writings; and on this account, too, *they do not agree with one another concerning the same things*. (p. 214, Patterson's emphasis)

Zoe Petre (2004) investigates Strabo's sources, too, and offers a theory that Strabo might be basing much of his information, in particular that about the Getae and the Dacians, on the erudite, though unfortunately long lost, work of Posidonios, another philosopher of the Stoic persuasion. However, given the Strabo lived in a time when Roman legions were probing the lower bank of the Danube and were settling into the Balkan Peninsula, it's likely that historians such as himself would also have other, more contemporary sources of information about the barbarian tribes that lived beyond the outer limits of the Empire. Petre cautions us, however, that the mere fact that we find the god Zalmoxis

mentioned again in Strabo “does not mean that Strabo will have learned, in 1 century B.C., about the existence of a cult dedicated to Zalmoxis with those Getae who were his contemporaries, but rather that Strabo had read Posidonios carefully, who had, in turn, read Plato, and probably Philolaos or Herodotus, too” (p. 386).

Strabo’s highest-profile contribution to contemporary Romanian history textbooks – his ambiguous distinction between the Getae and the Dacians – will be addressed below, in my discussion of the name(s) that these “early ancestors” have received in Romanian historiography. For now, suffice it to point out that, like Herodotus, Strabo found it useful to show his sources to his readers, explicitly evaluate the sources’ reliability, and then tell the readers what he knows and what he doesn’t know - scruples that seem to have been lost on many contemporary Romanian textbook authors. Petre (2004) offers her advice on how contemporary writers can recover them:

We can formulate any number of hypotheses [with regards to the Getae’s religious rituals] as long as we don’t forget that these hypotheses do not have as a starting point the *information* picked up by Herodotus, but rather the *interpretation* that Herodotus attempts to bestow on it. If we are careful to say *Herodotus thinks that...* and not *Herodotus tells us that...*, explicitly taking responsibility for the hypotheses that we believe to be legitimate, we are then free to assemble whatever we see fit in terms of modern anthropological constructs; otherwise, we’re stretching the meaning of a text that clearly belongs to the ancient Greek anthropology of religion [tradition], as trustworthy as that was in Herodotus’s time, and not to the historical record. (p. 110)

Below, I examine whether, and to what extent, a series of pivotal Romanian historical works, as well as a series of history textbooks, pay heed to Petre’s admonition.

### 3. Not “made up,” but “processed”

Pârvan (1926) addresses the question of sources at the very beginning of his *Getica*: “Three years ago, when I began my field research on the Dacian-Getae

protohistory, there was therefore no useable book, in any language, with general scientific information on the topic” (p. 2).<sup>52</sup> Whatever information there was, Pârvan assures his readers, has been properly credited in his narrative, in photo captions and footnotes for everyone to understand, even, in his words, “the most modest and innocent rural dilettante” (p. 2).

Although the overwhelming majority of Pârvan’s information is based on archaeological evidence, Herodotus and Strabo do feature prominently in Pârvan’s account of the Getae and the Dacians. (As was the custom in his time, Pârvan quotes extensively from the ancient historians in the original Greek, without a translation.) He warns his readers that archaeological discoveries have cast doubt on some of Herodotus’s stories. Nevertheless, many of the things that the “father of history” narrates are confirmed by later writers, such as Ptolemy, and the details that he offers in *Histories* can be “of the utmost value” (p. 33).

As shown above, while Pârvan endowed Romanian historiography with a solid methodology, he was not above allowing a preferred narrative (especially the one that traces the „proto”-history of the Romanian nation) to organize the evidence, rather than the other way around. That much is evident in the specific instances in which he objects to Herodotus’s assertions that do not fit his preferred narrative about the ancient populations who lived in the territories within, or close to, the boundaries of the modern Romanian state. Thus, we are told that Herodotus “did not have any precise information” about certain areas to the south of the Carpathian arch (p. 35), or that he conveyed information that is “absolutely false” (p. 35), or that he is “right [in his assertions] only to a very small extent” (p. 40). However, Pârvan salutes Herodotus’s obvious skepticism

---

<sup>52</sup> All Pârvan quotes are my translation from the Romanian.

about the stories that he receives from certain Thracian informants when those stories tell of a wild, mostly uninhabited territory to the north of the Danube.

As far as Strabo is concerned, Pârvan notes that one of his primary sources was Ptolemy of Lagos (one of Alexander the Great's generals and, later, the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt). Ptolemy's (and, by extension, Strabo's) discussion of an island, Peuce, receives considerable attention from Pârvan as, should it be found to match an existing island somewhere in the Danube Delta, it would provide a lot of interesting information about the location of the Getae population at that time. Pârvan criticizes Ptolemy's (Strabo's) account of Peuta. The Romanian historian offers us an all-too-scarce glimpse behind the curtains of historiography when he wonders whether the name that Ptolemy supposedly used to identify the island was actually inserted into the text by someone who copied Ptolemy's manuscripts at a later date. Just like Patterson (2013) had pointed out that Strabo's *Geography* was "largely a compilation of numerous other texts" (which could account for the seemingly contradictory points of view that Strabo offers in the book) (p. 212), on this occasion, Pârvan directs our attention to the fact that the texts we have inherited from the ancient writers have gone through multiple renditions and have experienced multiple additions and deletions that might offer some rather prosaic explanations for the contradictions and ambiguities that litter these works.

As opposed to Pârvan's *Getica*, in which technical jargon abounded, Iorga's *A History of Roumania* (1970) is a simple, "clean" narrative seemingly aimed at the non-specialist, not dissimilar to a school textbook. As such, the author makes few references to his sources of information, and, when he does do it, he makes use of vague, agentless phrasing: "Research that has been made, somewhat casually, without a general plan, and



hitherto without a close study of the results obtained, gives us some idea of the character of the earliest Roumanian civilisation” (p. 11). As with Pârvan, archaeological evidence is more explicitly valued than the literary accounts of the ancient Greeks. Strabo never makes an appearance, and Herodotus is mentioned fewer than a handful of times, and then generally in the context of him simply “describing” the appearance of an ancient people such as the Scythians (p. 13) or the Agathyrsi (p. 21). One lonely reference, however, does cast some doubt on the reliability of Herodotus’ account. Clearly alluding to the ancient historian’s note that his sources on the Getae are “the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea,” Iorga writes:

It must be added that the Greek merchant seems never to have visited personally the homes of the barbarians. He awaited them in his shop in the midst of the temples and monuments of his imposing civilisation. Otherwise Herodotus would give us sounder, more precise, *and less legendary*, information about the people and their settlements. (p. 18, my italics)

The rest of his chapter on the beginning of what he calls “the Roumanian race” makes no more meaningful reference to the ancient writers.

Roller’s textbook (1947), for all its mammoth size, makes explicit reference to its literary sources only slightly more frequently than Iorga did in his *History*. “The ancient history of the population of our country is known to us in bits and pieces as referenced by the Greco-Roman historians and the sterile to be found on several inscriptions,”<sup>53</sup> Roller writes at the beginning of his chapter on the Thracians, Dacians and Romans (p. 34). Herodotus makes several appearances, when we are told that he provides us with the “oldest news” we have about the Thracian tribes (p. 25) and that he had a few things to say about the Dacians’ religious beliefs (p. 33) and military prowess (p. 34). Strabo

---

<sup>53</sup> All Roller quotes are my translation from the Romanian.

makes no appearance whatsoever in Roller's narrative, although some of the information the textbook provides about the Dacians clearly comes from the *Geography*.<sup>54</sup>

I. Nestor, who is listed as the author of the first chapter in Oțetea's book, acknowledges the need to take what the Greeks say about the "Getae-Dacians" with a grain of salt – when he writes, for example, that "[a]t this point, we should show to what extent an analysis of archeological sources strengthens or refutes Herodotus's contention that the Cimmerian chieftains had died a tragic death" (p. 38) - but most subsequent references to Herodotus and Strabo present them as reliable sources whose descriptions have indeed been confirmed by other sources, literary and archaeological.<sup>55</sup>

As befits its sheer length and its claim to be the definitive piece of scholarship to lay out the "Romanians'" early history, the Academy's 2001 treatise pays close attention to the question of sources – in some chapters more than in others. Herodotus is mentioned right away, in the Foreword, as historians Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Alexandru Vulpe tell us that the *Histories* paragraphs that describe the Getae's religious practices have yielded differing interpretations (p. xxii). That statement is placed in context in a subsequent section, dedicated to "written sources," where we are told that the ongoing scholarly debate surrounding the reliability of Herodotus's accounts is owed to the fact that we have absolutely no independent sources to confirm the information offered by

---

<sup>54</sup> Roller: "As for vine, we know that during the reign of king Burebista it was widespread, and drunkenness had sometime become a danger" (pp. 30-1), and: "An important role in Burebista's state was played by his high priest, *Deceneu*, with whose help – according to some – by rooting out the vine, the vice of drunkenness, which had spread among the Dacians, was ended" (p. 35, original italics). For Strabo's corresponding account, see above.

<sup>55</sup> For example: "From other passages in Herodotus, as well as from later records, it would appear that..." (p. 42), and: "Both Herodotus's text and archeological data prove that..." (p. 42), and: "This is definitely proven by archeology, which confirms and explains the information provided by Herodotus and Strabo..." (p. 43), and: "The passage in Thucydides' *Histories* referring to the last decades of the fifth century B.C. once again confirms Herodotus's information concerning..." (p. 47), and: "Herodotus, the Greek historian, said that..." (p. 54), and: "Dacia's historical records begin with the information transmitted by Herodotus on an important event..." (p. 55), and: "Strabo, who has given the most accurate information on..." (p. 64).

him. The treatise is one of only two works under scrutiny in this dissertation where such an obviously consequential admission is made. The author then proceeds with explaining his own, rather ambivalent, take on the issue:

But the present text does not propose to examine the countless opinions Herodotus has expressed. Although the undersigned tends to see in the herodotic information a valuable primary or secondary source, one should in now way ignore or reject *ab initio* the arguments marshalled by the so-called “denigrators” of the father of history.

Whatever [the truth], we tend to believe that the information offered by Herodotus reflects, directly or indirectly, reality. Of course, it is important for us to know whether we are dealing with personal testimonies or testimonies acquired directly from real people, or whether that information comes just from books and from stories picked up in the public squares of the Greek towns that Herodotus has visited. It’s certain, however, that nothing has been “made up,” but at most “processed” through the lense of the author’s mentality and that of the era in which he lived.

Archeological discoveries have confirmed, more than once, Herodotus’s information [...]. But his work does also have quite a few descriptions that do not correspond to reality (such as: the size of Babylon, the measurement of the Black Sea’s size etc.), which constitute solid arguments in favor of the thesis that not everything recounted in his work is based on observation or the critical examination of sources. (pp. 50-1)<sup>56</sup>

The treatise author then reminds us that, while “we will never know” how much of Herodotus’s information on the Getae is hearsay, the Greek historian was accused by his contemporaries of being a “barbarophile” because of his “impartial tendency” when offering evaluations of the “non-Greek peoples, especially the Persians,” and, as such, is generally to be believed when he writes about the Getae (p. 51). In a later chapter, Alexandru Vulpe, whom Boia (2001) praises for bringing some rigurousness to the Getae-Dacian discussion, strikes a considerably more skeptical note, pointing out repeatedly that Herodotus’s accounts, “when subjected to a critical examination, pose a series of problems” (p. 407), and that his descriptions of barbarian tribes “don’t necessarily mirror reality” (p. 401). In an echo of Petre’s (2004) methodical analysis of the

---

<sup>56</sup> All treatise quotes are my translation from the Romanian.

*Histories* narrative, Vulpe also wonders whether Herodotus is at times simply meshing together two different events for the sake of a good story. However, the frequent authorial interventions that Petre (2004) and Dewald (1987) also examined (especially Herodotus's offering of several interpretations for the same event) are here taken as tentative proof that Herodotus is "serious" about evaluating his data (p. 433). In the end, Vulpe's conclusion comes back home: Herodotus is to be generally believed "regardless of how confusing his mode of discourse might be and even if, based on [his words], one cannot form a coherent image of the Getae's religious beliefs" (p. 433).

Strabo received considerably less attention in the treatise than Herodotus, but we do get a piece of context here that we don't get anywhere else: the Stoic, "universalist" worldview to which Strabo subscribed postulated that all peoples are fundamentally similar and related, despite the obvious differences in appearance or customs (p. 52). This belief explains why the Stoic Strabo, whom the treatise authors identify as "the premier source" for 2nd century Dacia, privileged ethnography and not political history (p. 52).

#### 4. "According to the father of history..."

As mentioned in Chapter 4, given that Romania is a European country that strongly favors a centralized educational system with a unique, rigid curriculum for all disciplines, authors do not have a whole lot of flexibility when assembling their textbooks. That is true not just of the actual informational content of the units and chapters, but also of the conceptual framework organizing that content. Thus, virtually all of the 17 history textbooks examined below follow the same model of presentation, with the following elements:

\* Each chapter has a main header, several distinct sections with sub-headers, several sidebars of all sizes, some variation of an “Exercise” section, and various graphic elements (photos, drawings, charts or maps).

\* The main chapter text is comprised of relatively short, declarative sentences,<sup>57</sup> usually devoid of any source attribution or metadiscursive elements such as validity markers. For example, in Oane & Ochescu’s (2006) fourth grade textbook, the introduction to the “Dacians – our ancestors” chapter reads as follows:

The Dacians were a people who lived on our country’s current territory. They are our oldest direct ancestors. They were freedom-loving, and they fought fierce wars with the Romans. From the blending of the Dacians with the Romans, a new people was born, the Romanian people. (p. 20)<sup>58</sup>

\* The sidebars, on the other hand, often contain direct quotes from writers such as Herodotus or Strabo, or unattributed additional information about some aspect touched on in the main text. It is in these sidebars that we tend to get some revelatory metadiscourse that helps put historical information in its communicative context. For example, in the ninth grade textbook coordinated by Zoe Petre (2008a) (the same historian quoted above on Herodotus’s authorship), in a sidebar titled “History, [presented] differently,” we are told that

[a]rcheological research confirms the remarkable development of the Getae civilization. The first Getae king whose name we are familiar with is Dromichaetes, who, at the end of the fourth century B.C., vanquished the Macedonian king Lysimachus in war. Diodorus of Sicily tells the story of...” (p. 12)<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Such declarative sentences contribute to the creation of an “objective” narrative that presents “facts” “as they really happened,” without the need for sourcing or any qualifiers.

<sup>58</sup> “Dacii au fost un popor care a locuit în teritoriul actual al țării noastre. Ei sunt strămoșii noștri direcți cei mai îndepărtați. Au fost iubitori de libertate și au luptat în războaie aprige cu romanii. Din amestecul dacilor cu romanii s-a născut un popor nou, poporul român.”

<sup>59</sup> “Cercetările arheologice confirmă dezvoltarea remarcabilă a civilizației getice. Primul rege get al cărui nume îl cunoaștem este Dromihete, cel care, la sfârșitul secolului al IV-lea î.Hr., l-a învins în război pe regele macedonean Lisimah. Diodor din Sicilia povestește că...”

\* Finally, the exercises that conclude most chapters will generally test the students' reading comprehension and, in considerably fewer cases, ability to think critically.

*What do they say about historiography and sources?* Before I examine the chapters devoted to the Thracians and the Getae, it is worth observing that many of the textbooks under scrutiny set aside some text (ranging in length from a few sentences to a few pages) to describe the way historiography works in terms of its methodology. To their merit, some textbooks even delve into the question of assessing historical sources. Petre's (2008b) fourth grade textbooks is a good example in this regard:

The sources are researched by historians, who carefully examine each source in order to see what can be learned from it. These experts try to obtain as much information [as possible] from the historical sources. That is why they must learn who created that source [of information], as well as when and to what purpose. Also, historians seek more sources related to the same one event and check one source against another. (p. 5)<sup>60</sup>

Manea, Stamatescu and Teodorescu (2004), who write for a tenth grade audience, offer an end-of-chapter "Didactical model" section whose stated purpose is to teach students how to read a "historical text." The first stage of that process is the "identification of the author," a stage that includes the following (remarkably critical) four steps:

- the author of the text that we are reading is expressing his own point of view or that of a group of persons;
- the author occupies a certain position within a socio-economic, political, military, etc. system;
- the author has a worldview and a value system as a result of the education that he has received and his social and intellectual status;
- in relation to the events that he is narrating, as well as in relation to the era in which these [events] take place, an author is neutral or he supports or challenges the unfolding of [these] events. (p. 24)<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> "Izvoarele sunt cercetate de istorici, care studiază cu atenție fiecare sursă pentru a vedea ce se poate învăța din ea. Acești specialiști se străduiesc să obțină cât mai multe informații din sursele istorice. De aceea, ei trebuie să afle cine, când și cu ce scop a realizat acea sursă. De asemenea, istoricii caută mai multe dovezi referitoare la același eveniment și verifică o sursă prin intermediul alteia."

<sup>61</sup> "Identificarea autorului:

- autorul textului pe care îl citim exprimă punctul său de vedere sau al unui grup de persoane;

A similarly critical section can also be found in Oane and Ochescu's (2013) eighth grade textbook which includes a section suggestively titled "The construction of the image of the past"<sup>62</sup> where we are offered explanations on historical sources (complete with a chart distinguishing between two dozen types of sources [pp. 12-3]), historiography (in general, as well as in the Romanian context), and the division of historical time into the customary five eras (prehistory, Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the modern era, contemporaneity). An end-of-chapter exercise prompt asks the students to put together a "mini-expo of historical sources" and to "organize a debate regarding their place and role in the writing of history" (p. 13).<sup>63</sup>

*Which direct quotes?* As mentioned above, Romanian historiography in general and Romanian history textbooks in particular get a lot of mileage out of just a handful of quotes in Herodotus's *Histories* and Strabo's *Geography* that touch on the lives of the Thracians and the Getae. Of the 17 textbooks under study, nine use some variation of Herodotus's "most manly and law-abiding" direct quote, four use his "the population of Thrace is larger than that of any country" direct quote, five quote Strabo's words on King Burebista, and five quote him saying that "the language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae." Almost every textbook paraphrases Herodotus and Strabo at least once in their chapters on the "Getae-Dacians."

- 
- autorul ocupă o funcție într-un sistem socio-economic, politic, militar, etc.;
  - autorul are o concepție despre viață și un sistem de valori rezultat al educației pe care a primit-o și al statutului său social și intelectual;
  - în raport cu faptele pe care le relatează, cât și cu epoca în care acestea se petrec, un autor este neutru ori susține sau combate desfășurarea evenimentelor."

<sup>62</sup> "Construirea imaginii trecutului"

<sup>63</sup> "Exercițiu de sinteză: Realizează împreună cu colegii de clasă o miniexpoziție de izvoare istorice. Organizați o dezbateri privind locul și rolul acestora în scrierea istoriei."

*How are Herodotus and Strabo described?* Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of the textbooks describe Herodotus as either a “historian” or an “ancient historian”<sup>64</sup> (e.g., Giurescu, 2006) or “the father of history”<sup>65</sup> (e.g., Petre, 2008b, p. 13). Not one textbook credits the “father of history” moniker to its originator, the Roman politician and writer Cicero. For his part, Teodorescu (2006) speaks of the “scholar”<sup>66</sup> Herodotus (p. 17). Strabo, who is mentioned on fewer occasions than Herodotus, is not generally granted a descriptor. When he does get one, he is called “an ancient geographer and historian”<sup>67</sup> (Giurescu, 2006, p. 20), or one of the two individuals (next to Ptolemy) who “created geography”<sup>68</sup> (Oane and Ochescu, 2004, p. 28).

*When do Herodotus and Strabo make an appearance?* In most textbooks, the bulk of the references to the work of the two authors can be found in the chapter(s) dealing with the Thracians, the Getae and the Dacian-Roman wars. Occasionally, one can find a smattering of Herodotus and Strabo direct quotes or paraphrases in chapters dealing with other topics, such as Mesopotamia (Brezeanu, 2004, p. 6), the battle of Marathon (Barnea et al., 2003, p. 26), the wider Greek-Persian wars (Vulpe, 2000, p. 21), Europe (Oane and Ochescu, 2004, p. 13), Egypt (Petre, 2008a, p. 6), Babylon (Petre, 2008, p. 27), and Italy (Oane and Ochescu, 2004, p. 13). Băluțoiu and Vlad (2012) strike a discordant note by

---

<sup>64</sup> “istoric antic”

<sup>65</sup> “părintele istoriei”

<sup>66</sup> “cărturar”

<sup>67</sup> “geograf și istoric antic”

<sup>68</sup> “Strabon și Ptolomeu au întemeiat geografia.”



mentioning Herodotus and Strabo on numerous occasions<sup>69</sup> before even discussing the Thracians and the Getae, in what I speculate might be an effort to legitimize the two authors as *the* authoritative sources of information about the ancient world. Several textbooks also mention Herodotus (and a few Strabo, as well) as notable members of the ancient Greek pantheon of thinkers, alongside Pythagoras and Aristotle (e.g. Giurescu, 2006, p. 17, where a bust of Herodotus is also pictured).

One textbook (Barnea, 2008) devotes a sidebar to sketching Herodotus's biography (p. 36), while two other textbooks (Vulpe, 2000, and Barnea et al., 2003) devote to him an entire end-of-chapter "Case Study" section. Both of these sections will be discussed below.

While it is important to this analysis to note exactly when sources such as Herodotus and Strabo are mentioned, as well as in what context, it is perhaps just as important to note when they are *not* mentioned – but should be. Petre's (2008b) fourth grade textbook, for example, sticks to the script when including in a chapter devoted to the "ancestors of the Romanian people" a sidebar text detailing the Dacians' religious beliefs. However, the information is not attributed to Herodotus (or other writers of Antiquity), but rather to a modern Romanian author who has written a book called *The history of the Romanians for every kid*<sup>70</sup> (p. 16). A sidebar in Oane and Ochescu's (2006) fourth grade textbook likewise describes the Getae's religious rituals (p. 20), closely following the anecdotes narrated by Herodotus in Book Four, but without anywhere mentioning his name.

---

<sup>69</sup> E.g., Herodotus about Egypt (p. 23), the Persian Empire (p. 34), the Thermopilae battle (p. 59), and Strabo about India (p. 24), the "cultural inheritance of the Ancient Orient" (p. 39), Greece on several occasions, and the city of Alexandria (p. 66).

<sup>70</sup> "După Petru Demetru Petrescu – 'Istoria românilor pentru toți copiii'"

*Where did Herodotus get his information?* While most textbooks do not bother to identify the sources of Herodotus's information, a few do break the mold. Thus, the Barnea (2008) ninth grade textbook tells us that *Histories* was written "on the basis of information collected during [Herodotus's] travels through Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Egypt, as well as in the North of the Black Sea (Olbia)"<sup>71</sup> (p. 36). The data he provides about the Getae, we are further told, was "collected from the Greeks of Hellespont and Pont, as well as from the Greeks who live in Scythia"<sup>72</sup> (p. 36).

Oane and Ochescu's (2013) eighth grade textbook also mentions the Greeks of Hellespont (a location which they helpfully translate in a subsequent parenthesis into a more modern, recognizable term: the Dardanelles), as well as the Greeks of Scythia and Pont (the latter qualified by a less-than-assertive "probably Olbia"). The authors, however, also acknowledge the fact that some of the information conveyed by Herodotus did not originate in his personal observation when they add another source category: "...or appropriated from earlier texts, such as that of Hecataeus of Miletus"<sup>73</sup> (p. 22).

Barnea et al.'s (2003) hefty section dedicated to Herodotus devotes an entire paragraph to the storyteller's travels, while also acknowledging his less direct sources of information:

...Planning to write a history of the clash between the two continents, Europe and Asia, between the Greeks and the Persians, he undertakes research trips on the Syrophenician coasts, in Persia, Egypt and the Greek city-states at Cyrene and Naucratis on the African coast. His itinerary touches on the Pontic coast as well,

---

<sup>71</sup> "...pe baza informațiilor culese din călătoriile făcute în Mesopotamia, Asia Mică și Egipt, precum și în nordul Mării Negre (Olbia)."

<sup>72</sup> "...lăsând o mulțime de informații despre aceasta, pe care, după spusele sale, le-a cules de la grecii din Hellespont și Pont, precum și de la grecii care locuiesc în Sciția."

<sup>73</sup> "Alături de această mențiune, istoricul oferă și alte informații prețioase despre geți, culese de la grecii din Hellespont (Dardanele), din Pont (probabil Olbia) și din Sciția, sau preluate din scrieri anterioare, precum cea a lui Hecataios din Milet."

up to Olbia, enabling him to inform himself directly on the peoples that he intended to describe.

Also using abbreviated data that predated him, from Hecataeus of Miletus or Hellanicus of Mytilene, Herodotus... (p. 38)<sup>74</sup>

*What kind of words are used when attributing information to Herodotus and Strabo?*

In keeping with the mode of “objectivity” that is the mainstay of educational historiography everywhere, the vocabulary used by textbook authors when attributing certain information to sources such as Herodotus or Strabo is mostly comprised of connotatively tame words, devoid of nuance or ambiguity. Thus, we are told that “[t]he first news<sup>75</sup> about the Getae comes to us from the Greeks (Herodotus, fifth century B.C.)”<sup>76</sup> (Barnea, 2008, p. 36), that Herodotus “informs” us, plain and simple, about the Thracians (Scurtu et al., 2007, p. 8),<sup>77</sup> that “we learn, on this occasion, data about the lands inhabited by the Getae” (Băluțoiu and Vlad, 2012, p. 79, my emphasis),<sup>78</sup> and that Herodotus “gives us precious information about the Getae” (Oane and Ochescu, 2013, p. 22, my emphasis).<sup>79</sup> Strabo, too, “presents” the Roman-dominated world (as a result of

---

<sup>74</sup> “Plănuind să scrie o istorie a confruntării dintre cele două continente, Europa și Asia, dintre greci și perși, întreprinde călătoria de documentare pe coastele siro-feniciene, în Persia, Egipt și cetățile grecești de la Cirene și Naucratis de pe coasta africană. Itinerarul său atinge și coasta pontică, până la Olbia, putând, astfel, să se informeze direct asupra popoarelor pe care intenționa să le descrie.

Folosind și datele sumare, anterioare lui, aparținând lui Hecateu din Milet sau Hellanicos din Mitilene, Herodot...”

<sup>75</sup> The choice to call the information provided by Herodotus “news” unintentionally echoes Alexe’s (2015) ironic designation of the Greek writer as “the first journalist, rather than the first historian” (p. 52).

<sup>76</sup> “Primele știri despre geți le primim de la greci (Herodot, sec. V î.Hr.)...”

<sup>77</sup> “informează”

<sup>78</sup> “Aflăm cu acest prilej date despre ținuturile locuite de geți...”

<sup>79</sup> “Alături de această mențiune, istoricul oferă și alte informații prețioase despre geți...”

“the accumulation of geographic knowledge” in his time [Manea, Stamatescu and Teodorescu, 2004, p. 18]).<sup>80</sup>

*How reliable are Herodotus and Strabo as sources of information?* As expected, most textbooks do not feel the need to provide an explicit evaluation of the reliability of the information provided by the two ancient writers. The few who do usually do so not in the chapter(s) dedicated to the Thracians/Getae/Dacians, but rather in the chapter dedicated to the Greeks. Thus, Manea, Stamatescu and Teodorescu (2004) offer an account of the conditions in which Herodotus and Strabo wrote their texts, with an emphasis on the worth of those texts:

[G]eography makes great progress as a result of Greek colonisation and the conquests of Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.), the knowledge in this field being encapsulated in the valuable works of Strabo and Ptolemy of Alexandria. The need to take the events down in writing will have contributed to the emergence of history, with writers such as Herodotus, the historian of the Greek-Persian wars, [who was] called “the father of history,” Thucydides... (p. 12)<sup>81</sup>

Băluțoiu and Vlad’s (2012) fourth grade textbook does not outright challenge the validity of Herodotus and Strabo’s accounts, but it does manage to smuggle into the text a measure of doubt with its strategic, if somewhat ambiguous, use of quotation marks (“The Greeks began early on to ‘tell the story’ of what had happened in previous times” [p. 71]<sup>82</sup>), as well as the use of the adjective “interesting” (“An interesting testimonial is

---

<sup>80</sup> “Mai târziu, acumularea cunoștințelor geografice i-a permis lui Strabon prezentarea lumii stăpânite de romani...”

<sup>81</sup> “[G]eografia face mari progrese în urma colonizării grecești și a cuceririlor lui Alexandru cel Mare (336-323 î.Hr.), cunoștințele din acest domeniu fiind cuprinse în valoroasele lucrări ale lui Strabon și Ptolomeu din Alexandria. Necesitatea consemnării în scris a evenimentelor va contribui la apariția istoriei, cu autori ca Herodot, istoricul războaielor greco-persane, numit și ‘părintele istoriei,’ Tucidide...”

<sup>82</sup> “Grecii au început de timpuriu să ‘povestească’ ce se întâmplase în vremurile anterioare.”

that of Ptolemy of Lagos, retained in the narratives of Strabo and Arrian, about Alexander the Great's incursion to the north of the Danube in the year 335 B.C." [p. 79]<sup>83</sup>).

Another way in which the general reliability of Herodotus's accounts acquires a welcome measure of context in the textbooks is by juxtaposition with Thucydides and his undoubtedly superior historiographical work. Not every textbook mentions Thucydides as he hardly had anything to say about the Getae, but given his widely-recognized status as the world's first *genuine* historian (that is, the first historian to employ a recognizable methodology involving, among others, the verification of facts from multiple sources), he does make an appearance – sometimes brief, sometimes more extended – in quite a few of the texts. Băluțoiu and Vlad's (2012) fourth grade textbook is representative of the manner in which most authors choose to walk the line between giving Thucydides his due and elevating him too high above the Getae-friendly Herodotus:

“The father of history” is considered to be Herodotus (485-425 B.C.), who has offered much information about the peoples that were known in his time. The most important historian of Antiquity was Thucydides (c.460-369 B.C.). (p. 71)<sup>84</sup>

Note how the authors operate the distinction between “the father of history” and “the most important historian” without resorting to an overtly evaluative marker such as a contrasting conjunction (e.g., “however,” “although”). The result reads as awkwardly in the original Romanian as it does in the English translation above. Brezeanu (2004) chooses a more logically harmonious way to phrase the juxtaposition, complete with a conjunction:

---

<sup>83</sup> “O mărturie interesantă este aceea a lui Ptolomeu al lui Lagos, păstrată în relatările lui Strabon și Arrian, despre expediția lui Alexandru cel Mare în nordul Dunării în anul 335 î.Hr.”

<sup>84</sup> “‘Părintele istoriei’ este considerat Herodot (485-425 î.Hr.), care a dat multe informații despre popoarele cunoscute în vremea sa. Cel mai important istoric al antichității a fost Tucidide (c.460-369 î.Hr.).”

In history, Herodotus is the father of the discipline, while Thucydides wrote the genre's masterpiece, without equal in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. (p. 35)<sup>85</sup>

Brezeanu then proceeds with further explaining the distinction:

In his *Histories*, written in the fifth century B.C. and devoted to the Greco-Persian wars, Herodotus conceived of history as a reconstitution of the past, an endeavor whose criterion is the ordering of facts according to their causes. A generation later, Thucydides, with a critical spirit [that was] much more applied than that of his predecessor, lays the scientific foundation of the discipline. In *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, he removes fate from the development of events, which he offers after a severe [process of] critical judgement, having foregrounded the characters who decide the course of events. (p. 36)<sup>86</sup>

In their ninth grade textbook, Barnea et al. (2003) not only explicitly address the main methodological differences between Herodotus's and Thucydides's accounts, but also go into welcome detail with regards to Herodotus's mixed record in terms of the factuality of his narrative:

Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) gives history its scientific character. In his work *Histories*, in which he describes the wars between the Persians and the Greeks (misnamed Median, due to the confusion between the tribes of the Medes and those of the Persians, [all] living in the Persian Empire), he offers much information about the populations that the Greeks and the Persians came into contact with throughout their existence. [...] Often, the author's explanations are the result of [his] direct observation [of events] during his travels or of indirect research; others, however, belong to fantasy, to the supernatural.

Thucydides (460-393 B.C.) writes *The History of the Peloponnesian War* in a more elevated scholarly manner, with information that is verified with other literary and epigraphic sources. (p. 36)<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> "În istorie, Herodot este părintele disciplinei, iar Tucidide a scris capodopera genului, neegalată în antichitate și evul mediu."

<sup>86</sup> "În *Istoriile* sale, scrise în secolul al V-lea î.Hr. și consacrate războaielor greco-persane, Herodot concepe istoria ca o reconstrucție a trecutului, operație ce are drept criteriu ordonarea faptelor după cauzele lor. O generație mai târziu, Tucidide, cu un spirit critic mult mai aplicat decât al predecesorului său, pune bazele științifice ale disciplinei. În *Istoria războiului peloponesiac*, el înlătură fatalismul din desfășurarea evenimentelor, pe care le înfățișează în urma unei judecăți severe, în prim-plan fiind așezate personalitățile care decid cursul faptelor."

<sup>87</sup> "Herodot (484-425 î.Hr.) dă istoriei caracterul de știință. În lucrarea sa *Istoria*, în care descrie războaiele dintre perși și greci (impropriu numite medice, din cauza confuziei dintre triburile mezilor și perșilor, locuitori ai statului persan), el oferă numeroase informații despre populațiile cu care grecii și perșii au venit în contact de-a lungul existenței lor. [...] Adesea, explicațiile autorului sunt rezultate ale observației directe

Vulpe et al. (2000) take a rather odd route when they incorporate a direct quote from Herodotus within a sidebar titled “Biography” that is otherwise entirely dedicated to Thucydides – complete with a direct quote from *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, a picture of his bust, and an actual mini-biography (p. 26). However, this seeming dismissal of Herodotus is reversed at the end of the chapter when the “father of history” gets his own two-page “Case Study.” This is the most thorough treatment of Herodotus’s reliability as a source that I have found in the textbooks under study. The special section is comprised of three direct quotes (the one about the Thracians being very numerous, the one about the Getae’s religious practices, and the “manliest and most just” one), a brief biography which includes his travels and a phrase ascertaining his worth as a historian, a summary of the information he offers about the Thracians and the Getae, a map of both banks of the Danube that fits Herodotus’s account, followed by two exercise prompts, a picture of the cover of the first Romanian translation of *Histories*, a picture of a Getae silver cup, two end-of-section exercises (mostly testing the students’ reading comprehension), and, crucially, a subsection titled “The worth of the source”<sup>88</sup> that explicitly addresses many of the points raised by Petre (2004) and Fowler (2013):

From Herodotus’s perspective, the notion of history did not exactly have the meaning it has today. His accounts look more like an investigation that combines geographic, ethnographic, economic, mythical and historical information, seeing as how in his time these disciplines had not yet been defined. Because of that, paradoxically, his “primitivism” is, in a way, closer to the modern concept of history in contrast with the Greek historians who came after him who were preoccupied with the narration and the causality of events. [His] is a wider history, [a history] of civilization. Despite all this, his critical spirit, regardless of the flaws that modern scholars have faulted him for (some considered him

---

din timpul călătoriilor sau ale informării indirecte; altele, însă, țin de domeniul fantasticului, supranaturalului.

Tucidide (460-393 î.Hr.) scrie *Istoria războiului peloponesian* într-o ținută științifică mai înaltă, cu o informație verificată de la alte surse literare și epigrafice.”

<sup>88</sup> “Valoarea izvorului”

extremely credulous), was by far superior to [that of] his contemporaries. He himself says: “My duty is to reproduce the things that are told [to me], but I am not in the least bound to believe them.” His evaluations exhibit sincerity, curiosity and common sense. Remarkably, archeological investigations undertaken for the past few decades, in Romania as well as in other countries, have in large part confirmed the information he conveyed. On the other hand, he is a supporter of the trend toward democratization in Greek society. His literary style betrays the qualities of a genuine storyteller, excelling in descriptions and tales, even if in his work destiny and happenstance often replace causes.

He blended, on one hand, tradition, including numerous legends, anecdotes [and] chronological ambiguity, in an attempt to offer a positive account of the facts that he knew about best, from the present or the near past. His work, *Histories*, organized in nine books, presents two worlds: that of the Greeks and that of the “barbarians,” in order to describe at length the life-and-death conflict that had the Greeks face the “barbarian” Persians. (p. 28)<sup>89</sup>

What we see here is an acknowledgement that Herodotus mixed “scientific” and literary genres, an acknowledgment that his historiographical acumen has been roundly criticized by modern scholars, an acknowledgment that he himself was critical of much of the information that he conveyed, and, as explained below, an acknowledgment that the framework of *Histories* is deeply tributary to a dichotomous worldview where warring peoples (especially the peoples of the Persian Empire) are presented as prototypes, rather than as complex, heterogenous groups. This last point is also in evidence in Barnea et

---

<sup>89</sup> “În viziunea lui Herodot, istoria nu a avut exact înțelesul de astăzi al noțiunii. Relatările sale se apropie mai mult de o investigație care cuprinde deopotrivă informații de natură geografică, etnografică, economică, mitică și istorică, având în vedere că în vremea sa aceste discipline nu fuseseră încă definite. De aceea, în mod paradoxal, ‘primitivismul’ său este, într-un fel, mult mai aproape de concepția modernă asupra istoriei în comparație cu istoricii greci de după el, preocupați de nararea și cauzalitatea evenimentelor istorice. Este o istorie mai largă, a civilizației. Cu toate acestea, spiritul său critic, oricare ar fi lacunele care i-au fost reproșate de savanții moderni (unii l-au considerat deosebit de credul), era de departe superior contemporanilor săi. El însuși spune: ‘Datoria mea este să reproduc cele ce se spun, dar acestor lucruri nu sunt cătuși de puțin silit să le dau crezare.’ Din aprecierile sale se degajă sinceritate, curiozitate și bun simț. Este de remarcat că în urma investigațiilor arheologice întreprinse în ultimele decenii, atât în România, cât și în alte țări, informațiile pe care le-a oferit s-au confirmat în bună măsură. Pe de altă parte, este un sprijinitor al tendinței spre democratizare în societatea greacă. Stilul său literar dovedește calitățile unui povestitor autentic, excelând în descrieri și povestiri, chiar dacă în opera sa destinul și întâmplarea țin adesea loc de cauze.

A îmbinat pe de-o parte tradiția, cuprinzând numeroase legende, anecdote, neclaritate cronologică, cu încercarea de a prezenta o relatare pozitivă asupra faptelor pe care le cunoștea mai bine, din prezent sau trecutul apropiat. Opera sa, *Istории*, structurată în nouă cărți, înfățișează două lumi: cea a grecilor și cea a ‘barbarilor,’ pentru a descrie mai pe larg conflictul pe viață și pe moarte care i-a opus pe greci ‘barbarilor’ persani.”



al.'s (2003) case study, in which we are told that "Herodotus, like other authors of Antiquity, particularly retains that which sets the barbarians apart, that which makes them different from the Greek world" (p. 38),<sup>90</sup> and not necessarily that which actually characterizes them.

*How do Herodotus and Strabo conceive of their own work?* As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I chose to focus on Herodotus and Strabo in my analysis of source usage not only because they provide some of the earliest sets of information about the Getae (and are therefore often referenced in the textbooks), but also because both writers give a remarkably critical treatment to *their* sources and the information they receive from them. Indeed, both *Histories* and *Geography* contain some very explicit paragraphs about the role of the historian and that of the geographer, respectively. The authors of most textbooks under study here chose to ignore such revealing metadiscourse. Petre's (2008a) ninth grade textbook is the only one that quotes Strabo about the proper duties of a geographer (p. 35), while two textbooks (Băluțoiu and Vlad, 2012; and Vulpe, 2000) quote Herodotus's mission statement.

*Are students prompted to think critically about historical sources?* As prescribed by the unitary history curriculum, each textbook chapter includes a series of questions/essay prompts for students to answer, usually in writing. The vast majority of these prompts seek nothing more than to test the students' reading comprehension (e.g., "Who were the leaders of our ancestors?" [Giurescu, 2006, p. 23]<sup>91</sup>), but a few do have higher ambitions, challenging the students to think critically. Of those, the most remarkable one is Petre's

---

<sup>90</sup> "...Herodot, ca și alți autori antici, reține mai ales ceea ce-i evidențiază pe barbari, ce-i deosebește de lumea greacă."

<sup>91</sup> "Care au fost conducătorii strămoșilor noștri?"

(2008a) ninth grade book which, at different points in the text, asks the following questions:

Compare Herodotus's statements about the Thracians with those of Homer. What is true and what is fiction? (p. 13)<sup>92</sup>

Do you think that the opinions of the authors quoted [above] about the consequences [of Roman conquests] are identical to each other or not? Answer in writing and identify the possible reasons for the differences [between the two sets of opinions]. (p. 49)<sup>93</sup>

Do you think that the author's statement is correct? Write an essay in which you justify your point of view. (p. 49)<sup>94</sup>

## 5. Recommendations I

Zoe Petre (2004), the prolific editor and author of Romanian history textbooks, concludes her influential book, *The Practice of Immortality: A Critical Reading of the Greek Sources Concerning the Getae*, with a dire warning directed at her historian colleagues:

The investigation that I have undertaken in this book started from the conviction that, without contextualizing the information regarding the Getae – as well as any historical-ethnographic information conveyed to us in the literature of Antiquity – contemporary research risks too much to absolutize, to disconnect, to operate with false concepts, that is, to neglect the established methods which require a necessarily critical reading of any source. Already harmful in itself, such methodological negligence is that much more dangerous when operating in the name, and with the rhetoric, of identity claims, as it tries to build, through artifice and overintepretation, a modern historical mythology meant to feed into damaging, aggressive, exclusive national pride. (p. 7)

---

<sup>92</sup> “Comparați afirmațiile lui Herodot despre traci cu cele ale lui Homer. Ce este adevărat și ce este ficțiune?”

<sup>93</sup> “Credeti că opinia autorilor citați asupra urmărilor este identică sau nu? Răspundeți în scris și identificați posibilele cauze ale deosebirilor.”

<sup>94</sup> “Considerați afirmația autorului ca fiind corectă? Alcătuiți un eseu în care să vă justificați punctul de vedere.”

Petre's point about contemporary research can, of course, also be made about the textbook narratives that research yields: the stories we are told in those books not only routinely dispense with any "critical reading" of their sources, but also try to build, "through artifice and overintepretation," a fairytale of Romanian heroes and Other(ed) villains that positions anyone deemed not to be a Romanian-speaking Romanian ethnic as, at best, a dubious outsider, and, at worst, a mortal enemy.

As detailed in Chapter 3, Critical Discourse Analysis has come under fire for being long on criticism and short on solutions. While that is probably true of my dissertation, as well, I do try to offer some "fixes," particularly in this chapter, the next one, and the very last one. I do so based on my experience with both pedagogy (having taught college-level courses for the past 17 years) and sociolinguistics/Communication studies, and I do so humbly, fully aware that critical thought is not something that one "possesses" and one "gives" to others, but rather a never-ending journey to which one can, and should, welcome others. Drawing on the preceding section's discussion of source evaluation and transparency, I thus offer the following set of recommendations for authors of history textbooks:

1. Whenever possible, attribute your information – particularly when that information is crucial to your chapter (as is the case with the information about the Getae's religious beliefs and character traits), as well as when that information has only one source that cannot be corroborated (as is the case with much of the Getae information that comes from Herodotus's work). Such attributions will encourage students to always inquire after the source of a statement before accepting it – an important aspect of critical thinking.

2. Do not misrepresent the importance granted to the Getae/Dacians in such classical texts as Herodotus's *Histories* and Strabo's *Geographies*. As argued elsewhere in this dissertation, anything that privileges an ethnocentric view of the world is less than desirable. In particular, I am most concerned about the unwarranted privileging of the so-called "proto-Romanian" ethnic groups to the detriment of other groups claimed as "ancestors" by contemporary citizens of the Romanian state – a privileging that, I believe, can easily lead to the portrayal of many of our contemporaries as "not Romanian enough" and thus legitimate targets of erasure (physical or symbolic).

3. Explain to the students that the writers of Antiquity (and Herodotus in particular) were not as concerned with sketching the precise portraits of the various non-Greek peoples as they were with building out the prototypical "barbarian," and the probable reasons for these priorities.

4. Explain to the students that the writers of Antiquity blended accounts that were, to the best of their knowledge, truthful, with clearly fantastic tales.

5. When using texts such as the *Histories*, mention the fact that they're most likely composed of various fragments<sup>95</sup> of disparate narratives that have gone through complicated processes of transcription, translation and editing.

6. The comfort that writers such as Herodotus and Strabo have with ambiguity, lack of information, and contrasting information and interpretation is an asset, from the point of view of critical thinking, to be emphasized and discussed with the students, not a deficit to be hidden from them.

7. Likewise, the generous amount of metadiscourse that Herodotus and Strabo offer to us should not be discarded in favor of an objective-looking, "clean," linear

---

<sup>95</sup> Only one textbook, Oane and Ochescu's (2013), refers to the fragmentary nature of the *Histories*.

narrative comprised primarily of unsourced, declarative statements. Special attention should be given to metalanguage that describes important aspects of the process of historiography (from the identification and evaluation of sources to the choice of narrative frames and vocabulary).

8. Remind the students that sourcing information is a “turtles all the way down”- kind of endeavor. In other words, there is no easily identifiable primordial source. Strabo might have gotten some of his information from Posidonios, who might have gotten some of *his* information from Herodotus, who might have gotten some of *his* information from an unnamed Greek storyteller from Pontus, and so on. Additionally, one should not fail to address the issue that all of these men were part of one specific community which had equipped them with one particular set of cultural (and historical) assumptions, expectations, priorities, values, beliefs and frames of perception.

9. Contextualize all sources. Strabo’s Stoic worldview played an obvious role in his description of the “known world,” and that role should be critically examined by the students. As Manea, Stamatescu and Teodorescu (2004) remind us, all authors have points of view, occupy certain positions in their societies and have been influenced by their upbringing and the intellectual and ideological environment in which they functioned.

10. When devising essay prompts, favor those that stimulate the students’ critical thinking abilities rather than their memory and reading comprehension.

## B. Ideographs: The Workhorses of Forced Homogeneity

In September of 1997, the state-run Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest hosts an extraordinary lecture from Karl Strobel, at the time a professor of ancient history at the University of Trier in Germany, on the topic of the “Getae-Dacians.” Without mincing words, Strobel rips into contemporary Romanian historiography, charging that the post-1989 “History of the Romanians” textbooks are even more “false” and more “nationalistic” than the notoriously deceitful textbooks of the Communist era. Put simply, the German professor charges that Romanian historians have continued replicating, and even exacerbated, the old myth of the unbroken ethnic continuity between the people called “the Getae-Dacians” and contemporary “Romanians.”

Strobel (1998) starts his lecture by pointedly reminding his scholarly audience that the heuristics that historians use in their day-to-day work and discourse should never be allowed to surreptitiously morph into taken-for-granted facts. And that is particularly important to remember in the case of “ethno-historical” concepts and conventions, such as the “Getae-Dacians”<sup>96</sup> (p. 62). “What we get at this point,” Strobel warns, “is the position of some of my Romanian colleagues, according to which one cannot engage in any pre- or protohistorical research without [working with] an ethnic definition” (p. 62).

Strabo tells us that the “Getae” and the “Dacians” spoke the same language. But let us not forget, Strobel says, that Strabo also spoke of them as two distinct, if related, entities – that is, when he spoke of both at all, since he mostly mentioned the Getae, not the Dacians. Also, Strabo is pretty clear on the source for those two names: they came from the Greeks and the Romans, respectively, not from the barbarians themselves. As

---

<sup>96</sup> All direct quotes from Strobel are my translations from the Romanian.

such, we do not know whether these names carried with them a group identity that was felt by the actual group of people under scrutiny here, rather than projected on them by foreigners consumed by a sense of their own civilizational superiority. Finally, Strobel argues, same language doesn't mean same people. A language community can, of course, overlap with an ethnic community, but it doesn't have to – ethnic groups can cross “linguistic borders” and populations that speak the same language can divide themselves into several distinct ethnic groups (p. 69).

Strobel reluctantly allows for the possibility that one could legitimately use the term “Getae-Dacian” for a bunch of related languages – or dialects of the same Thracian language – spoken to the north of the Danube. But even then, one should speak of a “Dacian-Getic” linguistic entity (with an emphasis on the adjectival nature of both terms), rather than of a “Geto-Dacian”<sup>97</sup> entity with its noun-like connotations. If Romanian historians wish to finally shed the “ideological and national fetish of continuity” that has long plagued Romanian historiography, Strobel concludes his address, they should start with de-reifying the “Geto-Dacians.”

A year later, Alexandru Vulpe (1998), one of the Romanian historians in attendance and a future director of the Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology, publishes his own thoughts on the matter in an article tellingly titled “Getae-Dacians?” In it, while he grants Strobel his contention that we have no proof that the Getae and the Dacians really were “the same people,” he goes to some length to minimize the risk that the phrase “Getae-Dacians” would make anyone believe that we are dealing with the same ethnic group. For Vulpe, the fact that many Romanian historians have used the terms

---

<sup>97</sup> “Geto-Dacian” is the preferred Romanian way for writing the phrase that in English is most commonly spelled out as “Getae-Dacian.”

interchangeably – including Vasile Pârvan whose *Getica* carries the subtitle “A Protohistory of Dacia” - is proof that they see the term as “a convention devoid of deep implications and assumptions” which could be used as a simple synonym for the “Northern Thracians” (p. 3). Vulpe does not explain why the notion of “Northern Thracians” does not pose the same risk as that of “Getae-Dacians” (that is, the risk that the reader would assume them to be a homogenous ethnic group), and neither does he provide any proof that Romanian historians knew better than to genuinely buy into the “national fetish of continuity” that Strobel had lamented in his speech.

Vulpe’s faith in the critical abilities of his colleagues notwithstanding, his “Getae-Dacians?” article does offer a healthy dose of information that goes a long way towards demystifying the Romanians’ “oldest ancestors.” “What do we know about the degree of connection between the idioms spoken in the Thracian territories in general and the North-Thracian [territories] in particular? Almost nothing!” he writes (p. 4).<sup>98</sup> The Greeks who wrote about the tribes to the north of the Danube (such as Strabo and Poseidonius) couldn’t be expected to be very familiar with the tongues spoken by the barbarians. If they saw that members of two different tribes were able to communicate with each other, as would contemporary Slovenians, Czechs, Slovaks, or Poles, they would conclude that the tribes spoke the same language. “That’s what I get from Strabo’s assertion” that the Getae and the Dacians spoke the same language, Vulpe concludes.

Romanian linguist, journalist, and all-around cultural provocateur Dan Alexe agrees with Vulpe that ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity most likely ruled in the days of the Getae and the Dacians. In his *Dacopathy and Other Romanian Delusions* (2015), Alexe delights in taking apart the revisionist conceit of those who insist on the Getae-

---

<sup>98</sup> All Vulpe quotes are my translation from the Romanian.



Dacians' past civilizational grandeur, as well as on their supposed ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. The image of a Dacian people/nation akin to, say, the contemporary Irish nation, Alexe points out, is born out of a Romanticist, racist imaginary. Language does not equal ethnicity, even if we could speak of homolingualism in the case of the "Dacians" – which we can't. "In history," the writer says, "linguistic diversity has always been the rule" (p. 56). In the absence of any vestiges of a written "Dacian" language, we can safely assume that the people now known as the "Dacians" most likely spoke a variety of languages and dialects. In the ancient world – the world that the Greeks and the Romans described for us – "tribal confederations were fluid and spoke languages of different origins, which were mixed and were used in parallel" (p. 51). The same observation holds for that other important element of "people-ness/ethnicity": territory. Alexe notes that much of the territory in question ("Dacia") was a so-called "spread zone," that is a transitory space that felt the periodic effects of the migrations that began in Central Asia and ended in Western Europe. What we're looking at here, he argues, is an area that was "totally non-urbanized, thinly populated, without any permanent settlements" and was "inhabited by diverse ethnic groups with no unity" (p. 58). The term "nation," Alexe says, should only be employed to describe political and cultural entities from the time of the French Revolution onwards. Alexe's conclusion is straightforward: labels such as "Dacians" or "Thracians" employed by writers such as Herodotus or Strabo were merely "generic names" (p. 51) that "do not cover an ethnic or linguistic reality" (p. 62).

But if we are not able to infer the existence of a relatively homogenous "Getae-Dacian" ethnic entity from what we know about the Dacians' and the Getae's languages,

could archaeology provide us with a little more certainty? Predictably enough, the answer is no – at least according to the strong caveats Alexandru Vulpe uses in his “Dacia before the Romans” chapter in the 2001 Academy treatise, as well as Niculescu’s (2007) equally forceful critique of the treatise. Both authors warn us that archaeology has very little to say, if anything, about the ethnicity of the people who made the pots and built the houses we dig up from the earth. “Material cultures” (i.e., the pots and the houses) do not equal ethnic groups, anymore than languages do. “[I]n areas of contact and interference between two cultural spaces, it is only normal that we would find both sets of characteristics,” writes Vulpe (2001, p. 414), since neighbors will tend to share many cultural, religious, and aesthetic customs, regardless of self-imposed or ascribed ethnic and linguistic differentiation.

As will be seen below, by and large, Romanian history books (be they historiographical works aimed at experts, works aimed at a wider public interested in historical narratives, or school textbooks) choose to either explicitly deny or simply sidestep the question of the heterogeneity of “Romania’s earliest ancestors.” The result is the reification of what, in his response to Strobel (1997), Vulpe (1998) claimed was just a convention: the unity of the “Getae-Dacians” and their role in the initiation of a thereon unbroken chain of dominant ethnic groups with a “natural” claim to territory and political power. Below, I examine some of the ways in which this rhetorical move is effectively accomplished, including the generally explicit presentation of a category membership device that equates the Dacians with the Getae (usually via Strabo’s “same language” quote), and the strategic use of several connotation-rich ideographs (McGee, 1980) when describing the “Getae-Dacian” entity.

## 1. Same language, same people?

As mentioned throughout this chapter, a shocking amount of Romanian historiography about the early “Getae-Dacians” rests squarely on the shoulders of but two brief phrases drawn from ancient literary sources: Herodotus’s “most manly and law-abiding” reference and Strabo’s “The language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae” statement. Few Romanian scholars have ever dared to question either the validity or the implications of Strabo’s seemingly factual assertion, and even fewer have managed to challenge it in as consequential a venue as the educational history textbook. The efforts of Petre (2004), Vulpe (2001) and Alexe (2015) to muddy the waters a little bit have been referenced above. Petre (2004) in particular, in her *Critical Reading of the Greek Sources Relating to the Getae*,” takes some time to map out the various usages of the terms “Dacians/Daci” and “Getae/Getica” in the ancient literary works of Herodotus, Strabo, Julius Caesar, Pliny the Elder, Flavius Josephus, Cicero, Criton, Ovid, Lucanus and others. Her conclusion is twofold. First, it is not true that, as most Romanian history books would have it (following Strabo), the term “Dacians” is used by the Romans, while the term “Getae” is used by the Greeks. Petre presents several instances in which this rule does not hold – Roman authors who speak of the “Getae,” post-Strabo authors who speak of two distinct, if related, populations, and so on. Second, even in the instances in which the rule does hold, Petre reminds us that the writers of Antiquity did not draw clear distinctions between original research and traditional accounts inherited from their predecessors. As such, their choices of labels for the populations to the north of the Danube do not necessarily reflect the reality on the ground: not those populations’ own sense of identity and difference, but also not even the Romans’ or the Greeks’ own

practical schema of differentiation. What we do know is that “[o]nly in the era of the Flaviis [69-96 A.D.] did the ethnonym Getai come to be perceived as the Greek version of the Dacians’ name” (p. 286), says Petre. By the time of Domitian’s and Trajan’s wars against the Dacians [86-87 A.D. and 101-102/105-106 A.D.], the two names had become fully synonymous, to the extent that Criton of Heraclea, Trajan’s doctor, recounts the Dacian campaign in a work titled “Getica” (now lost).

Centuries later, the first scholarly Romanian historiographers did hesitate to fully embrace the “two names, same people” theory solely on account of Strabo’s assurances. The categorical membership devices that they proposed were riddled with inconsistencies and ambiguity. In his *A History of Roumania*, Nicolae Iorga (1925), who usually speaks of “races” (Romanian, Dacian, etc.) operates what could be described as a class-based distinction between the Dacians and the Getae:

This task [mining gold in the Carpathian mountains] was reserved for the shepherds of the mountains, whose fortified centre was in the south-western corner of Transylvania: the Dacians, whom the Romans called the *Davi* or *Daii*. The name must, doubtless, be traced to the word *davae*, which indicated their villages. [...] One may therefore take the word “Dacians” as meaning the inhabitants of villages, peasants, as distinguished from the Getae, who had settlements more resembling, though inferior to, the “cities” of the Gauls. (p. 22)

Despite the apparent ambiguity in the title of his seminal book (*Getica. A Protohistory of Dacia*), Iorga’s student, Vasile Pârvan, did much to dial back the uncertainty with regards to the “Getae-Dacians.” Every critic of Pârvan’s mentioned in this chapter (e.g., Alexe, 2015; Boia, 2001, Petre, 2004, Vulpe, 2001) lauds him for his meticulous (and, in his time, revolutionary) usage of scholarly methodology, only to conclude that, when it comes to the “Getae-Dacian” question, Pârvan’s pronouncements were driven by the Romanticist, nationalist ideology that prevailed in his time, rather than by what the data

(literary and archaeological) actually told him. The membership categorization device that he employs, therefore, is the one that to this day dominates the Romanian historical narrative: the Dacians and the Getae are the same people (“Getae-Dacians”) and they are part of the northern branch of the Thracians. True to his scholarly nature, however, Pârvan stays away, by and large, from problematic labels, choosing to stick to the names of the population groups he writes about (e.g., “the Getae,” “the Scythians,” “the Sarmatians”).

Interestingly, we still find some vestiges of hesitation in the works of the Communist historiographers. For example, while extolling the “Dacians” as one of the Thracian tribes who “had managed to play a more meaningful historical role” (p. 25), Mihail Roller, the godfather of Communist historiography, does offer a qualification for the label: “the Dacian tribes, [or], according to some, Daco-Getae” (p. 25, my emphasis). He will subsequently alternate between “Dacians,” “Getae” and “Getae-Dacians,” using all three even in the context of Herodotus’s accounts (which, in the original, spoke only of the “Getae”).

Oțetea’s *History of the Romanian People* starts with a fairly clear exposition of his preferred categorical membership device:

[C]onsidering that when the first scanty rays of historical records light up this area, the presence of Thracian tribes is revealed in these parts, we must conclude that during the period under study, around 2000 B.C., the homeland of the Thracians was built up here, and from them Daco-Getian tribes were later formed in the Carpatho-Balkan area. (p. 31)<sup>99</sup>

The Communist emphasis on unity and continuation is in full swing in Chapter 1, written by I. Nestor, as we are told of “cultural unity throughout the Carpatho-Balkan area” (p. 38), “the uniformity of the cultural aspect” (p. 38), “full consolidation of the

---

<sup>99</sup> Original English translation.

Geto-Dacian tribes” (p. 38), a “Thraco-Cimmerian ethnic and cultural environment” (p. 39), a “Geto-Dacian world” (p. 44), and “a single culture [...] in the vast Carpatho-Balkan area” which was “Thraco-Geto-Dacian in character” (p. 47). The very last paragraph of the chapter, however, introduces a measure of nuance into the system of nested identity categories and even provides the reader with a welcome genealogy of the name “Dacians”:

The fact that northwest Dacia north of the Danube, including the Transylvanian plateau, was so powerfully infiltrated by the Celts for a comparatively long period [...] is a reason for the social and cultural evolution of the Dacian people in those parts becoming later synchronous with that of the Geto-Dacians of the southern and southeastern extra-Carpathian regions and still later acting as a decisive factor in the political-military life of the Geto-Dacian bloc north of the Danube. This branch of the Geto-Dacians known by the new name of Dacians (probably after the name of a leading tribe in the tribal union) exerted their influence from around the year 200 B.C. But, as asserted by the Roman historian Trogus Pompeius at the end of the first century B.C., “Dacii quoque suboles Getarum sunt” (the Dacians are also descendants of the Getae). (p. 48)

The second chapter in Oțetea’s book is written by Radu Vulpe, a Dacia specialist (and a student of Pârvan’s, as well as the father of Alexandru Vulpe). He provides a fairly detailed and careful explanation of the relationship between the Thracians, Getae and Dacians, which I will quote below to some length:

We know from ancient historical records that the territory of present-day Romania mostly coincides with that of Dacia, a country inhabited by Getae and Dacians from remote times. The population, thus named spoke the same language, had the same Thracian origin and the same culture, and shared between them the Carpatho-Danubian area, a large geographic unit.

The only difference between the Getae and the Dacians was the region they occupied, the former living in the plains south and east of the Carpathians, primarily on the two banks of the Lower Danube, while the latter held sway over the mountaineous regions of Transylvania. When the ancient Greek writers wished to name all the tribes of Dacia by one name, they preferred to call them Getae, these having been known to them for a longer time than the Dacians, as they were nearer to the Hellenic cities along the coast of Pontus Euxinus. On the other hand, the Romans called them Dacians for they had been in more frequent contact with the latter people owing to their westerly position. During the modern

period the double name – Geto-Dacians or Daco-Getians – is generally used as more convenient, for it expresses the fundamental unity of the two populations while taking the regional individuality of each into account. [...]

Among the numerous Thracian tribes, three main groupings are distinguished, which with time showed distinct features according to their evolution under different geographical, economic, historic, and cultural conditions. One group of the three were the Mysians and Phrygians of Asia Minor, the second, the Thracians proper (*Thracēs*) of the Balkan Peninsula (thus named in history), and the third, the Geto-Dacians, to whom should be added the North Thracian tribes of the Carpi, Costobocae, and of other populations of the northern Carpathians. There are differences between the dialects, religious practices, customs, and cultural trends of the three groups.

The oldest records mentioning the Getae belong to the sixth century B.C., while the Dacians are only mentioned in historical sources at the close of the third century B.C. (pp. 54-5)

While Radu Vulpe does not truly depart here from the “Getae-Dacian” orthodoxy (what with his speaking of a “fundamental unity of the two populations”), he does find a way to also introduce the idea of heterogeneity, as well as offer some caveat-implying information about his sources of information. The resulting ambiguity is best seen in his treatment of Strabo’s famous equivalence:

Strabo, who has given the most accurate information on the regional difference between the Getae and the Dacians, though the two belonged to the same people, asserts that Burebista was of Getian origin (p. 64).

Fully aware that on most ancient maps, the territory of “Thrace” does not extend to the north of the Danube (where most Romanian historiography tends to place the “Thracian” “Getae-Dacians”), Vulpe performs his rhetorical sleight of hand once again:

Ancient records never consider the Dacians of the mountains as part of Thrace, even though they admit that they were relatives of the Thracians. (p. 65)

After all that, let the reader decide whether the Dacians were the same people as the Getae, and what their exact relationship to the Thracians was.

The Academy treatise’s handling of the “Getae-Dacian” question is predictably inconsistent, given the different authors of the chapters, as well as the different time

periods in which those chapters were actually written (and recycled). Thus, as a rule, the chapters written by Alexandru Vulpe are able to handle a more nuanced discussion of the “Getae,” the “Dacians,” Strabo’s “same language” quote, and a host of similarly contentious issues, while the chapters and addenda written by others (or co-written by Vulpe with others) exhibit no such comfort. The Foreword therefore has no qualms speaking about the “Getae-Dacian civilization” (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, 2001, p. xxii), while at the same time warning the reader that the treatise’s authors do not always agree with one another and have therefore often chosen to qualify their statements with phrases such as “the author of these lines believes that...” (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, 2001, p. xxii).

Vulpe’s Dacian chapter (“Dacia before the Romans”) begins with the warning, referenced above in this dissertation chapter, that archaeological evidence does not easily lend itself to being mapped onto the literary information about the various “barbarian” populations the Greeks and the Romans came into contact with.

We know considerably more now than we did in the 20s, when the first great archeological-historical synthesis on that period [pre-Roman times] – Vasile Pârvan’s *Getica* – was published, but [our] phrasing nowadays is less categorical, as it aims to introduce the probability factor, to render the complexity of the phenomena under study as faithfully as possible, to distinguish between data [that we are certain of] and data that carries varying degrees of probability. (p. 399)

Vulpe goes on to explain that, when necessary, he will lay out several hypotheses about a given historical event or trend, but will also not hesitate to point out which one he considers the most reliable. Indeed, his chapter is peppered with hedges and qualifiers that allow the reader to look behind the curtain of the scholarly discourse and critically engage with the text and its message. Examples include hedges that challenge one’s source of information (e.g., “Of course, such images do not necessarily mirror reality” [p. 401]), hedges that introduce a measure of skepticism through the use of the conditional



mood and its close relatives (e.g., “the Phrygians will have migrated to Asia Minor” [p. 401, my emphasis], “the oldest references to the Thracians seem to date from the Mycenaean era” [p. 401, my emphasis]), and qualifiers of certainty (e.g., “Such diplomatic marriages are usually the result of... [p. 402, my emphasis]).

Vulpe makes it a point to recognize the importance of one’s lexical choices when describing groups of people, their characteristics and their actions. When describing Burebista’s political entity, for example, he tells us that Strabo uses a Greek word that can be best translated as “power” or “empire,” but cautions us that the term should not be taken to imply a degree of political organization akin to that of the Greek city-states (p. 650). He pays close attention to the names of the various ancient peoples that Romanian historiography is concerned with. He will often tell the reader exactly who came up with a particular name, and whether a certain population has been called by different names in historiography or in the ancient texts, and especially when a label that enjoys a lot of currency in contemporary historiography (such as the “Getae-Dacians” and the “Scythians”) is but a convention that should by no means be understood as the name of a homogenous ethnic group. Likewise, he reminds his readers that archaeology does not have much to say about ethnicity. There is, for example, no archeological object (e.g., a vase, or a weapon, or a burial ground) that can be identified as exclusively “Thracian” (p. 400).

In the end, despite this series of caveats and warnings, the categorical membership device that Vulpe proposes does not differ significantly than the one proposed by his predecessors: while the Getae and the Dacians might indeed have originally been distinct groups, they were so closely related that it makes sense to speak of the “Getae-Dacians”

for the sake of simplicity. Given the considerable length of the chapter, the author uses quite a few terms (ideographs) to describe the Getae-Dacians: the rather neutral *populație* (“population”), *triburi* (“tribes”) and *seminții* (a term that is usually translated into English as “tribe,” but is noteworthy in its nod to the origins question, as it belongs to the same lexical family as the Romanian word for “seed” – *sămânță*), as well as the highly problematic *neam* (best translated as *kin* or *Volk*; see below) - but, notably, not “ethnic groups” or “ethnicities.”

## 2. Getae-Dacian “Kinship”

So, what to call the Getae, the Dacians, the Romans, the Romanians? Are they tribes? Clans? Kinship groups? Ethnic groups? Nations? Nationalities? Peoples? Populations? Language groups? Communities? There is no agreement in evidence among the writers of history textbooks (or among the Ministry of Education people who put together the mandatory history curriculum) on the most suitable way to label groups of people deemed to have played a role in the history of “the Romanians.” Different textbooks privilege different terms – and some simply cycle through several of them in the same chapter. The stakes involved in the authors’ categorization choices are the same stakes that I’ve identified above in the case of the Getae/Dacians/Getae-Dacians: just like a “Getae-Dacian” identity category paves the way for a master narrative of Romanian unity and continuity through millennia (rather than, say, since the creation of the first independent Romanian state in 1859) and, by way of consequence, for a primordialist, exclusivist outlook on Romania’s present and future, so the talk of “ethnic groups” and

“kinships,” with their blood-and-soil connotations, paves the way, I believe, for an intolerant, ethnocentric worldview that should be avoided.

Historians Victor Neumann and Alexandru Niculescu have investigated (independent of each other) Romanian historiography’s specific use of various group identity-related ideographs, with an emphasis on *neam* (kin, *Volk*), *popor* (people) and *naționalitate* (nationality). Their conclusions are similar: what started as an expression of racial and ethnic solidarity stayed an expression of racial and ethnic solidarity, despite the changes that the notions of “citizenship” and “national community” acquired in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly in the “model” countries of Western Europe.

The term *neam* is perhaps the most venerable of them all. Its apparent etymology is (somewhat ironically) Hungarian, where the word *nem* signifies “gender” and “sex,” and, by extension, also “category” and “species” (Niculescu, 1997, p. 3). The earliest Romanian-language Bibles made extensive use of *neam*, in places where most English-language Bibles would use the word “nation” (see, for example, Genesis 10 or Ezechiel 36). The blood-relative connotations of *neam* are most obvious in the Old Testament sections that list a patriarch’s descendents by generation. According to Niculescu, sometime in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the early chroniclers of the Romanian-speaking populations begin using the term to mean “nationality” and “people,” with one of them, High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino (1639-1716), writing of “the current Romanian *neam*.” By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, writers such as Ioan Budai-Deleanu (1760/3-1820), Dinicu Golescu (1777-1830) and Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802-1872) virtually equated *neam* with “nation,” by which they clearly meant the community of Romanian-speaking Romanian ethnics (p. 3). According to Neumann (2013), between the two World Wars, during the dictatorial

regimes of King Carol II and General Ion Antonescu, the ideograph was marshalled in support of xenophobia and anti-Semitism (p. 396). This usage remained current during the subsequent Communist decades, even as the term was employed less frequently than before. Finally, the post-1989 atmosphere of heightened ethnic tensions and general identity dilemmas in Eastern Europe brought about the resurgence of *neam*, which increasingly found its way into official historical narratives, such as the school textbook. It is not, however, a term that is currently used in everyday parlance (in, say, a [non-nationalist] politician's speech about the "Romanian people," or someone's casual reference to the "Swedish nation"). As such, the presence of this archaic word in history textbooks signals that the authors are busy creating a genealogical chain for the Romanian people with the aim of showing that said Romanians are an ancient people.

To Neumann, virtually all of the most frequently employed labels to refer to collective identity (*neam*, *etnie*, *popor* and *naționalitate*) have their roots in the "ethno-differentialism" of nation-building elites whose preferred model for national solidarity was the clan-dominated village. None of these terms – and especially not *neam* – can be said to have distanced themselves semantically from a model of human organization that stresses blood, common ancestors and destiny, rather than the contractualism, neighborliness, and common values and goals that alternative terms such as "community" and "society" would suggest.

### 3. The "Proto-Indo-Europeans" and "ethnogenesis"

Given that no history textbook can be taught in a Romanian school without first being approved by the Ministry of Education, which checks that the textbook follows the

detailed curriculum, it comes as no surprise that there's little variation among the textbooks under study when it comes to the membership categorization devices they offer for the Getae and the Dacians. Put simply, the Getae and the Dacians are branches of, as Peneş & Troncotă's (2006) fifth grade textbook puts it, the "great nation of Thracians" (p. 14).<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, they are one half of the equation of the Romanian "ethnogenesis" – when "combined" with the Roman colonists, they became "Romanians." The only daylight between the textbooks comes in the degree of closeness that they attribute to the Dacians' and the Getae's relationship. Were they the same people who spoke the same language, or different peoples who spoke the same language, or different-but-brotherly people who spoke different dialects of the same language? The majority of textbooks choose not to dwell on these distinctions, usually settling for a brief, if often ambiguous, statement (often seasoned with a Strabo direct quote) to the effect that the Dacians and the Getae were the same people. The frequent use of the indexical "our" (as in Peneş & Troncotă's "The Dacians and the Romans – Our Forefathers"<sup>101</sup> chapter title) makes it clear that the authors' priority is not to complicate the historical narrative, but quite the contrary: to simplify it to the extent that the (ethnically Romanian) student can draw a straight line from the "ancient" Getae-Dacian people to him/her.

In many of the textbooks under study, the first or second chapter is devoted to what the authors offer to us as the first meaningful "moment" in the "history of the Romanians": the arrival to Europe, sometime during the Neolithic, of the so-called "Indo-Europeans." Much scholarship has been devoted to the questions of exactly who the "Indo-Europeans" were, when exactly they came to Europe, from where, and what the

---

<sup>100</sup> "Istoria lumii vechi consemnează existența unui mare neam al tracilor, din care făceau parte și dacii."

<sup>101</sup> "Dacii și romanii – strămoșii noștri."

nature of their interactions with the natives, whoever *they* were, might have been. The “Indo-European” identity category owes almost its entire existence to linguistics, and not to archaeology. As early as the 1700s, the men of letters who had begun comparing Europe’s various language families – and identifying a host of commonalities among them - had posited the existence of a “proto-Indo-European” mother-language from which all Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages (among others) were derived. In the modernist logic of nationalism, a unitary language could not exist without a unitary people. The “Indo-Europeans” were thus born in the scientific imaginary (and, from there, in the popular and political imaginary, including in its “Aryan” iteration), almost entirely as a result of reconstructive comparative linguistics. Linguists such as Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995) attempted to describe the “Proto-Indo-Europeans” “proto-homeland” and their cultural and economic practices by scrutinizing the lexical elements that seemed to be shared by many European, as well as some Asian, language families. The increased availability of archaeological evidence from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the advent of genetic testing more recently have led to the formulation of several competing theories with regards to the origins and identity/ies of the “Indo-Europeans” (see Anthony, 2010; Pereltsvaig and Lewis, 2015 for more information on the debates in this regard). This yet-to-be-settled nature of the “Indo-European” story, as well as the primordialist status of the “Indo-Europeans” (“the first people to...”) invite comparisons with the treatment that the Romanian textbooks grant to the “Getae-Dacians” – another “people” about whom we have very little information, but who feature prominently in “our” origin story. Below, therefore, I will examine the manner in which several textbooks chose to approach the “Indo-European” question vs. the “Geto-

Dacian” question.

It must first be noted that the Ministry of Education-mandated curriculum does not require textbook authors to discuss the “Indo-Europeans.” Rather, they are instructed to address “Historical peoples and spaces” in Antiquity, and to make sure that they “touch on” Sumerians, Jews, Egyptians, Thracians, Greeks and Romans. However, many textbooks do choose to devote anywhere from a few words to an entire chapter to these “first ancestors.” Barnea’s et al.’s (2003) ninth grade textbook is emblematic in this regard. The title of its chapter is “Main Indo-European Peoples and Languages”<sup>102</sup> (p. 11) – a preview of the relatively nuanced treatment given to the issue in a chapter that does reference the heterogeneity of the “Indo-Europeans” (“peoples,” rather than “people”), as well as the crucial connection of the category to the study of language. The authors proceed with a fairly thorough explanation of what they call “the Indo-European problem,” pointing out in a subchapter introduction that the question of origins does not simply focus on properly identifying a “human group” (as neutral a category label as one could come up with), but should also examine “the mechanisms by which innovations and language elements are transmitted from one human group to another” (p. 11).<sup>103</sup> This explicit emphasis on the process of *becoming* and the rejection of a perfect overlap between “human groups” and “languages” are, from my perspective, as welcome as they are rare in the Romanian textbooks. Barnea et al.’s preferred term for the “Indo-Europeans” is “group,” as, in addition to “human groups,” we are also told of “population

---

<sup>102</sup> “Principalele popoare și limbi indo-europene”

<sup>103</sup> “Cercetările recente, însă, indică faptul că ‘problema indo-europeană’ nu implică doar identificarea unui anumit grup uman, ci și a mecanismelor prin care inovații și elemente de limbă sunt transmise de la un grup uman la altul.”

groups.” Tellingly, *popor* (“people”) only makes an appearance in relation to Indo-European subgroups (i.e., “Indo-European peoples”).

In another welcome move, the authors provide some information on the disputes surrounding the “Indo-Europeans” origins, as well as on the political stakes involved in these disputes:

The debate regarding the origin and the place of origin (sic) of Indo-European peoples got its start in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the relationships between the great powers – the conflicts between them, as well as [their] claims to territory – foregrounded the need to come up with putatively scientific arguments to justify these claims.

[...] In an era dominated by the marshaling of historical arguments to justify political claims, the scientific problem of the Indo-Europeans’ arrival was used for political purposes, as well. (p. 11)<sup>104</sup>

The rest of the chapter offers more recognition that the historical narrative of the “Indo-Europeans” is still very much on shaky ground, from clear statements of uncertainty and doubt (“The main problem is identifying the place of origin of this population” [p. 11]<sup>105</sup>; “But archeological information does not offer certainty...” [p. 12]<sup>106</sup>; “So linguists have tried to contribute to the solving of this enigma...” [p. 12]<sup>107</sup>), to a variety of validity markers (e.g., “probably,” “possible,” “may have”). The very end of the chapter, however, betrays a desire on the part of the authors to come back to firmer ground, and wrap up Chapter 1’s main mission: the placing of the first bead in the bead

---

<sup>104</sup> “Dezbaterea cu privire la originea și locul de origine al popoarelor indo-europene a început în secolul al XIX-lea, atunci când relațiile dintre marile puteri – atât conflictele dintre acestea, cât și pretențiile de stăpânire a unor teritorii – au adus în prim-plan găsirea unor argumente ce se doreau a fi științifice și care să justifice aceste pretenții.

[...] Într-o epocă dominată de argumente istorice în favoarea unor pretenții politice, problema științifică a apariției indo-europenilor a fost folosită și în scopuri politice.”

<sup>105</sup> “Principala problemă este cea a identificării locului de origine al acestei populații.”

<sup>106</sup> “Dar informațiile arheologice sunt nesigure...”

<sup>107</sup> “Așa se face că lingviștii au încercat să contribuie la rezolvarea acestei enigme.”



necklace of ethnicity/nation. Thus, we are now told that, in “prehistory,” “Europe is dominated by Indo-Europeans” (p. 14),<sup>108</sup> and that the “[p]henomenon of Indo-Europeanization radically modified the ethnic structure of the continent” (p. 15).<sup>109</sup>

Interestingly enough, Barnea et al.’s textbook does not set aside a special chapter for the Dacians/Getae/Getae-Dacians/Daco-Romans. Instead, references to those populations are sprinkled throughout the chapters devoted to Ancient Greece and Rome. Thus, unlike the authors of most of the other textbooks under study, Barnea et al. avoid the implication that the “Getae-Dacians” were a “civilization” (to use Oane and Ochescu’s [2006] term) on par with that of the ancient cultural or military empires.

As mentioned in the “Sources” section of this dissertation chapter, Barnea et al.’s textbook offers a three-page “Case Study” devoted to “The Thracians and the Getae” as seen by Herodotus. The foregrounding of the source of information is, as I argued above, a laudable rhetorical choice. The actual text, however, consists of a mixture of straightforward assertions (e.g. “Through the herodotian text we learn about the main features of the Thracian-Getae kin/nations’ societies” [p. 38, my emphasis])<sup>110</sup> and doubt-inducing hedges:

The Thracians encompass several kin/nations, of whom those to the north of the Danube – the Getae – seem to have evolved separately, being quite individualized at the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., when the author [Herodotus] wrote his treatise. (p. 38, my emphasis)<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> “Europa este dominată de indo-europeni.”

<sup>109</sup> “Fenomenul de indo-europenizare a modificat radical structura etnică a continentului...”

<sup>110</sup> “Prin intermediul textului herodotian aflăm despre principalele trăsături ale societății neamurilor traco-getice”...

<sup>111</sup> “Tracii cuprind mai multe neamuri, dintre care cei din nordul Dunării – geții – par a fi evoluat separat, fiind bine individualizați la jumătatea veacului al V-lea î.Hr., când autorul își redacta lucrarea.”

The Romanian word that I've translated as "kin/nations" above is *neam*, and the authors offer it in this (early) instance without any qualification. That changes a few paragraphs down, however, when we are told that:

Speaking of the Thracians' political-military organization during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., Herodotus uses the notions of *neamuri*<sup>112</sup> led by *kings, basilei*, who are capable of putting together armies... (p. 38, original italics)<sup>113</sup>

Interestingly, Barnea et al. feel the need to provide both the Greek original and the Romanian translation for "kings," but in the case of the *neamuri* ideograph, they choose to go solely with their Romanian translation without allowing for the measure of instant accountability the original/translation juxtaposition would provide. Nevertheless, the very existence of metalanguage that refers to the translation process is yet another laudable rhetorical choice in this textbook.

As can be seen in the sentences quoted above, Barnea et al. use two identity category labels when speaking of "our ancestors": the "Getae" and the "Thracian-Getae." While the reason for the usage of the former is obvious (as that was the word used by Herodotus himself), we are not given an explanation for the hyphenated "Thracian-Getae." I can only speculate that this constitutes a reminder of the Getae's filiation, that is, yet another marker of Romanian historiography's obsession with origins and genealogy. As with the chapter on "Indo-Europeans," the Case Study on the Getae ends on a theme of unity and homogeneity accomplished through such agentless nominalization vehicles as the words "orientation," "evolution" and (especially) "individualization":

---

<sup>112</sup> The plural for *neam*.

<sup>113</sup> "Vorbind despre organizarea politico-militară a tracilor, pentru veacurile VI-V î.Hr., Herodot folosește termenii de *neamuri* conduse de *regi, basilei*, care au posibilitatea alcătuirii unor armate..."

There are certain periods of domination from neighboring civilizations, such as that of the Scythians during the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., without [these] causing a profound alteration of the ethnic and cultural essence that characterized the Thracians. After the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., when Persian and Scythian power declines, there is a reinforcement of orientation toward the south-Thracian area of civilization, in parallel with a deeper individualization of the Getae tribes to the north of the Danube. Their evolution during the second stage of the Iron Age leads to an ethno-cultural unification that allowed Burebista (c. 82-44 B.C.), a few centuries later, to politically organize the area between the Danube, the Balkans and the Black Sea. (p. 40)<sup>114</sup>

By way of conclusion, Barnea et al. offer a welcome dose of metalanguage when introducing both the “Indo-Europeans” and the “Getae.” While the first category benefits from a lot more hedging than the second, the authors (who also, notably, do not use the indexicals “us”/“our” when speaking of the Getae) make a clear effort to complicate important identity categories.

Another textbook that chooses to spend some time on the “Indo-Europeans” – and to make some important points about “ethnogenesis” in the process – is Brezeanu’s (2004) textbook. The introduction to its “Main Indo-European Peoples and Languages” chapter consists of a rather clear explanation of how linguists came to posit the existence, far in the ancient past, of an “Indo-European” group of people who spoke a similar language and had a common mythology. Then, the reader is told that the “process of Indo-Europeanization on our continent took place step by step, for some two or three millennia” (p. 9). And then a rare lesson in anthropology (and common sense):

[This process] consisted of the settling of the Indo-European warrior populations of shepherders and farmers on top of the Neolithic agrarian populations, and of the diffusion of the former’s techniques and spiritual practices. This is the essence

---

<sup>114</sup> “Există anumite perioade de dominare a civilizațiilor vecine, de exemplu cea a sciților pentru secolul al VI-lea î.Hr., fără să se producă alterarea profundă a fondului cultural și etnic ce-i caracteriza pe traci. După veacul al V-lea î.Hr., când puterea persană și scitică decade, orientarea spre zona de civilizație sud-tracică se accentuează, paralel cu o mai adâncă individualizare a triburilor getice nord-danubiene. Evoluția lor în perioada a doua a fierului duce către o unificare etno-culturală care i-a permis lui Burebista (cca 82-44 î.Hr.), câteva secole mai târziu, să coordoneze politic zona dintre Dunăre, Balcani și Marea Neagră.”

of the acculturation process, which eventually ended with the linguistic assimilation by the newcomers of the ancient agrarian population of Europe. We are not, therefore, dealing with the latter's extermination, just like the Indo-European people born of this fusion are "cultural" categories, not racial categories. (p. 9)<sup>115</sup>

No other textbook carries such a clear distinction between essentialist (and, I would argue, downright racist) identity categories and what Brezeanu somewhat hesitantly calls "cultural' categories" – that is, categories which are socially constructed and which live and die in language. Would that this logic also extended to the "Getae," "Dacians," "Getae-Dacians," "Daco-Romans," and, of course, "Romanians"!

A third textbook that discusses the "Indo-Europeans" in some depth, Vulpe's (2000) ninth grade textbook, has something new to offer: a blunt recognition that we are on very shaky ground when talking about the "Indo-European" language. A pull-out quote at the end of the chapter, from French archaeologist Henri Hubert, declares that "[t]oday's linguists do not consider "Indo-European" to be even the shadow of an actually spoken language" (p. 11). However, the quote goes on, it doesn't have to be an actual language, for it is in effect "a system of linguistic elements" which allows us to map out the relationships between various contemporary European and Asian languages (p. 11).<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> "Cert este că procesul de indo-europenizare a continentului nostru s-a produs treptat, pe parcursul a două-trei milenii. El constă din așezarea populațiilor războinice de păstori și agricultori ale indo-europenilor peste populațiile agricole neolitice și din difuziunea tehnicilor și valorilor spirituale ale celor dintâi. Aceasta este esența procesului de aculturație, încheiat în cele din urmă cu asimilarea lingvistică de către nou-veniți a populației străvechi de agricultori a Europei. Nu este vorba, așadar, de o exterminare a acesteia din urmă, după cum popoarele indo-europene, născute din această fuziune, nu sunt categorii rasiale, ci 'culturale.'"

<sup>116</sup> "Lingviștii de azi nu se mai gândesc că 'indo-europeana' ar fi măcar umbra unei limbi vorbite în realitate. Dar, pentru a trage concluzii de orice fel asupra compoziției sale și a raportului cu limbile realmente vorbite, nu are importanță dacă a fost vorbită ea însăși. Ea constituie un sistem de elemente lingvistice (...)."

Finally, Petre's (2008) fourth grade textbook offers a welcome, if simplistic, explanation of the formation of "peoples," complete with a very rare confession of ignorance:

From the beginning of time, humans have lived in communities in order to acquire food and to defend themselves against danger. When these communities, comprised of many families, lived on the same territory, spoke the same language and kept the same practices and traditions, they turned into peoples. [...] Some of these ancient peoples still exist (the Greeks), while others have disappeared *under circumstances that we cannot yet explain*. (p. 10, my emphasis)<sup>117</sup>

From my perspective, I would love to see the textbooks carry a combination of Barnea et al.'s explanation of how populations assimilate each other over long periods of time and Petre's observation that historians do not always know why the names of certain peoples show up in historical sources for a while and then disappear.

#### 4. One language, one people?

As mentioned above, there would probably be no clear categorical membership device involving the Getae and the Dacians (or the "Getae-Dacians") without Herodotus's *Histories* and Strabo's *Geography*. Strabo's brief assertion that "the language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae," in particular, is virtually ubiquitous in the textbooks. However, while most textbooks simply quote the phrase without much ado at the end of a chapter, some choose to contextualize it, and some even tweak the standard (Romanian) translation to make it a little more clear and more definitive in terms of its implications for Getae-Dacian homogeneity. Thus, Oane and Ochescu (2013) tell us that Strabo "reminds" us that the Dacians and the Getae speak the

---

<sup>117</sup> "Din cele mai vechi timpuri, oamenii au trăit în comunități pentru a-și procura hrana și pentru a se apăra de primejdii. Atunci când aceste comunități, formate din mai multe familii, au locuit pe același teritoriu, au vorbit aceeași limbă și au respectat aceleași obiceiuri și tradiții, s-au format popoarele. [...] Unele dintre aceste vechi popoare există și astăzi (grecii), altele au dispărut în condiții pe care nu le putem încă explica."

same language<sup>118</sup> (p. 28), while Scurtu et al. (2007) have no time for splitting hairs: they (mis)quote Strabo as saying that “The Getae and the Dacians *are the same people* because they speak the same language” (p. 8, my emphasis). For their part, Barnea et al. (2003) tell us that “Strabo *firmly* states” that the Dacians and the Getae speak the same language<sup>119</sup> (p. 58, my emphasis). Strabo’s thoroughly casual observation about a group of “barbarians” that receive but a few lines in his work has become, in this textbook, a firm statement that presents incontrovertible proof that the Getae and the Dacians are the same people.

As mentioned above, in most textbooks, the categorical membership devices we are presented with have the Getae and the Dacians as virtually identical branches of the (northern) Thracian family of *neamuri*. Here and there, this picture is a bit muddled, usually without any context being offered at those crucial junctures. Such is the case of Băluțoiu and Vlad’s (2012) fifth grade textbook (which, incidentally, skips any reference to the “Indo-Europeans” whatsoever). After an initial mission statement which defines “national history” as that which “studies the past of a people (a country)” (p. 6)<sup>120</sup> and informs the reader that historical knowledge “allows for the development of [one’s] feelings of patriotism, pride and national dignity” (p. 6),<sup>121</sup> the authors waste no time in elevating the “Getae-Dacians” to great heights, listing “the Getae-Dacian civilization” alongside history’s other “great civilizations” such as the Egyptians, the Sumerians, the

---

<sup>118</sup> “Strabon despre **daci și geți** – descriind în *Geografia* situarea lor, aminteste că vorbesc aceeași limbă” (original bold, my underline).

<sup>119</sup> “...daco-geții, din neamul tracilor, care vorbesc *aceeași* limbă, după cum afirmă răspicat Strabon, în *Geografia*” (original italics, my underline).

<sup>120</sup> “Istoria națională studiază trecutul unui popor (unei țări).”

<sup>121</sup> “Cunoașterea istoriei permite dezvoltarea sentimentelor de patriotism, de mândrie și demnitate națională.”

Assyro-Babylonians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Greeks and the Romans. Where Barnea et al.'s textbook introduced the Getae and the Dacians as mere addenda to Greek and Roman history, Băluțoiu and Vlad devote an entire chapter to the "Thracians," most of which is devoted to the "Getae-Dacians" – one of the "important kin/nations" (*neamuri*) of the "great Thracian family" (p. 77).<sup>122</sup> Having already informed their readers that "our Getae-Dacian ancestors can be considered to be creators of a civilization that constitutes the foundation of the Romanian people" (p. 10),<sup>123</sup> the authors bluntly announce that "[t]he Getae and the Dacians constituted the same people" (p. 77)<sup>124</sup> and then rarely waiver from the "Getae-Dacian" designation. Finally, the historical trajectory of the "Getae-Dacians" is as predictable as if it were ordained by Fate: they "connected" with the Romans "in a durable manner," "in order to constitute the Romanian people" (p. 79).<sup>125</sup>

However, Băluțoiu and Vlad's textbook does have one notable departure from the "Getae-Dacian" orthodoxy: it observes that the Dacians' language "was significantly different from the Thracian language, somewhat resembling the Illyrian language"<sup>126</sup> (p. 85). The authors do not explore the implications of this assertion, which echoes Neagu Djuvara's (2002) doubts regarding the "Getae-Dacians'" Thracian genealogy, and Vulpe's (1998) reminder that we know "almost nothing" of "the degree of connection

---

<sup>122</sup> "În marea familie a tracilor, geto-dacii reprezintă unul dintre neamurile importante."

<sup>123</sup> "[S]trămoșii noștri geto-daci pot fi considerați făuritorii unei civilizații care constituie temelia poporului român."

<sup>124</sup> "Geții și dacii constituiau același popor."

<sup>125</sup> "În sfârșit, romanii, cu care geto-dacii au intrat în legătură mai târziu, dar în mod durabil, pentru a constitui poporul roman..."

<sup>126</sup> "Limba dacilor, puțin cunoscută datorită numărului redus de elemente păstrate, era destul de diferită de limba tracă, asemănându-se oarecum cu limba iliră..."

between the idioms spoken in the Thracian territories.” If language equals ethnos, and the “Getae-Dacians’s” language is not a Thracian dialect, what is the criterion by which they can be classified as properly Thracian? Herodotus’s oft-quoted “most manly and law-abiding of the Thracians” phrase?

Peneș and Troncotă’s (2006) fourth grade textbook - perhaps the most nationalistic in both tone and content of all textbooks under study here – does not even bother with Strabo and his distinction/equivalence of the Dacians and Getae. In this text, the Getae are missing completely, leaving the stage entirely to the Dacians (who, as I noted elsewhere, are described here as having had “blond hair and blue eyes”! [p. 14]<sup>127</sup>).

I conclude this analysis with an account of a special case: the 12<sup>th</sup> grade textbook written by Dumitrescu et al. (2004). The book opens with a letter to the student, which, in turn, opens on a quote from French historian Catherine Durandin: “The history of the Romanians is a history of unsolved contradictions”<sup>128</sup> (p. 3). The textbook authors then address the student directly: “You are wrong, our dear 12<sup>th</sup> grade student, if you hope that, in this textbook, you will find all of those ‘unsolved contradictions’ that the French author is thinking of” (p. 3).<sup>129</sup> Each generation writes its own history, the authors then say, and each generation reads history differently. The Romantics will continue to believe in the importance of their historical narrative to the building of “national identity.” Pragmatics, on the other hand, will focus on distinguishing between truth and myth. What

---

<sup>127</sup> “Dacii erau oameni voinici, aveau părul blond și ochii albaștri.”

<sup>128</sup> “Istoria românilor este o istorie de contradicții nerezolvate.”

<sup>129</sup> “Te înșeli, dragul nostru elev din clasa a XII-a, dacă speri că, în acest manual, regăsești toate ‘contradicțiile nerezolvate’ la care se gândește autoarea franceză.”



the contemporary student can hope for is not a clean narrative, but rather some “clarity of thought” and some “peace of mind.”

The discursive shift between the other textbooks and this one is positively whiplash-inducing. Most of the pages are organized in two columns: the main text on the right, and a narrow sidebar on the left containing direct quotes, pictures, chronologies, and essay prompts. The quotes in particular seem to be chosen with the intention to challenge the student to think critically about at least some of the sacred cows of Romanian historiography. Thus, we find here, alongside the customary Herodotus and Strabo extracts, a quote from an 18<sup>th</sup> century traveler calling the Romanians of Transylvania “bad household managers,” “given to thievery,” “mean,” “wrapped in horrendous ignorance” and “despised by everybody” (p. 4),<sup>130</sup> as well as an excerpt from Alexandru Vulpe’s 1998 answer to Strobel in which the Romanian historian dismisses the idea of a “Getae-Dacians” spiritual, social, political and linguistic unity (p. 6). The main text patiently goes through the ancient literary sources that mention the Getae and the Dacians, without neglecting to tell the reader what the ancients *fail* to tell us, and why that might be. For example, the reader is informed that Sophocles mentions the Getae but doesn’t place them anywhere on the map, Herodotus likewise mentions them, but doesn’t tell us whether “Getae” was a self-given name or a name ascribed by the Greeks or the Romans, and, crucially, that Strabo does not provide any arguments of any kind for his assertion that the Getae and the Dacians spoke the same language, and that his “opinion”

---

<sup>130</sup> “[...] Gospodari răi, aplecați spre hoție și răutăcioși [...], învăluți într-o cumplită neștiință și disprețuiți de toată lumea (românii sunt) oameni vrednici de compătimire [...].”

“is not confirmed by other writers of Antiquity” (pp. 7-8). “As a result,” Dumitrescu et al. write, “we know little about the Getae-Dacians’ [sic] language” (p. 8).<sup>131</sup>

The Indo-Europeans, too, make an appearance here, not as a phantom people, but as a language family. Thus, we are told that “[c]onventionally, the ‘Getae-Dacian language’ is considered to be an ‘Indo-European’ language of the *satem* type” (p. 8).<sup>132</sup> The hedging of this statement with the adverb “conventionally,” as well as the enclosing of the “Getae-Dacian language” within quotation marks, further contribute to the general feeling that the authors of this textbook actually want their young readers to think critically about the world around them.

## 5. Recommendations II

Once again, based on the textual analysis I conducted above, I offer the following set of recommendations for the authors of history textbooks:

1. When describing “human groups” that have inhabited a certain area (such as the territory of contemporary Romania), allow for what Kideckel (1996) calls “categorical pluralism”: use a variety of terms, depending on the context.

2. When doing so, however, explain *why* you changed the label, and/or why you’re now operating with a different category membership device. Mere ambiguity or inconsistency do not make for taxonomical flexibility – clear, deliberate, explicative metalanguage is needed here. Also needed are discussions of how the rhetorical process of categorization, of naming things and deciding where they “belong,” is a powerful tool

---

<sup>131</sup> “Strabon nu argumentează afirmația sa referitoare la limba dacilor și geților. De altfel, opinia cunoscutului geograf grec din epoca romană nu este confirmată de alți autori antici. În consecință, despre limba geto-dacilor știm destul de puțin.”

<sup>132</sup> “Convențional, ‘geto-daca’ este considerată o limbă indo-europeană din grupa *satem*.”

that can be wielded with good intentions and bad intentions, good consequences and bad consequences.

3. Explicitly address your assumptions about the taxonomical relationship between “ethnic groups,” “language communities” and “material (archaeological) cultures.”

4. When invoking Strabo’s “same language” quote, contextualize it (historically and linguistically), lest it be taken by the reader as clear, irrefutable proof that the Getae and the Dacians were, indeed, the same people.

5. Address, in considerable detail, the crucial question of the homogeneity (or lack thereof) of the “Getae-Dacians” and the language(s) they spoke.

6. Recognize and address the (blood-and-soil) implications of the ideographs you use, especially those that describe groups of people (such as *popor*, *națiune*, and, of course, the Biblical *neam*). Collaborate with sociolinguists and other social scientists to raise your level of awareness with regards to the effects of various rhetorical choices, and incorporate a discussion of those effects in your texts.

7. Pay attention to the complex, never finished process of *becoming*, rather than focus exclusively on a frozen image of “ethnic” or “national” groups that formed quickly as a result of an “ethnogenesis” akin to the birth of a child.

8. Address, when relevant, the scholarly debates surrounding important issues in historiography (e.g., the origin of the “Indo-Europeans”).

9. Avoid on-the-nose indexicals such as “our ancestors” that promote exclusivist ethnocentrism.

10. Skip the professions of “patriotism, pride and national dignity,” and focus instead on critical thinking and self-reflection.

In this analysis chapter, I have focused on laying out the manner in which the authors of Romanian history textbooks took the first step in the fashioning of a homogenous Romanian identity category that is supposed to have retained its (God-given) ethnic integrity as it progressed through history. This first step, the rhetorical creation of a “Getae-Dacian” *neam*, is essential to the ethnocentric narrative that virtually all contemporary textbooks peddle, as the Eastern European/Balkan historiographic tradition puts a premium on uninterrupted lines of ethnic “ancestry” going all the way to pre-historic times: in the Romanian context, that would mean being able to connect present-day Romanian ethnics to heroic Iron Age populations that preferably lived somewhere within the boundaries of contemporary Romania. More specifically, I have sought to detail the manner in which the textbooks deploy labels (such as “the Dacians,” “the Getae” and “the Getae-Dacians”), thus calling into existence identity categories that will not have made any sense during the Iron and Bronze ages. I have also examined the way in which the textbooks built up those categories with the use of the very scarce historiographic evidentiary record, in particular the two ancient texts that provide the earliest information about the populations living on the north shore of the Danube and within the arch of the Transylvanian Alps. The next chapter will focus on the next step in the creation of the Getae-Dacian-to-Romanian narrative: the “Romanization” of the barbarian Getae-Dacians and the subsequent “ethnogenesis” of the Romanian *neam*.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANALYSIS II

The purpose of this dissertation is to show how contemporary Romanian textbooks construct a historical narrative which promotes an idea of “Romanian identity” that is, at its core, exclusivist and racist. My main unit of analysis is the triad of ethnocentric ideographs that have anchored Romanian-language historiography from its very beginnings in the 17<sup>th</sup> century till the present day: the putative “Daco-Roman” *origins* of the Romanian people, the *unity* of the Romanian-speaking people (in each one of its various iterations), and the unbroken *continuity* of “Romanianness” across the centuries (starting with “our oldest ancestors,” the “Getae-Dacians,” going through the “Daco-Romans” and the “proto-Romanians,” and ending with the modern “Romanians”).

The previous analysis chapter focused on the rhetorical tools employed by many historiographic texts (textbooks, treatises and popular history books) to fashion, with very little evidentiary basis, a homogenous “Getae-Dacian” identity category. The present chapter will discuss the language choices of Romanian historians when describing the events that followed the Roman conquest of Dacia. I focus here on three particular moments with heavy implications for the Romanian identity master narrative: 1) the supposed assimilation of the “Getae-Dacians” into “Roman culture” (a process referred to as “Romanization”) after the conclusion of the Dacian Wars, 2) the emergence of the “Romanian people” (a process referred to as “ethnogenesis” and usually described through a family metaphor) after the Aurelian Withdrawal of 271 B.C., and 3) the arrival between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. of the so-called “migratory peoples,” purportedly

after the “Romanians” were fully – and definitively – formed as a people/nation/ethnic group.

The three heuristics under study here (“Romanization,” “ethnogenesis” and the family metaphor of national “birth”) perform intensive ideological labor in the textbooks, as they provide the building blocks of a clean, straight-forward narrative of ethnonational progress through history. The “Getae-Dacian” identity category that the textbook authors have put together at great pain (given the rhetorical somersaults that the poor evidentiary support necessitated) is tempered in the forge of “Romanization” until it transforms into a “Daco-Roman”/“proto-Romanian” category. That receives further treatment by being taken through an “ethnogenesis” process at which point it undergoes one last organic transformation as it turns into a fully “Romanian” ethnonational identity category, which will now be presented as the “child” of two “parents” – a proud but ultimately weak Dacian “mother” and a dominant, culturally aggressive Roman “father.” All of these processes are offered for the students’ ideological consumption as largely unidirectional, progressive, easily observable undertakings that are devoid of tangents, bifurcations, retreats, paradoxes, ambiguities, uncertainty and hybridity. Finally, all of these processes focus squarely on the *ethnic* category as the master-key to virtually the entirety of “Romanian history.”

#### A. Romanization

In Chapter 4, I traced the ups and downs in Romanian historiography of the three “preferred ancestors” of the Romanian people (the Dacians, the Romans, and the Slavs), and, drawing on the works of Boia (2001) and Verdery (1991) in particular, I connected

those discursive changes to contemporary political contexts. The story I laid out in that chapter stopped about a decade after the last major socio-political upheaval in Romania – the 1989 overthrow of the Communist regime. Since that time, the Romanian history textbook has undertaken only minor changes that have not truly affected the master narrative that has now been served up rather uncritically to an entire generation of Romanian children: the Romanian people is the product of a synthesis between Romans and Dacians, with the latter assimilating into the “culture” (and/or “civilization”) of the former through an organic, inexorable, and beneficial process of “Romanization.”

No textbook seems to harbor any doubts about the validity and suitability of the term itself, despite, as will be shown below, the significant volume of critical scholarship that has been brought to bear on “Romanization” by numerous students of the ancient world. No Romanian textbook agonizes over the definition of the term, with Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s (2005) unassuming description being representative in this regard: “the acquisition of the Roman culture and the Latin language by the peoples conquered by the Romans” (p. 20).<sup>133</sup> According to the combined wisdom of Romanian historiographers, the adoption of the “Roman way of life” by the conquered Dacian population was facilitated by a medley of the following institutions: the Latin language,<sup>134</sup> literacy, spiritual beliefs, “material culture” (that is, the stuff of archaeology: coins, pottery, buildings, jewels, weapons, burial grounds, etc.), legal and administrative systems, cities (with such features as aqueducts, public baths, amphitheaters, granaries, schools, roads), trade, service in the military, “mixed marriages” (a euphemism for

---

<sup>133</sup> “Romanizare – însușirea culturii romane și a limbii latine de către popoarele cucerite de romani.”

<sup>134</sup> Constantiniu’s (2002) *An Honest History of the Romanian People* calls the Latin language “the main factor in the Getae-Dacians’ and in Dacia’s process of Romanization” (p. 41).

intercourse between Roman men and Dacian women leading to procreation), funereal customs, and names (see especially Giurescu, 2006; Băluțoiu and Vlad, 2012; Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu, 2005; Dumitrescu et al., 2004; Stan and Vornicu, 2012). Stan and Vornicu's twelfth grade textbook offers a convenient three-pronged chronological sequence for the process of "Romanization": 1) a "preliminary phase" lasting from Burebista's reign (82-44 B.C.) to the Roman conquest (106 B.C.), 2) a "Romanization proper" phase lasting from the Roman conquest to the Aurelian Withdrawal (271 B.C.), and 3) a "late Romanization" phase lasting from the Aurelian Withdrawal to the so-called "Romanian ethnogenesis" (p. 9). The other textbooks are generally less willing to provide such stage-by-stage periodization, preferring instead to allude to a fluid, but also incontrovertible, process of "Romanization."

In his 2004 book on the assimilation of central Spain into the Roman Empire, Leonard Curchin (2004) defines "Romanization" as

a descriptive rather than a definitional or explanatory term. It is a convenient name for a construct or paradigm devised by modern scholars to describe the process of cultural transformation by which indigenous peoples were integrated into the Roman empire. (p. 8)

Hingley (1996) traces the beginnings of the term's prominence to the works of Francis Haverfield, who, in the early 1900s, lectured and wrote extensively about, as the title of one of his books puts it, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (1912). The model of "Romanization" that Haverfield put forth, which stressed the overwhelming attraction that Roman civilization exerted over the conquered "natives," has resisted largely untouched for almost a century, having encountered serious challenges only from the 1990s on. According to Roth (2003), it was Martin Millet's *The Romanization of Britain* book (1990) that set off the most recent, and most significant, round of challenges to the



concept in question. While the term has, by and large, survived the debate despite calls for its complete elimination (see Merryweather and Prag, 2003), its meaning is no longer fixed and taken for granted. Below, I review three main challenges that critical historians have brought to bear on what Quinn (2003) calls the “traditional interpretative models” of “Romanization” (p. 23).

The first criticism leveled against the concept of “Romanization” – and the one that is, for obvious reasons, the most relevant to the overall argument made in this dissertation – has to do with the historians’ propensity to present the “Romans” and the “barbarians/indigenes/natives” as homogenous, stable and distinct identity blocs who possessed homogenous, stable and distinct “cultures” which could be “passed” from one to another like gifts (Curchin, 2004; Hingley, 2003; Hingley, 1996; Quinn, 2003). In Chapter 5 of this dissertation, I showed how the authors of most contemporary Romanian history textbooks created the ahistorical fiction of a unitary “Getae-Dacian” identity category. Working primarily from a lone reference from Strabo’s *Geography* according to which “[t]he language of the Daci is the same as that of the Getae” [Book VII, 13, p. 215]), the textbooks ranged from claiming, against evidence and logic, that Strabo had himself proclaimed the Dacians and the Getae to be the “same people,” to admitting that Strabo distinguished between the two but then arguing that “same language” really should be taken to mean “same people.” The Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu (2005) fourth grade textbook provides an illustrative, ambiguity-laden example of the latter narrative. In the introduction to the “Our Ancestors: the Getae-Dacians” chapter, the authors tell us that

[t]he Getae and the Dacians were related [and] they spoke the same language, which is why we call them *Getae-Dacians* or *Daco-Getae*. The Getae lived in

Wallachia and to the south of the Danube, while the Dacians lived within the Carpathian arch (Transylvania) and in the Banat. (p. 12, original italics)<sup>135</sup>

This initial attempt to thread the needle is soon, however, abandoned, as one of the end-of-chapter questions for the students flatly asks, “Why did the Getae and the Dacians constitute the same people?” (p. 13).<sup>136</sup> The history teacher assigning that question in class is offered no advice on how to deal with a student who answers, “They didn’t. The chapter says they were related and spoke the same language, but didn’t live in the same place.” (The overwhelming tendency of Romanian historians to equate language communities with ethnic groups will be discussed elsewhere in this chapter).

Curchin (2004) introduces a further wrinkle into the question of the “barbarians” ethnic homogeneity when he argues that many of the “tribes” described by the Roman and Greek writers might have been “new defensive coalitions formed in response to the Roman advance” (p. 32), rather than groups that had formed organically before their clash with the Roman Empire based primarily on family kinship.

As for the Romans, while most textbooks recognize that both the Republic and the Empire were multiethnic conglomerates, when discussing the Romans’ conquest of Dacia, very little of that recognition is in evidence. In fact, as Curchin (2004) reminds us, “Roman’ culture was not homogenous, but multifaced and unstable,” in large part “borrowed” from the Greeks and others, and in general best conceived of as a forever-changing tapestry of behaviors, values, beliefs and artifacts created not just in Rome, but in every corner of the Empire, by citizens and non-citizens alike (p. 9). “Thus, both

---

<sup>135</sup> “Geții și dacii erau înrudiți, ei vorbeau aceeași limbă [sic], de aceea noi îi numim *geto-daci* sau *daco-geți*. Geții locuiau în Muntenia și la sudul Dunării, în timp ce dacii trăiau în interiorul arcului carpatic (Transilvania) și în Banat.”

<sup>136</sup> “De ce geții și dacii constituiau același popor?”

‘Roman’ and ‘native’ are constantly shifting concepts, and it is meaningless to portray them as opposite poles when those poles attracted and merged with one another,” Curchin (2004) concludes.

The issue of ethnic homogeneity aside, Roth (2003) also questions the reliance of theories of “Romanization” on *ethnic* categories, as opposed to other kinds of identity categories that would have been more salient to “most people on a daily basis” (p. 37). As will be seen below, the most recent models put forth by the historians who still see value in rescuing the concept of “Romanization” give a lot of consideration to *class* identities as they examine the crucial role that “native” *elites* played in adopting the Roman culture (whatever each one of these last three terms means to the individual scholar).

A third major criticism brought against the concept of “Romanization” is its historical ties to the 19<sup>th</sup> century ideologies of colonization, nationalism and imperialism which can be seen in particular in the old model’s insistence on the absolute primacy of the “Roman element” (Curchin, 2004; Quinn, 2003; Hingley, 2003). In other words, the story of “Romanization” is usually described as the story of how the Romans made non-Romans into new Romans by simply presenting them with an attractive package of superior political organization, high culture, sophisticated language, moral values and engineering prowess. Positively overwhelmed by the offer, most native peoples (with a few notable exceptions) quickly succumbed and willingly turned themselves into Latin-speaking, toga-clad Romans.

The teleological model of historical development (from the culture of primitive “barbarian tribes” to the culture of advanced “Roman civilization”) is explicitly laid out in Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s (2005) textbook:

*The superiority of the Roman culture, the necessity of cooperation with the Roman bureaucrats, the Dacians' joining of the military, [and] the marriages caused more and more Dacians to learn the Latin language. (p. 21, my emphasis)*<sup>137</sup>

and in Dumitrescu et. al's (2004) textbook:

*Urbanism*, therefore, represents a feature of the new, superior way of organizing the societies included in Rome's administrative system. (pp. 10-11, original italics, my underline)<sup>138</sup>

Băluțoiu and Vlad (2012) strike a somewhat discordant note when, while still working within a paradigm of "development," they acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the "Romanization" process:

Roman rule contributed to the socioeconomic development of the Thracians, who underwent the process of Romanization. Greco-Roman spirituality adopted some elements of the Thracians' religion. The Thracian Spartacus was the leader of the greatest slave uprising which shook the powerful Roman state. (p. 76)<sup>139</sup>

Newer scholarly examinations of the processes of acculturation, assimilation and, indeed, "Romanization" now recognize that sociocultural changes within a society have a complicated relationship with issues of "superiority" and agency. In other words, for a particular set of beliefs, values and behaviors to triumph over another such set it is not absolutely necessary that the first set be perceived as superior to the other – certainly not by all, or even most, members of the "receiving" population. The great majority of the Romanian textbooks tell a story, either by implication or outright, of a population of

---

<sup>137</sup> "Superioritatea culturii romane, necesitatea cooperării cu funcționarii romani, înrolarea dacilor în armată, căsătoriile au făcut ca tot mai mulți daci să învețe limba latină."

<sup>138</sup> "*Urbanismul* reprezintă, așadar, o trăsătură a noului mod, superior, de organizare a societăților din spațiile incluse în sistemul administrativ al Romei."

<sup>139</sup> "Stăpânirea romană a contribuit la dezvoltarea economico-socială a tracilor, care au cunoscut procesul de romanizare. Spiritualitatea greco-romană a preluat unele elemente ale religiei tracilor. Tracul Spartacus a fost conducătorul celei mai mari răscoale a sclavilor, care a zguduit puternicul stat roman."

conquered Getae-Dacians who were willing, even eager, to renounce their “culture” and adopt that of their Roman masters, the quicker the better:

[The Romans] blended with the local population through marriage, such that the natives were *quickly and profoundly* Romanized. As in many [other] lands conquered by the Romans, Romanization, that is the *attracting* of the native population towards the Roman world (through language, material and spiritual culture, and kinships) was very strong. (Băluțoiu and Vlad, 2012, pp. 109-10, my emphasis)<sup>140</sup>

Interestingly, however, the same textbook claws back some of its praise for the irresistible “Roman culture” when attempting to construct an argument against the theory that the “Romanized” population was evacuated alongside the army during the Aurelian Withdrawal:

From the abandoned provinces, only the army, the administration and some inhabitants would leave. Most of population would stay. Often, people preferred the barbarians’ rule which was gentler than that of the Empire. (p. 118)<sup>141</sup>

Băluțoiu and Vlad’s opportunistic hedging not only reveals that there were indeed some aspects of the “Roman world” that the natives did not entirely enjoy, but it also seems to suggest that the Romans’ administrative system was not, in fact, an integral part of what it meant to be a Roman – otherwise, those who rejected the harsh rule of the Empire preferring to it the rule of uncouth barbarians could not have been as “Romanized” as previously described.

Nevertheless, the Dacians are generally portrayed as recognizing the superiority of the Roman culture after succumbing to its military prowess, and simply deciding to assimilate:

---

<sup>140</sup> “Ei s-au amestecat prin căsătorii cu populația locală, astfel încât băștinașii au fost repede și profund romanizați. La fel ca în multe ținuturi cucerite de romani, romanizarea, adică atragerea populației băștinașe spre lumea romana (prin limbă, cultură materială și spirituală, înrudiri) a fost foarte puternică.”

<sup>141</sup> “Din provinciile abandonate plecau numai armata, administrația și unii locuitori. Cea mai mare parte a populației rămânea pe loc. Deseori oamenii preferau stăpânirea barbarilor, mai blândă decât a imperiului. Pe acest temei își însușesc aspecte ale culturii cuceritorilor și, mai ales, limba latină.”

The natives *willfully* take on the process of assimilating [into] Roman civilization. On these grounds, they acquire aspects of the conquerors' culture, and especially the Latin language. (Dumitrescu et. al, 2004, p. 11, my emphasis)<sup>142</sup>

Of course, given the utter lack of testimonies from the Dacian side, this willingness of the natives to assimilate is a complete projection on the part of the authors who seemingly find it impossible to believe that the Dacians would resist in any way trading their Dacian identity/culture for a Roman one. One wonders why the natives fought the Roman legions in two bloody wars in the first place rather than welcome them with open arms. Hingley (1996) points out that our victor-written historical records are almost completely devoid of the voices of the conquered people. He challenges scholars of Romanization to seek evidence (material and otherwise) of the ways in which subjugated populations not only adopted, but also resisted and transformed the symbols, ideas and material culture of the conqueror. Virtually no such work is in evidence in contemporary Romanian history textbooks.

In his review of the immense literature on Romanization, Curchin (2004) identifies five different “commonly-used models of Romanization” (p. 12): 1) a “dominance model,” according to which Rome simply imposed its culture on its new subjects by force, 2) a “self-Romanization model,” whereby the “barbarians” adopted Roman culture willingly, 3) an “elite model,” which argues that the upper classes of the newly conquered people saw an advantage in adopting the Roman ways and modeled them to their own subjects, 4) an “interaction model,” which emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the Roman-barbarian cultural exchange without denying the power imbalance that defines that relationship, and 5) an “integration model,” favored by Curchin himself, which sees the Roman culture and the barbarian culture “undergo a process of mutual

---

<sup>142</sup> “Autohtonii își asumă în mod conștient procesul asimilării civilizației romane.”

permeation and amalgamation to form a new, ‘provincial’ culture” (p. 14). The history textbooks under study here assume, by and large, the self-Romanization model, with very few exceptions, such as Băluțoiu and Vlad’s (2012) lonely reference to the Romans’ adoption of certain aspects of the Thracians’ religion, and Dumitrescu et al.’s (2004) explicit privileging of elite groups (e.g., the literate priests and bureaucrats who learned the Latin alphabet, and the young men who joined the Roman military who learned the Latin language).<sup>143</sup>

While the current scholarship on “Romanization” is occupying itself with deciding whether the concept is “fundamentally incoherent” (Quinn, 2003, p. 28) or merely in need of a radical re-imagining, Romanian historians remain convinced that, upon losing the Dacian Wars, the natives willingly and thoroughly adopted all things Roman, including and especially the Latin language, the quicker to become the “Romanian people.” The inexorable process of “Romanization,” according to Constantiniu (2002), transformed the “Getae-Dacians” into “at first, Romans, then Romanics, and eventually Romanians” (p. 43).<sup>144</sup> According to Stan and Vornicu’s (2012) textbook, the third, and last, stage of “Romanization” ends with the so-called “Romanian ethnogenesis.” The next section addresses that concept in some detail.

---

<sup>143</sup> True to form, Curchin (2004) takes the time to complicate even the models he doesn’t agree with: “The elite had obvious motives and incentives to become Romanized. The real test of Romanization is whether it infiltrated the lower classes, or whether the elite formed a thin, Romanized veneer overlying a largely unassimilated society” (p. 136). The Romanian history textbooks do not even attempt to address this question.

<sup>144</sup> “Superioritatea categorică a civilizației romane față de cea geto-dacă și-a spus cuvântul; ea s-a impus în spațiul carpato-danubian, a romanizat pe băștinași și a făcut din geto-daci, mai întâi, romani, apoi romanici și, în cele din urmă, români.”

## B. Ethnogenesis

As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, following in the footsteps of German scholarship's "philological nationalism" (Reynolds, 1998, p. 29), Romanian historians tend to equate "ethnicity" with "language community." Their reluctance to call the "Getae-Dacians" an "ethnic group" might be connected to their uncertainty about the language(s) that the pre-Roman population of Dacia spoke; once the process of "Romanization" had worked its magic on the natives and taught them Latin, however, all such hesitation disappears and the stage is almost set for the emergence of a "Romanian people." One last hurdle remains: will the new nation be able to hold onto its "Romance language," or will it succumb to a newcomer's cultural pull and adopt *his* language? The answer to this question is thought to determine the very essence of the budding nation.

Giurescu (2006) explain this process of ethnic "clarification":

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, Slavic and Germanic migratory tribes swamped Europe and the Roman Empire. They established new states. In some regions, the Romanic population assimilated the migrants. Where the Romans did not exert a strong influence, the Slavs and the Germans gained dominance. New European peoples were thus born. The process whereby a people is formed is called ethnogenesis. With this process, the respective people's language is also formed. (p. 15, original emphasis)<sup>145</sup>

Other textbooks will offer slight variations on the theme, but most will include the same basic elements: the new European nations (as opposed to the Greeks and Romans) were formed around the time of the so-called Migration Period when tribes coming from the Asian steppes (Huns, Goths, Vandals, Franks, Avars, Slavs, Bulgars, etc.) pushed into territories previously conquered or dominated by the Romans and, after a series of

---

<sup>145</sup> "În perioada secolelor III-VI, peste Europa și Imperiul Roman s-au revărsat triburile de migratori germanici și slavi. Ei au întemeiat noi state. În unele zone populația romanică i-a asimilat pe migratori. În zona unde romanii n-au avut o influență puternică, slavii și germanicii s-au impus. Astfel au luat naștere noi popoare europene. Procesul de formare a unui popor se numește **etnogeneză**. Odată cu acest proces se formează și limba poporului respectiv."



clashes with the Empire and with each other, as well as further in-land migrations, settled in various corners of the continent. The most important element of “nationhood” is the national language, and most of the new nations slowly coalesced around one of three language families (Romance, Germanic or Slavic). Most textbooks will either explicitly or implicitly endorse Giurescu’s (2006) above-stated selection criterion (i.e., weak Roman influence leads to Slavic or Germanic linguistic, and therefore ethnic/national, dominance; strong Roman influence leads to Latin hegemony), with the “Daco-Romans” the premier example of a people whose Roman “character” was strong enough to assimilate the militarily aggressive Slavs and Germans.

As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, the manner in which textbook authors privilege the Romanian language in their narrative of the history of Romania to the detriment of all other languages spoken on the country’s territory for hundreds of years cannot fail but communicate to their readers a message of ethnic exceptionalism and exclusivity: true Romanians are native Romanian speakers; Romanian-speakers are strong people because they speak Romanian; speakers of other languages are not real Romanians; their ancestors were weak and succumbed to the Slavs and to the migratory peoples and adopted their language. (Predictably, few Romanian historians care to inquire after the “cultural strength” of Romania’s contemporary linguistic minorities who have clearly managed not to be “assimilated” into the Romanian language community that surrounds them).

In a classically protochronistic argument, Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu (2005) unequivocally privilege language over most other nation-building institutions, including statehood:

The label “Romanian” that the people/nation to the north of the Danube gives to itself proves that it is a direct successor of Roman culture and the Latin language.

The Romanians are, alongside the Greeks and the Albanians, the oldest inhabitants of South-East Europe and among the first to be Christianized. As opposed to neighboring peoples, the Romanians were late in organizing themselves into state-like formations, coexisting for centuries alongside the migratory peoples. (p. 27)<sup>146</sup>

Given the Balkan peoples’ extreme political sensitivity towards the labels that various groups and countries claim for themselves (e.g., the “Roma” people, the “Vlachs,” the “Macedonia”), it is, to say the least, disingenuous for the textbook authors to posit an endonym as definitive proof of legitimate membership in a specific identity category. In any case, for the “oldest inhabitants” assertion to make any sense, one must first accept the complete equivalation of “people/inhabitants” with “language communities” (for the rest of South-East Europe has continuously been inhabited by people since pre-historic times, too, not just the Dacian/Romanian territory). After eliminating from contention Hungarian and all Slavic languages (seen as having been brought to Europe late in the game by the migratory peoples), one is indeed left with three main languages still spoken in South-East Europe: Greek, Albanian and Romanian. The authors do not concern themselves with the question of exactly how old Hungarian and Slavonic are, because they have developed elsewhere. The point here is not just to extoll the Romanian speakers’ venerable linguistic tradition, but also to contribute to the thesis – crucial for Romanian historiography – that Romanians “own” the territory of contemporary

---

<sup>146</sup> “Denumirea de român pe care și-o dă poporul de la nordul Dunării dovedește că acesta este continuatorul direct al culturii romane și al limbii latine.

Românii sunt, alături de greci și albanezi, cei mai vechi locuitori din sud-estul Europei și printre primii creștinați. Spre deosebire de popoarele din jur, românii s-au constituit mai târziu în formațiuni statale, ei conviețuind secole de-a rândul cu populațiile migratoare.”

(Greater) Romania because their language has been spoken here longer than any other language.

Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu further provide us with a genealogy of the Romanian language. Thus, Romanian is a “Romanance language” despite the fact that “it has evolved apart from the rest of Romanity” (p. 26).<sup>147</sup> It is heavily indebted to Latin in its sounds, its grammar and its “basic vocabulary,” including “most of the words that name degrees of family kinship, spiritual traits, professions, and others” (p. 27).<sup>148</sup> The final product came about as a result of an “evolution” of the Latin language, plus the “retention” of “some Dacian words,” plus some “borrowings” from “migratory peoples, especially the Slavs” (p. 26).<sup>149</sup>

While no linguist denies the overwhelming Romance character of the Romanian language, the exact development and nature of it are the subject of considerably more debate than the textbook authors would let on. “The Romanian language has its origins in Latin,” Alexe (2015) writes in his *Dacopathy*, “but it has a Balkan structure and grammar, similar to those of Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian,” none of which is considered a Romance language (p. 63). Furthermore, while many textbooks have no qualms in identifying “Thraco-Dacian” words that carried over into Romanian (e.g., the Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu [2005] textbook identifies 11 such words, all related to shepherding, and the Giurescu [2006] textbook identifies six of them), Alexe also argues

---

<sup>147</sup> “Deși a evoluat separat de restul romanității, totuși ea păstrează principalele trăsături care o definesc ca limbă romanică...”

<sup>148</sup> “Din latină s-a păstrat majoritatea cuvintelor care denumesc gradele de rudenie, trăsăturile sufletești, ocupațiile ș.a.”

<sup>149</sup> “Evoluția limbii latine vorbite la nordul și sudul Dunării, menținerea unor cuvinte dace, împrumuturile de la migratori, în special de la slavi, au condus la formarea limbii române.”

(as detailed in the previous chapter) that the “Getae-Dacians” must have spoken more than one language (which, incidentally, considerably aided the hegemony of Latin in the wake of the Dacian Wars simply because of the need for a *lingua franca*). Since there is absolutely no written evidence of the language(s) that the Dacians spoke, no one really knows for sure which contemporary Romanian words have a Dacian etymology, which is why the authoritative *Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language* (DEX) does not offer a Dacian etymology for any word whatsoever (Borza, 2018). It is also worth repeating that the Romanian language was, for centuries, written in the Cyrillic (and not the Latin) alphabet, and that the pronounced Latin character of contemporary Romanian vocabulary owes much to the Transylvanian School’s heavy-handed attempts to “Latinize” the language.

Regardless of the exact components that went into the Romanian alloy, the historiographic consensus is that the Romanian people and language formed sometime between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. The curriculum mandated by the Romanian Ministry of Education for all tenth grade history textbooks requires that that “moment of creation” be called “ethnogenesis.” As such, all textbooks have a subchapter titled “The Romanian Ethnogenesis,” and, as with “Romanization,” they almost always seem to take the word’s applicability for granted and in no need of explanation. The innocuous-looking term, however, has had a long trajectory in historiography, having named an entire school of thought pertaining to the transformations undergone by early medieval Europe.

Originally borrowed from cultural anthropology, “ethnogenesis” entered historiography in the 1960s through the work of German-speaking scholars Reinhard

Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram, whose writings contributed to a venerable tradition of Germanic studies which concerned themselves deeply with the emergence of the “ethnic groups” thought to lie at the origin of the German peoples (e.g., the Goths). Although the body of scholarly literature that later came to be known as “Ethnogenesis theory” includes several diverging strands, the emphasis on the primacy of ethnicity (and “ethnic discourses”) in the dynamics of early medieval European constitutes a common thread for all historiographic approaches in this family. Ethnogenesis, which Gillet (2006) observes has by now acquired “the status of orthodoxy” (p. 243), seeks to offer a clear answer to a question that has long vexed historians: Why and how did the Europe of Hellenism and the Roman Empire turn into the Europe of a hundred little ethnic groups vying for political preeminence? And that answer is one that earlier Romantics would have no trouble recognizing: “the transition from classical to medieval culture [was] driven not by economics, religion or warfare, but by ethnicity” (Gillet, 2006, p. 242). What the Romantics would not recognize, however, is Ethnogenesis’s awareness of the fact that ethnic groups are not natural phenomena, but rather social constructed entities. In Wenskus’s and Wolfram’s telling, the ethnic groups that survived Late Antiquity and the early medieval period did so by coming together around charismatic leaders who were able to wield a pre-existing “core of tradition,” as well an origin myth, to fashion coherent social identities (Reuter, 2006, p. 102).

According to Gillet (2006), the Ethnogenesis model sees ethnic identification as predating the Roman conquests, with local communities well aware of their cultural and linguistic commonalities and disjunctions. Such awareness is supposed to have laid dormant under Roman domination, only to reawaken when the imperial wave retreated in

order to form the “nations” of Europe. The Romanian textbooks clearly share the German historians’ belief in the existence, and indeed preeminence, of the “barbarians” ethnic nature, but the route they take to its identification is a bit more subtle owing to their ideological need to also accommodate the mighty Romans. (It is worth noting that Gillet observes that the Ethnogenesis model does allow for the incorporation of Roman and Christian cultural elements into the process of ethnic formation).<sup>150</sup>

Băluțoiu and Vlad’s (2012) text does not use the word “ethnicity” or its derivatives when referring to pre-Roman groups. Instead, it prefers the use of “peoples” or the Biblical “*neam/kin*.” Likewise, when addressing the origins of various “peoples,” the authors employ the word “genesis,” without the “ethno-” modifier. However, as shown in the previous chapter, they leave no doubt in their readers’ minds that the “Getae-Dacians” were a homogenous, unitary “people” practically indistinguishable in nature from the kinds of groups that they will later in the textbook call “ethnic groups.” That identity is further cemented by the repeated labeling of the “Getae-Dacians” as “our ancestors.” Indeed, on just one rather sparse page, the authors speak of “ancestors” three times. In one of those instances, the indexical “our” is tellingly replaced with “of the Romanian people”<sup>151</sup> (p. 77). This emphasis on the uninterrupted connection between the “Getae-Dacians” and the “Romanians” speaks to the authors’ assumption that the two categories are perfectly compatible. (They do not speak of “Dacian aristocracy” or “Roman men” as

---

<sup>150</sup> In his *History*, which was written for the wider public, Constantiniu (2002) shows no such subtlety, as he speaks of an “ethno-linguistic synthesis” between the Indo-European newcomers and the “natives” of “Dacia.” The result of that synthesis is said to be “the individualization of ethnic blocs” such as the Greeks, the Illyrs and the Thracians (p. 29).

<sup>151</sup> “Geto-dacii sunt strămoși ai poporului român.”

“our ancestors,” for example, since class and gender do not move in the same taxonomic circles as “ethnicity/*neam*/people”).

Dumitrescu et al.’s (2004) twelfth grade textbook is also generally careful not to call the “Getae-Dacians” an ethnic group, instead using “tribes” and “the natives.” Twice, however, it breaks protocol: once when it tells us that the historian Jordanes neglects to mention “the *ethnicity* of the great priest” Deceneu who advised the Getae king Borebistas (p. 9, my italics),<sup>152</sup> and again when it tells us that the process of pre-Aurelian Withdrawal Romanization led to “essential *ethno*-linguistic changes” among the Getae-Dacians (p. 11, my italics).<sup>153</sup> (The distinction between the ethnic category and the linguistic one is a curious one given the insistence, across all textbooks, on the preeminence of language in the formation of ethnic groups).<sup>154</sup>

Despite its universal acceptance of the assumptions (and language) of Ethnogenesis by Romanian historians, the theory is not without its critics. According to Gillet (2006), for example, in their description of the ethnic formation process, Wenskus and Wolfram mistook “absorption” for “assimilation.” In other words, they assumed that the small “ethnic” groups that fell under the sway of a charismatic leader became one in every significant way, without the possibility of minority groups in, say, the Kingdom of the Franks, retaining some aspects of their “particularist identities” (p. 248). In both the previous chapter of this dissertation and the current one, I have discussed at length the Romanian historians’ penchant for treating the “Getae-Dacians,” the “Daco-Romans,”

---

<sup>152</sup> “Jordanes [...] nu precizează etnia marelui preot.”

<sup>153</sup> “[S]e ajunge astfel nu numai la ‘modificări comportamentale,’ ci și la ‘schimbări esențiale etno-lingvistice.’

<sup>154</sup> The “ethno-linguistic” reference is repeated later in the chapter, in the same context of Romanization.

and the “Romanians” as homogenous ethnic identities despite ample evidence that, at best, they were (and, in the case of the “Romanians,” still are) umbrella labels that cover a myriad other fragmented, complementary, contradictory or ambiguous identities.

A second criticism levelled at Ethnogenesis theory is related to its reliance on literary sources that make reference to various labels that are anachronically construed as names of ethnic groups. Ethnogenesis-friendly historians comb through documents belonging to a wide range of genres (e.g., letters, historical accounts, works of fiction, bureaucratic papers) looking for name-droppings (e.g., “Goth,” “Slavic,” “Vlachs”). They then assemble the cherry-picked references into a grand narrative that serves as proof that ethnic identity was not only fully alive in the early Middle Ages, but was actually the most important force shaping local communities. Predictably enough, Romanian historians are enthusiastic practitioners of this methodology, which is usually put to work to demonstrate the strength and unbroken continuity of the ethnic *ethos* in what many of them call “the Dacian space.”

A prime example of this is Adolf Armbruster’s (1993) *The Romanity of the Romanians: The History of an Idea*, which remains the canonical text dealing with the eponymous issue. Originally published in 1972, Armbruster’s book meticulously collects a multitude of historical references to the Latin-speaking populations of the Balkan Peninsula, in its quest to prove that the Romanians’ self-awareness as a Romanic/Latin people “coincided” with the naming of the Romanians in foreign literary sources. One potential problem: the earliest “written news about the Romanians” speak of a Latin-speaking population to the *south* of the Danube. Another potential problem: they do not actually mention “Romanians,” but rather “Vlachs.” The latter term originated in the



name of a Celtic tribe known to Caesar – the Volcae – and was subsequently used by the Slavs (who borrowed it from old German) to refer to all Latin-speaking foreigners. (The name of the Romanian-speaking province of “Wallachia” shares the same root, as do the names of “Wales” and “Wallonia”).

In keeping with the Ethnogenesis school’s insistence on finding “‘ethnic discourses’ operating alongside the overt narrative and aims of the text, or even contrary to them (as ‘contradictions’ and ‘paradoxes’)” (Gillet, 2006, p. 248), Armbruster first distinguishes between two classes of “Vlachs” (the generic Latin-speaking population and the “proto-Romanians”), then admits that the term is still in dire need of scholarly attention and cannot yet be fully put in the service of “Romanian ethnogenesis,” and then nevertheless proceeds with assuming that all literary references (usually Byzantine, Hungarian or German) to the “Vlachs” refer to the ethnic group which would later come to be known as the “Romanians.”

As for the geographic inconsistency, Armbruster makes a half-hearted attempt to argue that what goes for the southerners goes for the northerners as well because they shared not only a Latin-based language but also a material culture. As discussed in this dissertation’s previous chapter, “material cultures” (that is, the traces of human habitation that archeologists concern themselves with) have long been equated to ethnicities – but erroneously so, according to many contemporary scholars (e.g., Vulpe, 2001; Niculescu, 2007; Hingley, 1996; Quinn, 2003; Brather, 2002; Boia, 2001) who argue that two otherwise distinct groups can share the same pottery style, while different segments (classes, etc.) of the same group might use certain objects differently.

Armbruster is himself quoted in many twelfth grade history textbooks in the curriculum-mandated “The Romanity of the Romanians in the Historians’ View” chapter. One of those textbooks, edited by Alexandru Barnea (2014), includes such a quote in a sidebar on its very first page of main text. The chapter’s narrative wastes no time in getting to the point:

As the “thousand-year veil” owing to the eastern migratory groups’ domination over the Carpathian space begins to fray, the first testimonies about the Romanians begin to appear. Thus, in the Byzantine world, the ethnic identity of Romanians was well-known, as the first reference [to it] is to be found in a military treatise from the 7<sup>th</sup> century (*Strategikon*). Because of [their] language, they were called Romans... (p. 4)<sup>155</sup>

The military treatise in question is generally attributed to the Byzantine Emperor Maurice (reigned 582-602) who led military campaigns against the Persians, the Avars and the Slavs. It is in a passage describing the Slavs who had settled to the north of the Danube that the Barnea textbook finds that putative early proof of the Byzantines’ awareness of the Romanians’ “ethnic identity.” The *Strategikon* is not quoted or even paraphrased in the textbook, or, for that matter, in Armbruster’s book which briefly says that the treatise “mentions the existence of the Roman element<sup>156</sup> to the north of the Danube at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century” and, in a footnote, sends the reader to a 1969 book by Romanian historian P.P. Panaitescu for more information (p. 25). It is Panaitescu<sup>157</sup> who finally offers a translation (from the original Greek) of that crucial *Strategikon* passage:

---

<sup>155</sup> “Pe măsură ce ‘vălul milenar’ datorat dominației migratorilor răsăriteni asupra spațiului carpatic se destramă, încep să apară primele mărturii despre români. Astfel, în lumea bizantină, identitatea etnică a românilor era bine cunoscută, prima mențiune găsindu-se într-un tratat militar din secolul al VII-lea (*Strategikon*). Datorită limbii, aceștia erau numiți romani...”

<sup>156</sup> The Byzantines called themselves “Romans.” The Greek word Ρωμαίοι has been translated as “Romei” and as “Romaioi.”

<sup>157</sup> All direct quotes from Panaitescu are my translation from the Romanian.

And those who call themselves refugees or fugitives are tasked with pointing out routes and warn those who are in danger against those whom they should avoid. They are Romans (Romanoi) who have in time received this status (of refugees) and, having forgotten their own, they favor the enemy. These, if they are well-intended (towards our people) should be rewarded, and if they misbehave, they should be punished. (p. 88)<sup>158</sup>

Panaiteescu then proceeds with offering his own interpretation of the passage:

Thus the Byzantines knew quite well that a Roman population dwelt among the Slavs, in Dacia, which collaborated with them [the Slavs]; they considered it to have come from among the refugees from the Empire. Those refugees were there for sure, and I have spoken about the current of migration among the peasants of the Empire towards the north of the Danube. Note that the text speaks of people who have lived for a long time, perhaps for generations, among the “barbarians,” [and] have, “in time,” forgotten their own. How could the writer distinguish between the refugees who had arrived from the south and the Dacian natives who spoke the same language? We think it is possible to include the natives under the label of Romans living in Dacia that this text references. In any case, here’s reliable documentary proof that, at that time, Romans lived alongside the Slavs to the north of the Danube, and collaborated militarily [with them] against the Empire. It is the only written historical source that explicitly mentions the presence of the Romans to the north of the Danube in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. (pp. 88-9)<sup>159</sup>

While Panaiteescu introduces this analysis as proof that the “Daco-Romans” lived alongside the Slavs to the north of the Danube, his actual hermeneutics is riddled with hedges betraying considerable hesitation and ambiguity. He recognizes that the author of the *Strategikon* does not care to explain what exactly he means by the “Roman” label that he places on the refugees. He also recognizes that citizens of the Byzantine Empire (i.e.,

---

<sup>158</sup> “Iar acei care se numesc refugiați sau fugari, [sic] se îndeletnicesc cu arătarea drumurilor și dau de veste celor primejduiți de cine trebuie să se ferească. Ei sunt romani (romanoi), care cu timpul au primit această calitate (de refugiați) și uitând pe ai lor, favorizează de preferință pe dușmani. Aceștia, dacă sunt bine intenționați (față de ai noștri), se cuvine să fie răsplătiți, iar dacă se poartă rău, să fie pedepsiți.”

<sup>159</sup> “Bizantinii deci știau bine că între slavi, în Dacia, locuia o populație romană, colaborând cu cei dintâi; ei o socoteau provenită dintre refugiații din Imperiu. Acești refugiați existau desigur și am vorbit de curentul de migrațiune a țăranilor din Imperiu spre nordul Dunării. De observat că în text e vorba de oameni care trăiau de mult, poate de generații, între ‘barbari,’ cei care ‘cu timpul’ au uitat de ai lor. Cum putea distinge scriitorul pe refugiații veniți din sud de bășinașii de aceeași limbă din Dacia? Socotim posibilă înglobarea bășinașilor sub numele de romani trăitori în Dacia, pomeniți în acest text. În orice caz este aici o dovadă sigură, documentară că pe atunci trăiau romani alături de slavi în nordul Dunării, într-o colaborare militară împotriva Imperiului. Este unicul izvor scris care atestă explicit existența romanilor în nordul Dunării în veacul VI.”

“Romans”) were known to take refuge among the Slavs from the Byzantine tax collectors. So, in effect, Maurice might simply be speaking of those individuals and none others. Panaitescu hesitantly rejects that possibility with a rhetorical sleight of hand: he asks whether it’s possible that Maurice is including, under the label “Romans,” *both* Latin-speaking refugees from the Empire *and* Latin-speaking Dacian “natives.” He then answers his own question: Yes, that is indeed possible. The problem is that Maurice has absolutely nothing to say about any Latin-speaking “natives” – that population is introduced in the conversation by Panaitescu alone. As in previous instances documented in this dissertation chapter, the failure of a source to specify what he means by a label is conveniently taken by Romanian historians as proof that he *might* have had in mind their preferred meaning; from there, it’s a small step to the certainty that the ancient writer did indeed intend to say that which provides support for the “pro-Romanian” position. Panaitescu seems to sense that he is on extremely thin ice with this reasoning, as signaled by the hedging with which he begins his rather inconclusive conclusion: “*In any case, here’s reliable documentary proof that, at that time, Romans lived alongside the Slavs to the north of the Danube*” (my italics).

As if Panaitescu’s analysis was not logically deficient enough, his translation from the *Strategikon* is also dubious. The main English-language translation of the treatise – done by George Dennis (1984) – further casts doubt on the Romanian historian’s discovery. When Maurice writes that “They are Romans (Romanoi) who have in time received this status (of refugees),” Panaitescu interprets that to mean “people who have lived for a long time, perhaps for generations” in this region. This reading is important to him because, if accurate, it would allow him to argue that Maurice’s

“refugees” were really (in part? mostly? entirely?) Latin-speaking “natives” - that is, “Daco-Romans.” However, Dennis’s English translation divorces the “refugees” from the “Romans” altogether, and, more importantly, has a completely different take on what the reference to “time” actually means:

The so-called refugees who are ordered to point out the roads and furnish certain information must be very closely watched. Even some Romans *have given in to the times*, forget their own people, and prefer to gain the good will of the enemy. Those who remain loyal ought to be rewarded, and the evildoers punished. (pp. 123-4, my italics)

In a footnote, Dennis explains who the “refugees” were: “During the reign of Heraclius refugees from the Danube regions, Pannonia, Dacia, and Dardania sought safety in Thessalonica” (p. 124, footnote). Nothing is said about the language they spoke, and thus the English translation gives us no reason to equate them with the “Daco-Romans.” As for the “Romans,” they seem to have been former Byzantine subjects since it seems possible for them to “remain” loyal – presumably to the Empire and not to a foreign people as rewards are advised for such loyalty. Finally, this translation gives us no indication that the “Romans” did anything “in time”; rather, they have simply “given in to the times” and betrayed their people.

What began as Panaitescu’s tortuous argument in favor of “Daco-Roman” continuity to the north of the Danube (a question of the highest importance to the Romanian historians bent on proving at all costs that the “proto-Romanians” resided in the lands of “Dacia” long before the arrival of the Slavs and the Huns), morphed into a curt assertion in Armbruster’s otherwise detailed analysis of literary sources, and then into an even more succinct, albeit prominently placed, statement in the Barnea textbook. Along the way, what *might* have been a *Strategikon* reference to a Latin-speaking (non-

refugee) population to the north of the Danube became incontrovertible proof that “in the Byzantine world, the Romanians’ ethnic identity was well-known” (Barnea, 2014, p. 4). Witnessing this process, one would be hard-pressed to disagree with the critics of the Ethnogenesis approach to historiography who fault it for “waiv[ing] methodological analysis of sources in order to construct them as conduits for a predetermined category of information,”<sup>160</sup> that is, information about “ethnic identity” (Gillet, 2006, p. 249).

Even if the “thousand-year veil” that prevented the “proto-Romanians” from having a presence in Europe’s chronicles didn’t exist and the record were full of Vlacho-Romanian name-droppings, one would still be on shaky ground when speaking of a Romanian “ethnic identity” before the modern era. And that is because, according to the critics of Ethnogenesis, the names one finds in the documents of the early Middle Ages were not initially attached to the ethnic groups that they are attached to now:

“Ethnic” titles such as “kingdom of the Goths” are literary terminology, reflecting centuries of Greco-Roman thought conflating geographical regions with *ethne*, “peoples” and insouciant of the autonyms or world-view of foreign peoples. (Gillet, 2006, p. 252)

Just like Herodotus’s and Strabo’s usage of the labels “Getae” and “Dacians” is not a reliable indication of the existence of two well-defined, distinct ethnic groups (see Chapter 5), the Byzantine, Hungarian and German documents’ usage of the labels “Vlach” or “Roman” is not a reliable indication of the formation of a “Romanian” ethnic identity during early medieval times (to say nothing of the vacuous “proto-Romanian” heuristic).

---

<sup>160</sup> Note the similarities between this accusation and the accusations often levelled against Critical Discourse Analysis, my own method of choice in this dissertation. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, CDA practitioners do not claim to proceed to analysis with a blank slate, devoid of any assumptions and preferences for certain analytical categories and not others. They also seek to explain their choices and account for legitimate alternatives.

Despite its salutary embrace of social constructivism, Ethnogenesis theory is “fundamentally essentialist” in its insistence on the cohesiveness, stability and eventual permanence of “ethnicity” (Gillet, 2006, p. 252). Reuter (2006) explains why Wenskus and Wolfram’s Ethnogenesis is a dead end:

[B]oth Wenskus and Wolfram have depicted the earlier state of scholarship, with a hint but only a hint of parody, as conceiving peoples as being fixed, capable only of changing their names (so that the early medieval Saxons corresponded to the Tacitean *Chauci*, and the major issue in deciding where the Bavarians came from when they arrived in the early sixth century is in identifying them with some earlier group). It is possible to parody their position in turn as being one of flux followed by fixation: there is a period of ethnogenesis, but then we have the people; ethnogenesis, like history, comes to a full stop; it takes some time to make the Bavarians out of whatever mix we choose to stress, but once made they are there. (pp. 102-3)

In a nutshell, that is exactly the story that the Ministry of Education-approved history curriculum wants Romanian students to take away from their textbook: following a period of flux in which, to once again quote Băluțoiu an Vlad’s (2012) euphemism-heavy assertion, the Getae-Dacians “connected” with the Romans “in a durable manner,” the “Romanian people” was “constituted” and has remained as such ever since (p. 79).<sup>161</sup> No amount of cohabitation with Hungarians, Slavs, Roma or Turks from the early Middle Ages to the present day could ever sully the wholesomeness of the Romanian ethos.

### C. The Family Metaphor

In *Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies*, Walter Pohl (1998) points out that the Ethnogenesis school of historiographic thought often chose to describe the transformations that their precious (ethnonational) “people” went through over the centuries with the help of biological metaphors (“birth, growth, flowering, and decay”).

---

<sup>161</sup> “În sfârșit, romanii, cu care geto-dacii au intrat în legătură mai târziu, dar în mod durabil, pentru a constitui poporul roman...”

Such heuristics favored “all kinds of chauvinist ideologies” that violently condemned any alternative to the nation-state. While contemporary historians are considerably more skeptical of the “one people, one state” dogma that used to rule the day in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Pohl writes, “it is remarkable enough that we still seem to rely upon biological metaphors” in our historical narratives (§ 3). The story of “ethnogenesis” that dominates Romanian historiography, for example, is frequently told in terms of such biological metaphors, especially those having to do with the family life of human beings: birth, parents, children, siblings, relatives, etc. Many of the textbooks under study in this dissertation also follow this pattern when discussing (ethno-)nation-building and language-formation (two processes which to them are to be found in a dialectical relationship).

Giurescu’s (2006) fourth grade textbook tells us that “The Romanian people is born Christian” (p. 26),<sup>162</sup> Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s (2005) textbook mentions a “Geto-Dacian family” (p. 13), and virtually all textbooks speak of the Romanian people’s “ancestors.” Băluțoiu and Vlad (2012) further develop the family metaphor in their discussion of the Romanians’ “birth certificate” (though they curiously enclose the verb “signed” within quotation marks, perhaps betraying a glimmer of awareness about their use of metaphor):

Through its conquest by Trajan, Dacia became a Roman province. Thus was “signed” the Romanian people’s birth certificate, the cohabitation of Dacians and Romans constituting the foundation for the appearance of Europe’s eastern-most Latin people (*neam*). (p. 108)<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup> “Poporul român se naște creștin.”

<sup>163</sup> “Prin cucerirea ei de către Traian, Dacia a devenit provincie romană. Astfel s-a ‘semnat’ actul de naștere al poporului român, conviețuirea dintre daci și romani constituind temeiul apariției celui mai răsăritean neam latin al Europei.”



The essential role that metaphors play in our cognitive processes has long been recognized by students of communication. Cognitive linguist George Lakoff has given the idea perhaps its most famous treatment in a succession of books<sup>164</sup> starting with *Metaphors We Live By* (1980, co-authored with Mark Johnson). Our actions are in large part determined by our worldviews, Lakoff argues, and those worldviews are anchored by concepts that (metaphorically-speaking) live in our heads. In turn, those concepts are essentially metaphors: maps that allow us to grasp that which seems foreign and overly complicated to us in terms of that with which we are already familiar with and which we find easy to work with. The process by which a cultural group (call it “ethnic group,” “nation” or what have you) develops its own distinctive sense of identity over time is extremely complicated and hard to pin down, as are, for that matter, *all* processes involving multiple human beings. (Witness the quantity and heterogeneity of social science literature attempting to explain the way societies work). The conceptual map that the family metaphor provides us with helps us wrap our heads around that complexity, and, for that reason, is perennially favored by those who write textbooks for the use of individuals whose intellectual sophistication is seen as limited due to their young age.

All of the fourth grade textbooks under study here begin with a discussion of the student’s actual family (“Draw your family’s genealogical tree”). They then bring in the concept of a “tribe,” which is often defined along the lines of “a group of families that have a common ancestor” (Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s, 2005, p. 12).<sup>165</sup> By the time the concept of the “ethnic group/nation/*neam*” comes to the fore, the family metaphor has

---

<sup>164</sup> See *More Than Cool Reason* (1989, co-authored), *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* (1986), *Moral Politics* (2016), and *Don’t Think of an Elephant!* (2004).

<sup>165</sup> “Trib - grup de familie care au un strămoș comun.”

already been primed – and, just as importantly, does not feel like a metaphor anymore, but rather as the literal truth. (Small wonder, then, that we still speak of our compatriots as “our blood”).

As with any map, a master metaphor does not only facilitate one’s understanding of a complex concept, but it also limits that understanding to one cluster of preferred meanings. (A political map will prompt the student to see the world in terms of countries, for example, while a geographical map will make her think of mountains and plains, instead of Belgium and Zimbabwe). Moreover, a “simple metaphor” is never simple: its sense-making abilities rely on a succession of secondary, less explicit, metaphors, which Lakoff calls “entailments.” Below, I propose a list of such entailments that, I believe, come in a package with the nation-as-family metaphor:

*Two parents:* Modern three-parent in vitro fertilization experiments notwithstanding, all human beings have two biological parents. The Romanian people’s two “parents,” the Dacians and the Romans, neatly fit into that schema which effectively excludes the possibility that the Romanians might also have a Slavic “parent,” or, God forbid!, a Hungarian one. As Băluțoiu and Vlad’s quote above makes clear, it was the “cohabitation of Dacians and Romans” that led to the “appearance” of the Romanian people.

A child cannot add to her biological parents at a later date – hence the suspicion that the high stewards of the Romanian language (a group that includes the contemporary leaders of the rule-setting Romanian Academy, as well as the authors of school textbooks) show towards recent neologisms.

A child does, however, have grandparents and great-grandparents – that is, ancestors. The Băluțoiu and Vlad’s (2012) fifth grade textbook offers a quick lineage, complete with evaluative adjectives and the indexical “our”:

Within the great Thracian family, the Getae-Dacians represent one of the important kin (*neamuri*). They are, at the same time, our most removed ancestors. (p. 77)<sup>166</sup>

The authors do not explain what “most removed” means and the decision to start Romanian history here, and not elsewhere, is obfuscated through the use of a simple declarative sentence. Of course, one reason for that phrasing might lie in contemporary historiography’s inability to make any solid observations about the “Indo-European peoples” that “came” before the Thracian Getae-Dacians. However, the phenomenon has its equivalent in how individuals obsessed with the purity of their ethnoracial “blood” tend to work with their reconstructed genealogical tree: by privileging certain branches as “important” and by prudently stopping their inspection of the tree before the reality of ethnoracial diversity makes itself too visible.

*The birth:* A child’s birth is an event that is clearly bounded in time: it follows a transition period of roughly nine months, it happens over a small period of time (anywhere from a few minutes to 18 hours), and, at the end of it, the child is definitively separated from her mother. Working within the birth metaphor, Romanian historians have no qualms indicating in their textbooks a distinct period of time when the Romanian nation was in the womb, as well as a relatively well-defined moment when the “baby” was birthed (e.g., before or soon after the Aurelian Withdrawal, or before the Slavs arrived in Eastern and Central Europe). To suggest that the Romanian language or the

---

<sup>166</sup> “În marea familie a tracilor, geto-dacii reprezintă unul din neamurile importante. Ei sunt, totodată, cei mai îndepărtați strămoși ai noștri.”

Romanian nation continued undergoing radical transformations into the Middle Ages and Modernity (and, indeed, that they're very likely to continue experiencing such transformations in the near future, given the country's membership in the European Union and the acceleration of various globalizing phenomena) is still, in the mainstream Romanian public space, tantamount to committing heresy.

*The child:* A child is a distinct, bounded entity, who, despite undergoing constant change throughout her life, will not acquire a fundamentally different shape. The child's body will grow, but it will not develop a third arm, nor is it likely to lose an arm – and if it does, the loss is perceived as an unnatural, highly regretful accident that greatly handicaps the individual.

The child might be very similar to another child, but she will never become that other child. Children don't blend into each other. Two children do not become three children, nor can they, at any point, merge into one entity. Thus, even though virtually every Romanian knows that the Romanian language has long “borrowed” words from other languages,<sup>167</sup> the Romanian public space (including the school classroom and the media) is never lacking in outraged denunciations of so-called “loan words” – especially when the “lender” of words is the world power *du jour*, English-speaking America. The “Romglish” idiom spoken by much of Romania's youth is often perceived by those who hold the most cultural power to be an unnatural attempt at hybridization, akin to the building of a Frankenstein monster from body parts originally belonging to different people.

---

<sup>167</sup> See, for example, Chapter 4's description of the Transylvanian School's attempts to “Latinize” the Romanian language.

Likewise, hyphenated ethnic identities (e.g., “Hungarian-Romanian”) have not made any headway in the Romanian-speaking world, such labels being inexistent in history textbooks, even with regards to historical characters with mixed parentage, such as King Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490) who appears to have had a Hungarian mother and a Romanian father. Contemporary schoolchildren raised in a mixed household are effectively told by the history textbook that one must carry just one ethnic identity – or, at the very least, that one of their multiple ethnic identities must be so overwhelmingly dominating of the others as to be, ultimately, the only identity that really matters. The echoes of the “miscegenation” debates of the last four centuries are obvious to anyone with a basic knowledge of the subject.

#### D. Hybridity and the Other

No historical narrative that covers events in the Balkan Peninsula can hope to completely ignore the Other, since, owing to its geographical location between Western Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, the region has always been a meeting point of different linguistic and ethnic groups. Just in the past three centuries, parts of the territory of contemporary Romania, for example, have been incorporated into three multiethnic conglomerates, the Russian/Soviet, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. Before that time, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the “Romanian lands” absorbed nearly a millennium of migration waves that originated in Central and East Asia. And before *that* time, the quintessentially heterogenous Roman Empire held sway over most of Europe, East and West alike.

So far in this chapter, as well as in the previous one, I have focused on mapping out the ways in which textbook authors presented inherently heterogeneous entities as homogeneous, distinct and clearly bounded categories. In this last section, I seek to analyze their treatment of that Other which they found impossible to completely exclude from the historical narrative. For that, I first return to the “ethnogenesis” moment (whose crucial importance to the “Romanian story” I have detailed above), and will then end this chapter on a brief examination of how the authors dealt with the “ancestors” of the ethnic group that holds the infamous distinction of being the Romanians’ arch nemesis: the Hungarians.

When discussing the aftermath of the Dacian Wars, many textbooks quote 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman historian Eutropius who, in his *Abridgement of Roman History*, mentions that Emperor Trajan, the conqueror of Dacia, “had transplanted thither an infinite number of men from the whole Roman world” (Book VIII:6). The Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu textbook prefers a translation that speaks of “a great number of people *from all corners of the Roman world*”<sup>168</sup> (p. 20, my italics), and reinforces the message with a subsequent statement that has the conquerors bringing a “great number of colonists *from almost every province* of the empire”<sup>169</sup> (p. 21, my italics). Băluțoiu and Vlad’s textbook also offers the Eutropius quote and then follows up with listing some of the homelands of the Roman soldiers who joined the colonists and settled in Dacia: Britannia, Gallia, Lusitania and Siria. None of the textbooks cares to quote the rest of the passage in Eutropius’s *Abridgement* which hints at the complete extermination of the Getae-Dacians:

---

<sup>168</sup> “...o mulțime foarte mare de oameni din toate colțurile lumii romane.”

<sup>169</sup> “...au adus un număr mare de *coloniști* din aproape toate provinciile imperiului.”

...because Trajan, after he had subdued Dacia, had transplanted thither an infinite number of men from the whole Roman world, to people the country and the cities; *as the land had been exhausted of inhabitants in the long war maintained by Decebalus.* (Book VIII:6, my emphasis)<sup>170</sup>

The fate of the natives notwithstanding, the textbooks also decline to discuss exactly what the diversity of race/ethnicities/cultural backgrounds among the colonists themselves means for the Dacian population that would later become the “Romanian people,” with one, rather odd, exception: the Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu textbook. Early on, the authors describe the “Getae-Dacian” men as “tall and robust, [with] a light skin, blond hair and blue eyes”<sup>171</sup> (p. 13), a characterization that is entirely unsupported by evidence and that I personally cannot help but suspect of outright Aryanism.<sup>172</sup> But then, at the end of the same section, the authors pose the following essay question for the students: “Describe the Dacians’ physical aspect. Compare it to that of contemporary Romanians. What did you notice? How can the possible differences be explained?”<sup>173</sup> (p. 13). Only an interview with the textbook authors – an endeavor which unfortunately this dissertation cannot accommodate – would clarify the thought process that yielded this essay prompt. What do the authors expect the students to say about the “physical aspect” of contemporary Romanians? Are Romanians not tall anymore? Not robust? Do (too) many of them have hazel eyes now? And if they do, is that because of the Dacians “mixing”

---

<sup>170</sup> In his *An Honest History of the Romanian People*, Constantiniu (2002) calls Eutropius’s observation about the complete elimination of Dacians “an obvious exaggeration” and offers, as proof of that, historical references to Dacian men enrolled in the Roman military in the time of emperors Trajan and Hadrian (p. 40). Later on, he admits however that “the wars provoked great losses among the Dacian kingdom’s male population” (p. 42).

<sup>171</sup> “Bărbații erau înalți și robuști, aveau pielea de culoare deschisă, părul blond și ochii albaștri.”

<sup>172</sup> The previous chapter of this dissertation looked at a similar quote from Peneș and Troncotă’s (2006) fourth grade textbook, according to which the Dacians had “blond hair and blue eyes” (p. 14).

<sup>173</sup> “Prezentați aspectul fizic al dacilor. Comparați-l cu cel al românilor de astăzi. Ce ați constatat? Cum explicați eventualele diferențe?”

with the (non-Aryan) colonists from “all corners of the Roman world,” or with the subsequent “migratory populations” (which the textbook tells us elsewhere were “assimilated” by the natives)?

If the scholarly debate about of the Dacian population’s ethnic and cultural homogeneity immediately following the Dacian Wars is only hinted at in the textbooks, no such luxury is available to the authors when describing the subsequent period of time – that is, the age that came after the most controversy-laden and politically explosive moment in early “Romanian” history: the Aurelian Withdrawal of (roughly) 271 A.D. In Eutropius’s telling, unable to effectively protect the Dacian province from the Goths and the Carpi, Emperor Aurelius (reigned 270-275 A.D.) decided to abandon the territory and establish a new similarly-named province to the south of the Danube river. A handful of ancient writers tell us that the withdrawal included the men enlisted in the Roman military, the bureaucrats, and, at least according to Eutropius, all “Roman citizens” (Book IX:15). Who exactly was left behind? The answer to that question has been extremely difficult to come by with any measure of certainty because the departure of the record-keeping Roman administration led to a severe dearth of documentation on the life of the territory that covered almost 1,000 years (3<sup>rd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries), a period often called by historiographers the “Dark Millennium.” Nevertheless, as explained in chapter 4 of this dissertation, because of the implications of this question on the nature of “Romanian” identity, until very recently, virtually no Romanian historiographer went with a “We don’t know who exactly was left behind, if anyone” answer.

In his *An Honest History of the Romanian People*, Constantiniu (2002) does come close to making that admission, but pulls back at the last moment. Noting that almost all



written sources speak of the complete “emptying” of the Dacian province, he paraphrases French historian Jean Nouzille who says that those who believe that everyone left Dacia have *historical sources* on their side, while those who believe that many (if not most) residents stayed behind have *logic* on their side. In other words, a dilemma born out of insufficient information. Constantiniu is not content to leave it at that, though. He subsequently makes his choice clear by stressing what he calls the “practical impossibility” of completely emptying a province of all its residents. He even finds one literary source that, he argues, helps his point:

There is, however, one source that, indirectly, supports the adversaries of the complete Dacian withdrawal thesis: Jordanes,<sup>174</sup> a Romanized Goth who lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, writes only about the withdrawal of legions from Dacia (“Emperor Aurelian, recalling the legions thence, stationed them in Moesia”<sup>175</sup>). The absence of any reference to the Romans or the provincials could be explained by the existence, to the north of the Danube, of a Romanic population, which would have made Jordanes give up the claim that the emperor had moved all of Dacia’s residents to the south of the Danube.<sup>176</sup> (p. 44)

Note the qualifying language Constantiniu uses to make his point (“indirectly,” “could be explained,” “would have made”), as well as the fact that his argument rests on “the absence of any reference,” rather than on the presence of evidence – a rhetorical trick that, given the reasons for the “Dark Millennium” moniker, many Romanian historians

---

<sup>174</sup> Jordanes is used very sparingly by Romanian historians given his highly controversial conflation of the Goths with the Getae in his *Getica*.

<sup>175</sup> *Romana*, chapter 217. Translation by Brian Regan.

<sup>176</sup> “Există totuși un izvor care, indirect, vine în sprijinul adversarilor tezei despre totala evacuare a Daciei: Iordanes, un got romanizat care a trăit în secolul al VI-lea, scrie numai despre retragerea legiunilor din Dacia (‘împăratul Aurelian, rechemând de acolo legiunile, le-a așezat în Moesia’). Absența oricărei referiri la romani sau provinciali s-ar putea explica prin existența la nord de Dunăre a unei populații romanice, ceea ce l-ar fi făcut pe Iordanes să renunțe la afirmația că împăratul îi strămutase în sudul Dunării pe toți locuitorii Daciei.”

have felt preferable to a simple, unqualified profession of ignorance.<sup>177</sup> The seesawing continues in Constantiniu's next paragraph, where once again he admits to ignorance, only to then impeach the motives of the ancient writers on his way to eventually discrediting their information:

The desertion of Dacia by the imperial army and administration was certainly accompanied by the desertion of those who had riches to safeguard from the invaders. What was the number of those who took refuge to the south of the Danube? Impossible to evaluate! If the Latin literary sources speak about a total evacuation of the province, they do that in order to build an image of [the state] safeguarding all Roman citizens.<sup>178</sup> (p. 44)

For their part, the authors of history textbooks prefer to strenuously emphasize the “obviousness” and “logic” of the proposition that the Aurelian Withdrawal left many thoroughly-Romanized people behind in Dacia – enough people, with a strong enough Roman identity, to soon “give birth” to what the Băluțoiu and Vlad (2012) textbook calls “Europe’s eastern-most Latin people”<sup>179</sup> (p. 108).

Once again, a selectively-quoted Eutropius is called to buttress the continuity argument. The same passage that spoke of an “infinite number of men from the whole Roman world” being “transplanted” into Dacia also speaks of Trajan’s successor, Hadrian (reigned 117-138 A.D.), who desired to do what Aurelius later did, which is leave Dacia altogether:

---

<sup>177</sup> In *The Romanity of the Romanians: The History of an Idea*, Armbruster (1993) operates with the same tool, proposing that a literary source that speaks of “Roman shepherds” taking refuge against the Huns to the south of the Danube constitutes proof that *some* Romanians stayed put simply because the text does not speak of *all* “Romans” taking refuge (p. 42).

<sup>178</sup> “Părăsirea Daciei de către armata și administrația imperială a fost, cu siguranță, însoțită și de plecarea celor care aveau să-și pună la adăpost bogății, expuse acum năvălitorilor. Care a fost numărul celor refugiați în sudul Dunării? Imposibil de evaluat! Dacă sursele literare latine vorbesc despre o evacuare totală a provinciei, ele o fac pentru a acredita imaginea punerii la adăpost a tuturor cetățenilor romani.”

<sup>179</sup> “cel mai răsăritean neam latin al Europei”

After the death of Trajan, AELIUS HADRIAN was made emperor [...]. Envyng Trajan's glory, he immediately gave up three of the provinces which Trajan had added to the empire, withdrawing the armies from Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, and deciding that the Euphrates should be the boundary of the empire. When he was proceeding, [sic] to act similarly with regard to Dacia, his friends dissuaded him *lest many Roman citizens should be left in the hands of the barbarians*, because Trajan, after he had subdued Dacia, had transplanted thither an infinite number of men from the whole Roman world, to people the country and the cities; as the land had been exhausted of inhabitants in the long war maintained by Decebalus. (Book VIII:6, my emphasis)

In its “Dacia after the Roman Withdrawal” chapter, the Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu (2005) textbook gets down to business right away, telling its readers that “the greatest part of the residents remained in Dacia,” despite the departure of the army, the bureaucrats and “some residents with strong ties to the Roman Empire” (p. 22).<sup>180</sup> A sidebar placed in close vicinity to this sentence explicitly – if unconvincingly - makes the case for uninterrupted continuity in Dacia. Titled “A withdrawal of the entire population was impossible,”<sup>181</sup> the sidebar contains a fragment of the Eutropius paragraph quoted above (from “After the death of Trajan...” to “in the hands of the barbarians”). No explanation is provided for the purported connection between the argumentative title and the actual quote which states that Hadrian had indeed ordered massive withdrawals elsewhere and that he had been dissuaded from doing the same in Dacia because of the potential bloodshed that would ensue. While a Dacian withdrawal was deemed by Hadrian to be undesirable, nowhere does the quote actually say that such a withdrawal was *impossible* for Hadrian – much less for his successor, Aurelian. Finally, in case the textbook’s fourth grade readers somehow failed to get the point, the authors included a

---

<sup>180</sup> “Deși alături de armată și funcționari au trecut fluvial și unii locuitori strâns legați prin interese de Imperiul roman, cea mai mare parte a localnicilor a rămas în Dacia, acomodându-se noilor condiții de viață.”

<sup>181</sup> “O retragere a întregii populații era imposibilă.”

helpful end-of-chapter essay question on the matter: “Do you think a withdrawal from Dacia of the entire population was possible? What does Eutropius tell us in this regard?”<sup>182</sup> Once again, one can only speculate how the history teacher is supposed to react to a student answering, “Eutropius speaks of the *desirability* of a Dacian withdrawal, not of its *feasibility*. And he speaks of Hadrian, not of Aurelius.”

The Eutropius inconsistency is not the only head-scratcher in Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s (2005) chapter on post-Roman Dacia. One page later, another sidebar, titled “The Continuity of the Romanic Population,”<sup>183</sup> is likely to induce intellectual whiplash in its readers:

A 5<sup>th</sup> century writer tells us that:

“The people living to the north of the Danube are mixed and besides their barbarian language they seek to speak either the language of the Huns or that of the Goths or that of the Ausons [Romanized populations] when they deal with the Romans.” (p. 23, square brackets in the original)<sup>184</sup>

For the title of the sidebar to have a logical connection to the sidebar text, it seems necessary for us to accept that it is the Dacians’ fluency in Latin that makes them a “Romanic population,” regardless of any other cultural factors alternatively described as vectors of Romanization. Even so, the juxtaposition of the “the people living to the north of the Danube” who have their own “barbarian language” and the “Romanized populations” who speak Latin carries the implication that the Dacians were manifestly *not* a “Romanized population” fully two hundred years after the Aurelian Withdrawal. Had they been Romanized, there would have been no need for the Gothic or Hunnic

---

<sup>182</sup> “Credeți că era posibilă o retragere a întregii populații din Dacia? Ce ne spune Eutropius în acest sens?”

<sup>183</sup> “Dănuirea populației romanice”

<sup>184</sup> “**Dănuirea populației romanice.** Un scriitor din secolul al V-lea povestește: ‘Locuitorii de la nordul Dunării sunt amestecați și pe lângă limba lor barbară caută să vorbească sau limba hunilor sau a goților sau a ausonilor [populații romanizate] când au de-a face cu romanii.’”

languages to play the role of *lingua franca*, and the Latin the Dacians would have spoken to the Romans would have been their own language, not a foreign one. As it stands, the quote simply proves that the Dacians were cosmopolitan enough to try to speak their neighbors' languages.

The textbook authors also make no attempt to explain what the unnamed 5<sup>th</sup> century writer means when he says that the northerners were "mixed." According to the quote, these people had their own "barbarian language" and only spoke Latin, Goth or Hunnic as second languages. If the writer does not mean to say that the Dacians were mixed *linguistically*, does he mean to say that they were mixed *ethnically*? The quote doesn't provide any details on this account, and the textbook authors do not feel the need to contextualize it in any way, other than to slap an on-the-nose title above it about continuity and Romanization.

Having explained that the contemporary names of some Romanian rivers carry names similar to those used by the people of Dacia at the time of the Aurelian Withdrawal, the Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu's (2005) chapter ends with a multiple-choice question:

What does the preservation of river names from the time of the Getae-Dacians prove?

- a) Getae-Dacian continuity;
- b) Getae-Dacian continuity, as well as Daco-Roman continuity;
- c) The Romanization of the migratory populations. (p. 23)<sup>185</sup>

While the "Getae-Dacian continuity" answer makes some sense, considering that the students had already been told that "the old names of rivers live on to this day"<sup>186</sup> (pp. 22-

---

<sup>185</sup> "Ce demonstrează dăinuirea numelor de ape din vremea geto-dacilor?"

- a. continuitatea geto-dacilor;
- b. continuitatea geto-dacilor precum și a daco-romanilor;
- c. romanizarea populațiilor migratoare."

3), the logic of the other two answers, if also meant to be correct – a reluctant assumption on my part – is considerably more nebulous. Confusingly, the authors did not specify what they meant by “old names” – “old” as in “before the Roman conquest,” or “old” as in “from the time of the Daco-Romans”? Considering that the “old names of rivers” observation comes in a section titled “The Continuity of the Dacian-Roman Population,” I would guess that the “Romanization” element is a crucial part of this exercise. Although the transmission of river names of uncertain origin (Dacian? Latin?) merely proves *some* continuity, but not any particular kind of *ethnic* continuity, the authors probably intend to offer it as clear evidence of the “Getae-Dacian => Daco-Roman => Romanian” sequence that has for decades now become an untouchable article of faith in Romanian historiography.

The Giurescu (2006) textbook offers a similar pseudo-proof for the continuity of the “Daco-Romans.” In a chapter titled “The Aurelian Withdrawal and Its Aftermath,”<sup>187</sup> the authors include an image captioned, “Third century sculpture depicting a Daco-Roman family.”<sup>188</sup> A subsequent essay question asks this of the students:

What is the significance of the sculpture [pictured] above? How does it prove that after the departure of the Roman army, Daco-Romans continued to inhabit Dacia? (p. 24)<sup>189</sup>

The only logical answer, of course, is, “It doesn’t. You’re the one who said it depicted a Daco-Roman family.”

---

<sup>186</sup> “...vechile nume de ape dăinuiesc până astăzi...”

<sup>187</sup> “Retragerea Aureliană și Urmările Ei”

<sup>188</sup> “Sculptură din secolul al III-lea d.Hr. reprezentând o familie daco-romană.”

<sup>189</sup> “Ce semnificație are sculptura de mai sus? Cum dovedește ea că și după plecarea armatei romane, în Dacia continuau să locuiască daco-romanii?”

The anxiety these exercise prompts betray is not exclusive to the pages dealing with the “Daco-Roman” times. Indeed, if one is concerned with taming the hybridity, ambiguity and sheer complexity inherent in such identity categories as “ethnicity” and “language community,” the period of Roman conquest and its immediate aftermath is probably easier to handle than the historical period that succeeds it: the age of the “barbarian invasions.” The last section of this chapter examines how one textbook chose to handle the Huns, that is, the “barbarian”/migratory group whose name became an exonym for a nation and for contemporary Romania’s largest ethnic minority, the Hungarians. I find that the textbook communicates a hierarchy of ethnic groups through foregrounding some of them while backgrounding others, two operations that anchor what structural linguists call “markedness.”

“One of the hallmarks of human language is the existence of polar oppositions among the signs of any linguistic system,” writes Edwin Battistella in his 1990 book on the development of the concept of “markedness” by the so-called “Prague School” of linguistics (1929-1952) (p. 1). That much is obvious to every child or non-native speaker learning a language. What the scholars associated with the Prague School discovered, however, is that the two elements of these polar oppositions are not always equivalent in terms of their linguistic and cultural importance. To give but the most popular example, the concepts of “male” and “female” are opposites in all languages, but their cultural weight is unequal in most cultures, as “male” works as a default concept against which all other categories (including, and especially, “female”) are measured. In structural linguistics parlance, the dominant element of the pair is described as being “unmarked,” while its opponent is described as being “marked.” The unmarked element is usually

“more broadly defined,” less complex, while the marked element has more features and its meaning is usually more specific (p. 4).

While Battistella’s focus in this book is on mapping out the principles and implications of markedness theory as they pertain to linguistics, he does make occasional forays into sociolinguistics and symbolic anthropology. He quotes a letter from Roman Jakobson, the principal figure of the Prague School of structural linguistics, to Nikolai Trubetzkoy, who is credited with being the first to articulate the marked/unmarked distinction:

...your thought about correlation as a constant mutual connection between a marked and unmarked type is one of your most remarkable and fruitful ideas. It seems to me that it has a significance not only for linguistics but also for ethnology and the history of culture, and that such historico-cultural correlations as life~death, liberty~non-liberty, sin~virtue, holidays~working days, etc., are always confined to relations *a~non-a*, and that it is important to find out for any epoch, group, nation, etc., what the marked element is. (qtd. in Battistella, 1990, p. 5)

Markedness, Battistella writes, “may be a useful concept for describing the organization of society, culture, and the arts” (p. 5), as “some cultural oppositions exhibit a contrast between narrowly defined and broadly defined terms that parallels the marked/unmarked opposition in language” (p. 197).

Battistella proposes six criteria by which one can recognize the so-called “markedness values”: *optimality* (a term is unmarked in many languages so it is likely to also be unmarked in any given language), *distribution* (unmarked terms “are distinguished from their marked counterparts by having a greater freedom of occurrence and a greater ability to combine with other linguistic elements” [p. 26]), *syncretization* (the unmarked category “lends itself to greater differentiation” [p. 40]), *indeterminateness* (“marked elements are characteristically specific and determinate in



meaning while the opposed unmarked elements are characteristically indeterminate, a factor that follows from the definition of semantic markedness as having both a general meaning and a meaning opposite from that of the marked term” [p. 27]), *simplicity* (“unmarked elements are less elaborate in form than their counterparts” [p. 27]), and *prototypicality* (“properties are less conceptually complex, and hence less marked, the more closely and clearly they reflect attributes of prototypical or experientially more basic categories” [p. 27]).

In Burlec, Lazăr and Teodorescu’s (2005) textbook, the explicitly named chapter “The Romanian People: Offspring of Dacians and Romans” is followed by a brief “Case Study” devoted to “The Migratory Peoples.” One indication that the “migratory people” constitute a marked category in relation to the so-called “autochthonous”/Romanian people is the very fact that the story of their impact on “Romanians” is not included in the ethnogenesis chapter proper, but rather in a separate section.<sup>190</sup> As per Battistella’s criterion of indeterminateness, the “migratory people” have very specific features that require description and annotation, in contradistinction with the “natives.” (Both labels are assigned, of course, without regard to individuals’ actual place of birth or self-identification.)

The “Case Study” has three elements: a main text, a sidebar and a “chronological schema” that purports to depict the timeline of “the natives living together with the migratory peoples” (p. 28).<sup>191</sup> The timeline enumerates the migratory people in question:

---

<sup>190</sup> In recent years, several Romanian historians have reconsidered the role that these “migratory peoples” have played in the creation of the first “Romanian states” and have concluded that traditional Romanian historiography has been drastically underrating their importance (see, for example, Djuvara [2009] on the Cumans).

<sup>191</sup> “Schemă cronologică a conviețuirii autohtonilor cu migrații.”

Daco-Romans (!), Goths, Huns, Gepids, Avars and Slavs, and, in parallel, traces out the genesis of the Romanian people: Dacians → Daco-Romans → Romanians. The two tracks are mostly kept separate, meeting in just two places: the point of origin (Dacians) and the point of arrival (Romanians). The sidebar provides a few details about each one of these peoples. The main text only focuses on one of them: the Huns. Given the historically fraught relationship between Romania and Hungary, the authors' choice to single out the Huns (the Hungarian's putative barbarian ancestors) is telling. Not only are the "migratory peoples" a marked category in opposition to the "natives," but the Huns are also a marked category in opposition to the wider "migratory peoples" category. Not surprisingly, the description accorded to the Huns is a bleak one:

Here's how the Roman writer Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>192</sup> describes the Huns' lifestyle: "They came from Asia. They have a wild appearance. In the first days after their birth, children have their faces deeply lacerated with an iron. They grow old without having grown a beard, full of scars and wrinkles, better resembling two-legged animals than human beings. They do not eat cooked food, but rather wild grass roots and the meat of all kinds of animals, [meat that is eaten] half raw, having warmed it up a bit in between their legs and the horses' backs. They do not take shelter in houses and avoid them like they would graves. In their wanderings through mountains and forests, they become accustomed early in life to cold, hunger and thirst. The Hun men buy and sell, eat and drink on horseback day and night, and sleep deeply hanging over the horses' necks. They even take counsel on horseback... They all go here and there, having no stable homes and no laws." (p. 28)<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> No mention is made of the fact that, as a Roman writer and soldier, Ammianus Marcellinus could hardly be expected to praise the Huns who would soon play a big role in bringing down the Western Roman Empire.

<sup>193</sup> "Iată cum descrie scriitorul roman Ammianus Marcellinus felul de viață al hunilor: 'Ei au venit din Asia. Au o înfățișare sălbatică. Copiilor, chiar din primele zile de la naștere, li se brăzdează adânc obraji cu un fier. Ei îmbătrânesc fără barbă, plini de cicatrici și zbârcituri, părând mai degrabă animale cu două picioare decât oameni. Nu se hrănesc cu mâncare gătită, ci cu rădăcini de ierburi sălbatice și cu carne de animale de tot felul, jumătate crudă, pe care o încălzesc puțin așezând-o între picioarele lor și spinarea cailor. Nu se adăpostesc în case și fug de ele ca de niște morminte. În rătăcirile lor prin munți și păduri se obișnuiesc de mici cu frigul, foamea și setea. Bărbații huni cumpără și vând, mănâncă și beau, stând călare ziua și noaptea și, aplecați pe gâtul cailor, dorm adânc. Ei și la sfat stau călări... Toți umblă de colo-colo fără locuri stabile și fără legi.'"

The “migratory people,” and the Huns in particular, are carefully and rather elaborately defined. They are one way and not another; they are never characterized by political, social or cultural diversity. They are a marked category and thus “abnormal.” The prototypical “Romanian,” therefore, is further defined by that which he is not: an uncivilized, lawless (Hun[garian]) invader.

In this chapter and the previous one, I have sought to examine precisely how the historical narrative put forward by contemporary Romanian textbooks has been built on the tropes of *origins*, *unity*, and *continuity*. To that end, in Chapter 6, I traced the development of a homogenous “Getae-Dacian” identity category. In the present chapter, I have continued tracking the progression of that identity category and have identified two pivotal moments when it has shed its old names and acquired new ones: from “Getae-Dacians” to “Daco-Romans” via “Romanization,” and from “Daco-Romans” to “Romanians” via “ethnogenesis” and in contradistinction to the external and internal Other. While in the last two chapters I have endeavored to offer a variety of “fixes” that pertain to the strategic deployment of language on the textbook page, in the seventh and last chapter of this dissertation, I will revert to the macro level and address one potential vehicle for implementing such fixes: the so-called “joint textbook.”

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

In the two analysis chapters in this dissertation, I have offered upwards of 20 specific recommendations to authors of Romanian history textbooks, in order to help them produce historical narratives that welcome multiple identities (past, present and future) and stimulate critical thinking on the part of the students. A few themes cut across these recommendations:

1) An emphasis on metadiscourse, that is, on language that doesn't just recount past events but also explicitly addresses the historiographer's language choices when recounting those events, as well as some of the available framing alternatives.

2) A de-emphasizing of clarity, certainty and linearity and an embracing of ambiguity, hybridity and multivocality, at least when addressing controversial issues.

3) Honesty about the availability of information and evidence (or lack thereof) surrounding certain historical events.

4) A sustained effort to stimulate the students' critical thinking abilities and develop their information literacy skills, by discussing with them the credibility of various historical sources, as well as the various processes by which "objective" historical discourse is achieved.

5) An understanding of the political and material consequences of various ideographs (such as "Getae-Dacian," "Romanian," "Romanization," "ethnogenesis," "people/kin/nation," "ancestors").

If this elevator pitch were to have its own elevator pitch, it would read something like this: “Metadiscourse and a focus on hybridity make for a historical narrative oriented towards peace, tolerance and diversity, rather than war, nationalism and purity.” This concluding chapter seeks to add one last bit of context to the dissertation’s two key concepts: metadiscourse and hybridity.

I begin with a relatively in-depth examination of one of the most promising mechanisms by which contemporary historians can prime themselves and their audiences to accept a critical narrative of history: the joint textbook, that is, a textbook created by historians from two or more countries with a record of animosity. Narratives that help students bring a critical lens to historical events, claims and priorities can obviously best be written by historiographers who have themselves been educated (formally in school, or informally through readings and discussions with their peers) in the critical paradigm. Such individuals are unfortunately still in very short supply in Romania, despite the notable efforts of a handful of professors of history across the country. However, were Romanian historians to work with, say, Hungarian historians to create a joint textbook, I believe that this systemic lack of critical education could be largely compensated for by the very process of reconciling opposing historical narratives that such a textbook would require. In other words, the joint textbook by itself should offer a measure of guarantee that most ethnocentric accounts of history have been ironed out of the narrative, and that long-standing thorny issues (e.g., the past demography of Transylvania and its connection to contemporary issues of political legitimacy) are handled in a less than definitive, simplistic manner. Below, I seek to explain precisely how the pressure to come up with a

version of history that would be acceptable to both parties favors the emergence of a text that is so very much in sync with my own priorities as summarized above.

While in previous chapters I have analyzed specific instances in which the Romanian historical narrative fails to grapple in any significant way with the ambiguity and heterogeneity that are intrinsic to all stories of “becoming” (including that of “becoming Romanian”), the second half of this chapter is devoted to providing an extra bit of rationale for embracing uncertainty and diversity. I thus conclude with a return to an important discussion from Chapters 1 and 2: just what kind of identity do I wish a reconstructed Romanian history textbook offered its readers?

#### A. The Joint Textbook: A Shortcut to Critical Thinking

Most joint history textbooks that have seen the light of day so far have explicitly been based on the “truth and reconciliation” paradigm established by the 1996 eponymous Commission in South Africa, in that they aim to move beyond prejudice and conflict by learning everything that can be learned about the injustices of the past and agreeing to “forgive” one’s former enemy (Wang, 2009). Dozens of joint textbook projects exist in the world, in various stages of completion, and benefitting from various levels of recognition from governments, scholars, media and public opinion: Franco-German, Chinese-Japanese-Korean, German-Polish, Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region, Israeli-Palestinian, Greco-Turkish, German-Czech, inter-religions in Egypt, Russian-German, and others (Korostelina & Lässig, 2013). In November 2006, a joint meeting of the Romanian and Hungarian governments called for the creation of a

Romanian-Hungarian textbook. A mixed committee of historians was formed, but a textbook is yet to see the light of day.

In her introduction to “History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbook Projects,” Karina Korostelina (2013) aptly summarizes the benefits of joint history textbooks:

Common history projects involve peace education on several levels. First of all, common history textbooks can play an important role in combating negative stereotypes and biases by presenting ample information about neighboring countries, their history, culture and achievements. They foster common national or regional identities and dissolve borders between different groups. *They also redefine nationalistic narratives by exploring the idea of historical truth and show why historic narratives cannot provide simple, literal truths. The past is not easily reconstructed or “made amenable to linear and uplifting narratives.” [...] The transformation of exclusive narratives in history textbooks into common narratives that emphasize multiculturalism and social heterogeneity underlines the importance of inclusiveness and tolerance.*

Second, the peace education framework enables common history projects to face the complex task of reconciling the wrongdoings of all parties in post-conflict societies. [...]

Third, the promotion of peace education is strongly connected to the attitudes of participating historians. The main point of history is not dates of events or battles on which all historians can easily agree. Rather, *the most important questions of history are those pertaining to the sources, significance and impact of events, and the possibility of numerous interpretations depending on various social and political perspectives.* [...]

Fourth the peace education framework promotes the development of the students’ understanding of history and its impact on dynamics of violence and peace. [...] The peace education framework provides a resolution for the problem of different interpretations of history by *increasing awareness about the impact of textbooks authors’ attitudes, visions and identities on their descriptions of intergroup relations, conflict and peace* [...].

Fifth, the peace education framework fosters the skills and the knowledge of teachers who use common history textbooks as supplementary or primary textbooks. (pp. 21-4, my emphasis)

### 1. The Franco-German and the Chinese-Korean-Japanese textbooks

Without a doubt, the prototypical joint textbook is currently the Franco-German textbook, the initial volume of which was published in 2006. It was the result of many

decades of discussions between French and German scholars and politicians, going back all the way to the 1930s, before the ethnonationalist explosions of the Second World War hit the pause button on all European reconciliation projects (Defrance & Pfeil, 2013). In 2003, 500 French and German students between the ages of 15 and 19 met in Berlin under the aegis of the French-German Youth Parliament and called for the creation of a joint textbook. The idea was soon endorsed by both governments, and a mixed committee of historians began drawing up chapters and timelines. According to Defrance and Pfeil (2013), the French side initially conceived of the text as a teacher's aid-book, but the Germans' insistence on putting together a real textbook that could be taught to high school students in both countries won out. The first volume of *Histoire/Geschichte* was submitted to French and German authorities for approval, in open competition with every other history textbook on the market. The French Ministry of Education approved it, as did all 16 German states, which set their own educational policies – the first time, according to German broadcaster Deutsche Welle (Gruber, 2006), that all states had approved the same history textbook. *Histoire/Geschichte* now has three volumes, covering history from ancient Greece to the present day, and is being taught to 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The second highest profile joint textbook in the world is the 2005 China-Japan-Korea textbook, whose current version is officially titled *A History to Open the Future: Modern East Asian History and Regional Reconciliation*. A considerably heavier lifting than the contemporaneous Franco-German effort, this text was billed as a “supplementary teaching resource” for middle schools, and has not been approved as a textbook in its own right by either one of the three countries (Yang & Sin, 2013). It was the result of



three years of work by more than 50 Chinese, Korean and Japanese scholars and teachers, most of whom were not closely associated with the policy-setting Education Ministries in their countries (Wang, 2009).

I find these two textbooks remarkable not only because of what they share in common (i.e., their status as the most prominent joint textbooks currently in circulation), but also because of what separates them: the political context in which they've been published. As Defrance and Pfeil (2013) point out, the European textbook "is not an instrument with which to spur on the process of Franco-German reconciliation, which was achieved in the 1960s and has now evolved into a phase of cooperation" (p. 59). The East Asian text, on the other hand, is operating in an environment characterized by repetitive "history wars," most of which pit the Chinese and Korean governments and public opinion against Japanese right-wing politicians (Chubaek, 2010). As will be shown below, while the Franco-German textbook would seem to be an ideal model for a future Romanian-Hungarian textbook on account of shared history, it is in fact the Chinese-Japanese-Korean textbook that provides a better comparison, given the largely unresolved nature of the ideological and historical conflicts between the two Eastern European countries.

## 2. Metadiscourse and Dispute Resolution

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, both textbooks showcase a significant amount of metadiscourse, as the authors clearly felt the need to explain and justify their rhetorical choices to audiences whom they fully expected to be critical to a fault of their work. For starters, the sheer oddity of the joint textbook makes both sets of

authors begin with a preface in which they anticipate their readers wondering, “Why such an enterprise?” (*Histoire/Geschichte*, 2006, p. 2<sup>194</sup>) and answer: to create a common conscience that goes beyond one country which could, in turn, bring peace to a region that has known much bloodshed and suffering. Thus, the Chinese-Japanese-Korean text authors wish to “create an East Asia in which peace and democracy prevail and human rights are guaranteed” (*A History to Open the Future*, 2010, p. 2), and the Franco-German text authors plead for “an European consciousness that has historically been based on the universal values of human rights and democracy that the last world war trampled underfoot” (*Histoire/Geschichte*, 2006, p. 5). The advocacy function of history textbooks, which generally goes unmentioned in traditional texts, is made apparent here. I, of course, am thrilled to see this, as transparency and self-reflection are constitutive ingredients of critical pedagogy.

Another metadiscursive element that both textbooks exhibit is a discussion about how the narrative they present can be taught in the classrooms. Notably, at the end of a chapter titled “The French-German Partnership: An Exemplary Success?” the European textbook includes two sidebars presenting “points of view” about the French and the German pedagogical models offered by a German student who had studied in a French university, and a French student who had studied in a German university, respectively. Including these musings about pedagogy helps the readers of these textbooks understand that history can be taught in many ways, and that reading a narrative and remembering its highlights is just one of those ways. *How* one teaches something is itself a lesson that the students will learn, whether the instructor intended for that or not. The praxis of critical

---

<sup>194</sup> All direct quotes from the Franco-German textbook are my translation from the French.

pedagogy and the students' processes of critical thinking and learning will always inform each other.

Despite its lack of high standing within state-run curricula (or perhaps because of it), the China-Japan-Korea textbook is a genuine embarrassment of metadiscursive riches, as its treatment of the intersections of historiography and politics is generous, complex and disarmingly sincere. About midway through the text, the authors include a section on “Japanese History Textbook Controversies” which recounts the huge international uproar in 2001 when the Japanese government approved a history textbook (known as the “Fusosha textbook”) that presented imperial Japan’s occupation of Southeast Asia as a decidedly positive event which was largely met with “cooperation from local people who had suffered under white people’s colonial rule for hundreds of years” (qtd. in *A History to Open the Future*, 2010, p. 220). The excerpts from the Fusosha textbook are presented alongside excerpts from Korean and Chinese textbooks which, predictably enough, speak of “Japanese imperialism’s war of aggression,” “policies to stamp out our nation and our national culture,” and “every conceivable evil deed” (p. 220). “The images portrayed are very different, aren’t they?” the authors ask their readers (p. 221). By way of conclusion, the Textbook Controversies section traces the post-1950 history of Japanese historiography, from its reluctance to recognize that Japan had committed atrocities during the Second World War to a concerted effort to spare the feelings of neighboring countries, and back again. In fairness to the Japanese, however, the authors also note that, because of its controversial nature, as of 2005, the Fusosha textbook “remains almost completely unused in Japan’s schools” (p. 221). What’s more, towards the end of the main text, we are given the case-study of Ienaga Saburo, a Japanese textbook author who

has successfully sued the government to force it to approve his textbooks which depicted Japan's actions in WWII in a negative light.

The readers of the Korean version of the joint textbook (more on this below) are treated to a 17-page appendix titled "The Making of *A History to Open the Future as Observed by a South Korean Participant*" whose author, Sin Chubaek, lays bare much of the painstaking negotiations and debates that eventually produced a text that (some) Chinese, Korean and Japanese historians could live with. First, Chubaek confirms that the joint textbook is meant to provide a refutation of the Fusosha textbook "by shedding light on Japan's aggression, colonial rule, and the misery of war" (p. 237). The Korean author then brings us a detailed behind-the-scenes perspective on the five international conferences where the Japanese, Korean and Chinese historians met to hash out the plan for the textbook, as well as its contents. In what I consider to be a particularly salutary choice on his part, Chubaek devotes most of his appendix to explaining exactly how the numerous points of contention were resolved (or at least mitigated) by the future authors of the joint textbook. Five distinct solutions emerge from his account.

The most obvious (and perhaps most desirable) way to resolve a political dispute is to reach a compromise that leaves no one entirely happy or overwhelmingly frustrated. In Chubaek's account, the many authors of the joint textbook were often able to talk things over and find a way to narrate an incident or elucidate a cause-effect relationship in terms that would not outright offend either party. A dispute about labeling and periodization, for example, was ended by splitting the difference:

The other {conflict}, pointed out by the Korean and Japanese teams, was that it was inappropriate to put the Sino-Japanese Jiàwǔ War under the heading of "Imperialism and Colonial Status" because Japan at the time was not yet an imperialist country. The Chinese team countered that China was turned into a

semi-colony as a consequence of the Sino-Japanese war and it was, on the contrary, therefore quite appropriate to include it under the heading of imperialism. After further debate it was eventually resolved that treaty port opening would be kept as the starting point, but that this would be done in a way that emphasized cross-country comparisons and that 1894 [the year the Sino-Japanese War started] would be used as the dividing line between periods covered in the two chapters. (p. 240, square parentheses in the original)

From the perspective of critical pedagogy, the students reading this account have a chance to learn that history does not come within a preordained periodization. This insight about the constructed nature of time divisions is of a piece with similar insights about the constructed nature of administrative units (such as “countries”), events (such as “the Middle Ages”), and entities (such as the “Getae-Dacians”).

A second method to resolve disputes involves one party allowing itself to be persuaded of the superior merits of a position held by the other party. Chubaek recounts one such instance, in which the three sides initially disagreed about the framing of the historical narrative:

Differences over the constitutive elements of the supplementary teaching resource persisted. The Chinese wanted the focus to be on the narrative text. The Japanese team wanted an arrangement with a balance between documents and narrative. And the Korean team advocated an exploratory format built around documentary sources. Given these circumstances, the decision was made to proceed with the drafting of sample sections and to continue the debate using these as points of reference. Accordingly, each country was asked to produce two writing samples from an assigned chapter—Japan was given Chapter 1, South Korea Chapter 2, and China Chapter 3.

After reviewing the sample subsection drafts produced by the three country teams [...], the thirteenth Korean Supplementary Teaching Resource Domestic Conference determined that it would propose a set of guidelines for arranging the various elements on a page to the Japanese and Chinese teams at the upcoming November meeting in Seoul. We had come to the conclusion that a narrative approach would actually work better than a source exploration approach in encouraging student discussion, but within that context sources should be arranged in a way that would facilitate comparisons across the three countries. The Korean side had, in other words, reconsidered its position and had moved toward the approach that the Chinese team was championing. (p. 242)

When faced with disagreement over the shape the textbook would take, rather than get bogged down in fruitless debate, the three sides challenged themselves to create three rival products and then let them fight it out in the marketplace of ideas, so to speak. Of course, such free competition can only happen in an environment characterized if not by trust then at least by good will and fairness. According to Chubaek's account, the South Koreans were open to changing their minds – no small feat considering how difficult it often is for scholars to admit, even in the most comfortable of situations, that their way of doing things might not be the best one out there. Once again, the values modelled by these historians in the process of writing the historical narrative (and the openness with which they address them) can teach their students as much as the actual contents of that narrative can.

A third way to handle disagreement, employed by the authors in situations when the parties are simply unable to come to a common denominator, is to present the conflicting texts side by side (the so-called “dual narrative approach” [Lässig, 2013, p. 14]), and let the readers decide whom to believe (if anyone). Far from explaining away the authors' failure to compromise, Chubaek opts once again for transparency, disarmingly confessing to political and cultural interferences:

[T]he most sensitive item, the Ŭlsa Treaty of 1905 and its legality, was dealt with by using the column format to outline the points of contention and leaving judgment concerning the matter to the reader. From the standpoint of Koreans' sensibilities the answer is clear-that this is a powerful instance of illegal action on the part of Japan-but in the context of the current state of research in the two countries this was probably the appropriate way to deal with the matter. It was no doubt also an outcome that illustrates the way committee members from Korea and Japan were subject to invisible pressures from the societies they belong to and consequently found it necessary to take these pressures into account along with the academic considerations. (p. 247)

A fourth, related, method for resolving dispute that Chubaek addresses in his Appendix is the “both-and” method: crafting a narrative that attends to everyone’s priorities without necessarily pitting them against one another. This solution is most suitable to situations in which the dispute is neither weak enough that it can be solved through persuasion or compromise, nor strong enough that the side-by-side divergent stories would induce some sort of dissonance in the reader’s mind:

In the case of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident the question was how do we square in an objective manner Japan’s aggressive impulse and the resulting historical inevitability of conflict, on the one hand, with the randomness of a specific local incident, on the other, and to do this for an incident that has been the object of intense dispute but where definitive empirical evidence is nonetheless lacking? In the end, the subsection was written in a way that attempted to shed light on both the chance element in the incident itself and the broader context of a historical situation that made the Sino-Japanese war virtually inevitable and for which the Japanese military was responsible. (p. 248)

This quote is additionally remarkable for its reference to the lack of “definitive empirical evidence” and its discussion of the difficulty in connecting individual, small (“local”) events to momentous events, such as war. Neither of these topics are usually in evidence in Romanian history textbooks – and they are sorely missed. For example, the “dark millennium” referenced in Chapter 4 (so called because we have very little evidence of what the inhabitants of Transylvania were up to during those centuries) is at the core of undoubtedly the greatest dispute between Romanian and Hungarian historians. But because confessing to limited concrete proof doesn’t help one make the case for a perennially Romanian Transylvania, the overwhelming majority of Romanian textbooks never go there. As Korostelina (2013) points out above, one of the benefits of joint textbooks is their attention to sourcing. Indeed, one assumes that a mixed, Romanian-Hungarian committee of historians would have no choice but to pay close attention to the

actual evidence, as anyone offering up an unsubstantiated narrative of identity and land ownership would be instantly challenged by the other party. As for the dubious causality relationship between small and big events, the authors of Romanian textbooks unfortunately rarely hesitate to draw the thickest, straightest lines from a skirmish to a war.

Finally, when confronted with truly irreconcilable disputes, the Chinese, Korean and Japanese historians employed a method of last resort: publishing different information in each one of the three textbook versions:

[T]here were differences [...] between the Chinese view that the people who lived in Taiwan prior to the Sixteenth Century should be called “highland people” and the Korean and Japanese perspective that they should be called “indigenous people” or “aborigines.” [...] In the case of the latter, which is an illustration of another instance in which a clear consensus was not reached, the term *wōnjumin* (indigenous people) was used in the Korean edition (p. 86) and the term “highland people” were used in the Chinese (*gāoshānzú*, p. 66) and in the Japanese versions (*kōsanzoku*, p. 64) (p. 247).

If a Romanian-Hungarian committee of historians got together to hash out the history of Transylvania, I would hope, of course, that extended negotiations between them would preempt the need for such a rhetorical trick, especially in cases such as the one above where population labels are concerned. But I could easily see the historians employing the other four methods for resolving disputes without papering over them with lies, euphemisms or simply silence.

### 3. Diversity of meaning, diversity of identity

In a 2017 interview (Grădinaru, 2017), historian Lucian Boia (he of the *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* bombshell of a book) argued that a joint Romanian-Hungarian textbook would be harder to achieve than the Franco-German



textbook was, not because the level of historical animosity between the Eastern Europeans is higher than that between the Western Europeans, but because the power differential between Romania and Hungary has always been different than that between France and Germany. While the latter pair have fought many wars against each other, they have rarely dominated each other *culturally* for long and they have rarely feared for the integrity of their national identity. Transylvanian Romanians, however, spent centuries under total Hungarian domination and Transylvanian Hungarians are nowadays vociferously denouncing Romanian efforts to smother their language, culture and identity. Boia, however, does not make any reference to the Chinese-Korean-Japanese textbook, which, as mentioned above, is a better analogue for a Romanian-Hungarian text, given the historical context of imperial Japan's brutal conquest of Korea and China during the Second World War, as well as China's steadily increasing assertiveness in contemporary world affairs.

The give-and-take that a joint textbook requires from its authors is not limited to the interpretation of controversial historical events. In his Appendix, Sin Chubaek recounts a discovery that has important implications for the reform project laid out in this dissertation:

The point was that, not only today, but back then as well, Japanese society was composed of a variety of people. This was a perspective that, we had to admit, the committee had not taken into account. With this as an inspiration, the Korean team members decided that they would write about Japanese who helped Korea and Koreans. [...] The very important point was brought home that it is precisely when one stops looking at things from a national perspective and makes an effort to understand the people that one begins to pay greater attention to another society's diversity. (pp. 243-4)

If I was to limit my criticism to just one target in this dissertation, that target would, of course, be the effort to paint “Romanians” (as well as “Getae-Dacians” and “Daco-Romans” – and also “Hungarians” and “Turks”) as a monolithic, homogenous *neam* that acts purposefully throughout history. That belief in the preordained “progress” of a faceless entity, identified only through racial and ethnic labels, comes with two related unsavory implications: 1) Individuals are not ultimately responsible for their conduct, even when engaged in wars of extermination, and 2) Atrocities may be unfortunate, but since History/God/Nature has deemed them necessary, denouncing them is a futile exercise. Using language that recognizes the heterogeneity of any population rather than obliterate it is therefore one of the main requests I make of textbook authors in this dissertation. Indeed, in the concluding “best practices” chapter of *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbook Projects* (2013), Korostelina argues that joint textbooks must always go beyond simply offering the historical perspectives of neighboring countries: they should offer “a more comprehensive picture of all ethnic groups that compose a particular nation” (pp. 237-8).

Chubaek’s Appendix has one more gift to give, this one related to language choice. Negotiating with his Chinese and Japanese counterparts, the Korean historian found that “identical character combinations” had different meanings in each language (p. 245), and that terms that he had “thought were perfectly acceptable were unfamiliar or unpalatable to others” (p. 247). The debates around word choice had quickly morphed into debates about ideology, since, of course, language is never *just language*:

In the concluding section entitled “Peace and Reconciliation in East Asia,” the Japanese team argued for the inclusion of a message calling for unity and peace among mankind based on the concept of a “global citizen.” The Korean team offered up its opposition on grounds that the term global citizen was a Western-

centric way of thinking invented by the great powers that was not suited to East Asian society and in South Korea the term global citizen does not necessarily have a positive meaning. With the difference between the two sides still present at the final stages of the review, a compromise was reached in which international solidarity and cooperation among citizen movements would be emphasized. (p. 250)

What the Franco-German textbook and the Chinese-Korean-Japanese textbook show us is that when challenge and negotiation are built into the textbook-writing process, the authors have no choice but to embrace the critical paradigm: they find themselves forced to explain their language choices to their peers, to explicitly connect their assertions to evidence, to evaluate said evidence and to admit the lack of evidence when appropriate, to entertain alternative narrative frames, and to be wary of ideographs. Moreover, if the two textbooks discussed above are representative of joint textbooks in general, it seems that once prompted to engage in critical thinking, the authors will also share insights from that process with their readers. And *that*, of course, is one of the main things I advocate for in this dissertation. Like Boia, I don't believe that a Romanian-Hungarian (or Romanian-Roma, or Romanian-Turkish) history textbook that would act as a catalyst for critical thinking is imminent. But it is certainly a worthwhile aspiration.

### B. Hybridity and Ambiguity

A few years ago, I presented parts of this dissertation at an international conference at Columbia University in New York City. I ended my talk with a series of recommendations for authors of history textbooks. The very first question from the audience came from a lady whose heavily accented English made me speculate that she was a Native Romanian speaker. She said to me, "You recommend that schoolchildren be given a historical narrative that is not linear and not clean, but rather riddled with

ambiguity and uncertainty. Aren't you afraid that such a narrative will be psychologically damaging to those children, who need a simple, clear story about their national identity?" Since that conference, this has probably been the question I have been asked most frequently when presenting my ideas of textbook reform. My answer has evolved a bit throughout the years, but the essence has remained constant: "This is a legitimate question to raise, but, in my view, its deal-breaking potential is limited. I am not a psychologist. But my readings in a variety of social sciences, as well as my personal experiences and observations, tell me that children 1) always-already know that life is complicated, 2) aren't overly concerned or emotionally challenged when presented with complicated narratives, and 3) benefit immensely from strong doses of critical thinking administered at any age."

The complete picture of the psychological effects of ambiguity is more complicated, of course. Jamie Holmes's 2015 book, *Nonsense: The Power of Not Knowing*, takes a close look at a variety of case studies and experiments in which people have had to deal with ambiguity, uncertainty and incomplete knowledge. He quotes both old and new theories of psychology that posit that humans have an innate need for clarity and certainty. And there is a good reason for that: confronted with the complexity of everyday life, humans need to be able to make quick judgments (hence the resilience of stereotypes in all human cultures) and then act on those judgments resolutely, rather than be paralyzed by ambiguity and an overabundance of options. "Our need to conquer the unresolved," Holmes writes, "is essential to our ability to function in the world" (pp. 12-13). In that sense, my Columbia University inquisitor had a point. Holmes quotes pioneering psychologist Jean Piaget who argued in his work that this instinctual drive to

resolve inconsistencies is crucial to the process by which children learn. So children who are presented consistently with uncertainty and who are denied the chance to resolve that uncertainty will probably not flourish intellectually or emotionally. But neither will children who are presented with nothing but certainty. “[W]hen our thirst for clear answers goes into hyperdrive,” extremism follows (p. 13). The person with no doubts is a fanatic. There is arguably no place where the drawbacks of permanent certainty and clarity are more evident than the social (racial, ethnic, national) identity narrative that people offer up to each other. Those who insist that they themselves have a singular, unadulterated ethnonational identity imbued with an unambiguous, virtuous lineage are those who will also find it easy to accept the weaponizing of nationalist discourse and the dehumanization of other people.

While Piaget’s discoveries do indeed show that children (as well as adults) possess the instinct to seek clarification, they also show that the process of inspecting and eventually resolving ambiguity is also crucial to their intellectual, emotional and creative development. In other words, while perpetual ambiguity might be damaging to young minds, so is not enough ambiguity. A balance of uncertainty and certainty, potential and affirmation, clarity and paradox should therefore be the goal of (critical) pedagogy.

Holmes also relies on contemporary experimental psychology to argue that the more desperate one gets in one’s quest for clarity, the more one becomes susceptible of making bad decisions and believing in conspiracies and other irrational “answers.” What’s more, these tendencies are stronger in times of tumult – that is, precisely when we need a clear mind the most. One does not have to be an elite connoisseur of politics and history to observe that nationalist ideologies are in ascendance when populations

encounter difficult times such as violence (whether because of war, terrorism or domestic criminality) and economic depression. At the time of this writing (2019), Romania is traversing one of the better periods in its history, with fairly steady economic gains and virtually no serious foreign threats. This, therefore, is the perfect time to critically reassess not just the content of the history textbook, but also its goals; not just the “history of the Romanians” but also the history of “Romanianness.” In his book, as well as in several articles he has co-authored or been interviewed for, Holmes offers several related ways to move forward that resonate with much of the focus of this dissertation.

First, schools (as well as most other organizations) should help the people they employ and serve get comfortable with ambiguity. Uncertainty should be seen as a useful challenge to be methodically overcome, as a gateway to curiosity and creativity, not as a nuisance to be eliminated as soon as possible. Second, schools should “teach ignorance,” that is, engage students in discussions about the things we *don't* know about the world, rather than simply pouring into their mind the things we do know (or think we know) according to the centuries-old banking model of education that Paolo Freire has famously denounced in his works.

But, if people are naturally conditioned to paper over all asperities and achieve “closure” as soon as possible, how exactly does one build up a tolerance for ambiguity among students? Unsurprisingly, Holmes’s answer mirrors the main “fix” that I have proposed in this dissertation: the strategic use of metadiscourse. In *Nonsense*, Holmes details several experiments in which psychologists were able to help people make solid decisions in stressful situations by asking them to think about those situations and about their potential responses to them *before* they found themselves forced to act. Talking

about the way we frame things will help us decide whether we truly want to frame them like this or like that. Metadiscourse kickstarts critical thinking. Students should not just be familiarized with historical events; they should also be encouraged to consider alternative frames for those events, as well as competing meanings for them. Students should not be offered a simple, straightforward, and ultimately disingenuous,<sup>195</sup> historical narrative of “Romanian nationhood”; they should be encouraged to develop awareness of their “situational need for closure” so that they can question it and make responsible, informed decisions about their social identities (p. 80).

A 2015 Mind/Shift story (Flanagan, 2015) based on an interview with Holmes further breaks down the recipe for metadiscourse. Among its specific recommendations are the following:

- “Address the emotional impact of uncertainty.”
- “Show how the process of discovery is often messy and non-linear.”
- “Emphasize the current topics of debate in a field.”

I believe that each one of these recommendations applies to history textbooks. The books – and the classroom pedagogies accompanying them – should make room for discussions of identity: the meanings that the term “Romanian” has had, has now, and might have in the future. They should also take the readers on a journey of discovery that allows them to get lost, to meet with dead-ends, bifurcations and roundabouts, while always being on hand to discuss the wisdom of each choice: to discuss the expectations, assumptions,

---

<sup>195</sup> I have argued, in previous chapters, that history is not – cannot be – straightforward. While there are an infinite number of “correct” renditions of the historical narrative, a story that presents events in a linear fashion, like beads on a string, is not, in my view, a legitimate story that should be offered to students. No one’s social identity is clean or straightforward, and the education system should not seek to convince students that *certainty* is the natural state of things. In *Nonsense*, Holmes makes a similar point about ambivalence which, he says, “is a far more common state of mind than most people assume” (p. 108).

values, beliefs, and norms of meaning-making and knowledge-making. Finally, textbooks should showcase disagreements in historiography, rather than giving them short shrift or ignoring them altogether. Were the Dacians and the Getae the same people? We're not sure. Was there a significant population of "Romanized" people in Transylvania before the Magyars of old came? We're not sure, despite furious professions of certainty from many Romanian and Hungarian historians whose intellectual acumen has habitually slinked away when confronted by accusations of treason and xenophilia. History textbooks should *lean into* the inconsistencies, the disagreements, the ambiguities and the gaps in knowledge (of which, as mentioned before, they are many in the case of Transylvania's "parentage") and provide the students with an opportunity to study original materials, debate theories of historiography, and generally challenge everything before (provisionally) accepting any explanatory narrative.

### 1. The Marginal, the Immigrant, the *Mestiza*

In my response to the question I received all those years ago at Columbia, I mentioned that children generally know that the "national story" is complicated. But I didn't get much of a chance to explain why that is. One reason, of course, is that plenty of children (and plenty of *Romanian* children in particular) are raised in multiethnic families (like mine), have friends of different ethnicities than themselves, or, at the very least, go to school with kids of different ethnicities.

As Hall repeatedly pointed out, "[m]odern nations are all cultural hybrids" (2011, p. 617). The multicultural experience is a reality; ethnic homogeneity is the real utopia (Antohei, 1999). The various Romanian provinces have always had sizable minority



populations. In 1918, Romania roughly doubled its territory and population having acquired the provinces of Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia. According to Boia (2015), this brought most Romanian-speakers in the region within the borders of the Romanian state, but it also brought in a whole lot of “non-Romanians,” to the extent that the 1930 census found only 71.9 percent of the population to be ethnic Romanians. According to Hurezeanu (2010), in between the two World Wars (up until around 1938), roughly 800,000 Germans and the same number of Jews lived in Romania - some of the largest such populations in Europe outside of Germany.

Additionally, Romania has been a major *source* of immigrants, at least since the 1980s when waves of desperate people found a myriad ingenious ways to escape a country ruled with an iron fist by a Communist dictator. The process of emigration accelerated after 2007 when Romania’s accession to the European Union gradually opened up Western European markets to Romanian labor and business. As of 2017, at least 3,6 million Romanians lived outside of Romania, the 17<sup>th</sup> largest diaspora in the world (Porter and Russell, 2018). Whether one is writing a “History of Romania” or a “History of the Romanians,” one does not have to look far to find Romanian lives that have been deeply impacted by the encounter with the Other. First, we have the immigrant, who, as Hall has pointed out repeatedly is (in Rojek’s [2003] paraphrasing) the “true representative” of the “late modern experience” because the immigrants’ inherent liminality “has given them a head start in living in and with the culture of hybridity” (p. 185). Second, we have the “internal Other” – the ethnic or racial minority, the mixed-ethnicity individual, the bilingual in-betweeners.

In her seminal *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) speaks of a “new *mestiza* consciousness” that is the result of “racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization” (p. 99), a consciousness embodied by the Chicana who is neither fully Mexican nor fully white American (or is both, or something else altogether), who is “not comfortable” in America “but home” there nevertheless (p. 19), who is “[s]tubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders [her] unbreakable” (p. 86).<sup>196</sup> The *mestiza* has always had to grapple with ambiguity; clean narratives of identity have never been available to her:

In perceiving conflicting information and points of view, she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supported to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. [...]

The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else. (p. 101)

The *mestiza* is the future, Anzaldúa argues, and it's hard to disagree with her. Along with the immigrant, the *mestiza* has already mastered the art of “the breaking down of paradigms” and of “the straddling of two or more cultures” (p. 102). History textbooks should do more than acknowledge the existence of mixed-ethnicity and ethnic minority

---

<sup>196</sup> I use Anzaldúa's text with a measure of trepidation. In an interview conducted by Karin Ikas (1999) and included at the end of the second edition of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa delivers a stark warning against the misuse of her words:

[W]hite critics and teachers often pick just some parts of *Borderlands*. For example, they take the passages in which I talk about *mestizaje* and borderlands because they can more easily apply them to their own experiences. The angrier parts of *Borderlands*, however, are often ignored as they seem to be too threatening and too confrontational. In some way, I think you could call this selective critical interpretation a kind of racism (p. 232).

I'm still not sure whether it's appropriate for me to use Anzaldúa's *mestizaje* concept here.

Romanians from the very beginning of the Romanian state. It should avoid any language that even hints at a Nae Ionescu-like distinction between “good Romanians” and “Romanians pure and simple.” But, more than that, it should give up its obsession with ethnic homogeneity and center its identity narrative on the immigrant/hybrid/*mestizo* as an appropriate symbol of past, present and future diversity in all things “Romanian.”

In the preceding six chapters, I have attempted to sketch out a project of critical pedagogy that would have authors of history textbooks consider alternative frames for the narratives they present: frames that would allow the readers to see how language constructs realities, thereby prompting them to challenge the historiographers’ rhetorical choices and imagine alternatives. I remain a strong believer in the ability of language to shape our view of ourselves and of the Other.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A history to open the future: Modern East Asian history and regional reconciliation.* (2010). (Rev. ed.). Seoul, South Korea: Minimum.
- AAA statement on race. (1998). Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>
- AAPA statement on biological aspects of race. (1996). *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 101, 569-570.
- Agar, M. (1994). *Language shock: Understanding the culture of conversation*. New York: William Morrow.
- Alexe, D. (2015). *Dacopatia și alte rătăcirii românești* [Dacopathy and other Romanian delusions]. București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Althusser, L. (2014). *On the reproduction of capitalism: Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. New York: Verso. (Original work published in 1970)
- Anderson, B. R. O. G. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. (Rev. ed.). New York: Verso.
- Anthony, D.W. (2010). *The horse, the wheel, and language: How Bronze-Age riders from the Eurasian Steppes shaped the modern world*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Antoși, S. (1995, September 18). Teoria istoriei ca provocare a istoriografiei [The theory of history as a historiographical challenge]. In *Litere, Arte, Idei*, 6-7.
- Antoși, S. (1999). *Civitas imaginalis: Istorie și utopie în cultura română* [Civitas imaginalis: History and utopia in Romanian culture]. (2nd ed.). București, Romania: Polirom.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Appleby, J., Hunt, L. & Jacob, M. (1995). *Telling the truth about history*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Armbruster, A. (1993). *Romanitatea românilor: Istoria unei idei* [The Romanity of the Romanians: The history of an idea]. București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.

- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Critical thinking VALUE rubric*. Retrieved on June 24, 2019 from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/critical-thinking>
- Balibar, E. (2005:1991). The nation form: History and ideology. In E. Balibar & I.M. Wallerstein (Eds.). *Race, nation, class* (pp. 86-106). London: Verso. (Original work published in 1988)
- Battistella, E.L. (1990). *Markedness: The evaluative superstructure of language*. State University of New York Press.
- Ben-Amos, D. & Weissberg L. (1999). *Cultural memory and the construction of identity*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Berciu, D. (1980). *De la Burebista la Decebal*. (2nd ed.). București, Romania: Editura Politică.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. London: Sage.
- Bloome, D., Power, S.C., Christian, B., Madrid, S., Otto, S. & Shuart-Faris, N. (2008). *On discourse analysis in classrooms: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Boia, L. (2001). *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*. (J.C. Brown, Trans.). Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press.
- Boia, L. (2015). *Cum s-a românizat România* [How Romania Romanianized itself]. București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Borza, R. (2018, July 18). Puțină gramatică. Cuvinte dacice [A little grammar. Dacian words]. *Contributors.ro*. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <http://www.contributors.ro/cultura/putina-gramatica-cuvinte-dacice/>
- Bosch, E., Calafell, F., González-Neira, A., Flaiz, C., Mateu, E., Scheil, H.-G., et al. (2006). Paternal and maternal lineages in the Balkans show a homogenous landscape over linguistic barriers, except for the isolated Aromuns. *Annals of Human Genetics*, 70, 459-487.
- Brather, S. (2002). Ethnic identities as constructions of archaeology: The case of the Alamanni. In A. Gillet (Ed.). *On barbarian identity: Critical approaches to ethnicity*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.

- Brătianu, G.I. (1988). *O enigmă și un miracol istoric: Poporul român* [An enigma and a historical miracle: The Romanian people]. București, Romania: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică. [Originally written in 1942]
- Budeancă, C. & Olteanu, F. (2015). *Identități sociale, culturale, etnice și religioase în comunism* [Social, cultural, ethnic and religious identities in Communism]. București, Romania: Polirom.
- Burke, P. (2015). *The French historical revolution: The Annales School, 1929-2014*. Stanford, CA: Stanford California Press.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R. & Coulthard, M. (Eds.) (1996). *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Chiciudean, I. & Halic, B.-A. (2003). *Imagologie. Imagologie istorică*. [Imagology. Historical imagology]. București, Romania: comunicare.ro.
- Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (2005). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Chubaek, S. (2010). The making of *A history to open the future* as observed by a South Korean participant. In *A history to open the future: Modern East Asian history and regional reconciliation*. (2010). (Rev. ed.). Seoul, South Korea: Minimum.
- Cocoș, R., Schipor, S., Hervella, M., Cianga, P., Popescu, R., Bănescu, C., et al. (2017). Genetic affinities among the historical provinces of Romania and Central Europe as revealed by an mtDNA analysis. *BMC Genetics*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://bmccgenet.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12863-017-0487-5>
- Constantiniu, F. (2002). *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* [An honest history of the Romanian people]. București, Romania: Univers enciclopedic.
- Constantiniu, F. (2007). *De la Răutu și Roller la Mușat și Ardeleanu* [From Răutu and Roller to Mușat and Ardeleanu]. București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Copilaș, E. (2015). *Națiunea socialistă: Politica identității în epoca de aur* [The socialist nation: The politics of identity in the Golden Age]. București, Romania: Polirom.
- Curchin, L.A. (2004). *The Romanization of Central Spain: Complexity, diversity and change in a provincial hinterland*. New York: Routledge.
- Defrance, C. & Pfeil, U. (2013). Symbol or reality? The background, implementation and development of the Franco-German history textbook. In Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects* (pp. 52-68). New York: Routledge.

- De Jasay, A. (1985). *The state*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Dennis, G.T. (Trans.) (1984). *Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine military strategy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Dewald, C. (1987). Narrative surface and authorial voice in Herodotus' *Histories*. In *Arethusa*, 20:1/2, 147-170. Retrieved on June 25, 2019 from [https://sites.duke.edu/greek504\\_01\\_f2016/files/2016/09/dewald\\_1987.pdf](https://sites.duke.edu/greek504_01_f2016/files/2016/09/dewald_1987.pdf)
- Djuvara, N. (2002). *O scurtă istorie a românilor povestită celor tineri* [A short history of the Romanians as told to young people]. București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Djuvara, N. (2009). *Thocomerius-Negru Vodă: Un voievod de origine cumană la începuturile Țării Românești* [King Thocomerius-Negru: A king of Cuman origins at the beginnings of Wallachia] (3rd ed.). București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Downham, C. (2017, September 28). Vikings were never the pure-bred master race white supremacists like to portray. *TheConversation.com*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <http://theconversation.com/vikings-were-never-the-pure-bred-master-race-white-supremacists-like-to-portray-84455>
- Drăgan, J.C. (2000). *Imperiul romano-trac* [The Roman-Tracian empire]. București, Romania: Editura Europa Nova.
- Dumitrescu, N., Manea, M., Niță, C., Pascu, A., Trandafir, A. & Trandafir, M. (2004). *Istoria românilor: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [The history of the Romanians: A textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Humanitas Educațional.
- Dutceac Segesten, A. (2011). *Myth, identity, and conflict: A comparative analysis of Romanian and Serbian history textbooks*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Erni, J.N. (2008). Out-performing identities. In A.M.Y. Lin (Ed.). *Problematizing identity: Everyday struggles in language, culture, and education* (pp. 193-198). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Elliott, A. & du Gay, P. (Eds.) (2009). *Identity in question*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Eutropius (trans. 1853). *Abridgement of Roman History* (J.S. Watson, Trans.). Retrieved on June 30, 2019 from <http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/eutropius/index.html>
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. New York: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1996). A reply to Henry Widdowson's "Discourse analysis: A critical view." *Language and Literature*, 5:1, 49-56.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. New York: Routledge.
- Fassett, D. L., & Warren, J. T. (2006). *Critical communication pedagogy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fishman, J.A. (2002). The primordialist–constructivist debate today: the language–ethnicity link in academic and in everyday-life perspective. In D. Conversi (Ed.), *Ethnonationalism in the contemporary world: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism* (pp. 83-92). London: Routledge.
- Flanagan, L. (2015, October 21). How to spark curiosity in children through embracing uncertainty. *Mind/Shift*. Retrieved on July 2, 2019 from <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/42518/how-to-spark-curiosity-in-children-by-embracing-uncertainty>
- Flowerdew, J. (1999). Description and interpretation in critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1089-1099.
- Flowerdew, J. (2012). *Critical discourse analysis in historiography: The case of Hong Kong's evolving political identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fowler, R.L. (2013). Herodotos and the early mythographers: The case of the Kabeiroi. In S.M. Trzaskoma & R. S. Smith (Eds.), *Writing myth: Mythography in the ancient world*. Walpole, MA: Peeters.
- Freire, P. (1996). *The pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Penguin Books. (Original work published in 1970)
- Gamkrelidze, T.V. & Ivanov, V.V. (1995). *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans. A reconstruction and historical analysis of a proto-language and a proto-culture*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Geertz, C. (1988). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. *High Points in Anthropology*, 531-552.
- Gellner, E., & Breuilly, J. (2008). *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.



- Ghosh, P. (2015, November 23). DNA study finds London was ethnically diverse from start. *BBC.com*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-34809804>
- Gibbons, A. (2017, May 15). There's no such thing as a "pure" European – or anyone else. *Science*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/05/theres-no-such-thing-pure-european-or-anyone-else>
- Gillett, A. (2006). Ethnogenesis: A contested model of early medieval Europe. In *History Compass*, 4:2, 241-260.
- Gillett, A. (Ed.) (2002). *On barbarian identity: Critical approaches to ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- Gilyard, K. & Vorris, N. (Eds.) (2004). *Rhetoric and ethnicity*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.
- Giroux, H.A. (2000). Public pedagogy as cultural politics: Stuart Hall and the "crisis" of culture. *Cultural Studies*, 14, 341-360.
- Giroux, H.A. (2009). Critical theory and educational practice. In A. Darder, M.P. Baltodano & R.D. Torres, (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 27-51). New York: Routledge.
- Giurescu, D.C. (Ed.) (2006). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: Textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Sigma.
- Górny, M. (2013). *The nation should come first: Marxism and historiography in East Central Europe*. (A. Górny, Trans.). Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang Edition.
- Gottlieb, R.S. (1987). *History and subjectivity: The transformation of Marxist theory*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
- Grădinaru, M. (2017, November 7). Lucian Boia: Să-i mai lăsăm pe daci, important este că românii s-au dovedit a fi o națiune unită în ultimul secol. Dacă am avut acest succes, să nu ne închipuim că altceva în afară de tirade naționale nu ar mai fi de făcut [Lucian Boia: Leave the Dacians alone. What's important is that the Romanians have proven to be a unified nation for the last century. If we've accomplished this, let's not think that there's nothing left for us to do besides nationalist tirades]. *News.ro*. Retrieved on July 2, 2019 from <https://www.news.ro/cultura-media/interviu-lucian-boia-i-lasam-daci-important-romanii-s-au-dovedit-natiune-unita-ultimul-secol-avut-acest-succes-ne-inchipuim-altceva-afara-tirade-nationale-ar-facut-1922400007002017111017371190>

- Gruber, B. (2006, July 10). Joint German-French history book a history-maker itself. *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved on June 30, 2019 from <https://www.dw.com/en/joint-german-french-history-book-a-history-maker-itself/a-2078903>
- Hall, S. (1986). The problem of ideology: Marxism without guarantees. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10, 28-44.
- Hall, S. (1996a). Ethnicity: Identity and difference. In G. Eley & G.E. Suny (Eds.), *Becoming national: A reader* (pp. 339-349). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hall, S. (1996b). New ethnicities. In D. Morley & K.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 441-449). London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (2000). Who needs "identity"? In P. du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman (Eds.). *Identity: A reader* (pp. 15-30). London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (2011). *Modernity: An introduction to modern societies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hall, S. & Jhally, S. (1997). Race, the floating signifier: Featuring Stuart Hall. [Transcript]. *Media Education Foundation*. Retrieved on June 12, 2019 from [www.mediaed.org/transcripts/Stuart-Hall-Race-the-Floating-Signifier-Transcript.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/transcripts/Stuart-Hall-Race-the-Floating-Signifier-Transcript.pdf)
- Hammersley, M. (2002). On the foundations of critical discourse analysis. In M. Toolan (Ed.). *Critical discourse analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics* [Vol. III: Concurrent analyses and critiques] (pp. 242-257). New York: Routledge.
- Herodotus (trans. 1920). *The histories* (A.D. Godley, Trans.). Retrieved on June 25, 2019 From [www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.012](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.012)
- Herodotus (trans. 1960). *The histories* (A. de Sélincourt, Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books.
- Hester, S., & In Housley, W. (2002). Introduction: Ethnomethodology and national identity. In S. Hester & W. Housley (Eds.). *Language, interaction and national identity: Studies in the social organisation of national identity in talk-in-interaction* (pp. 1-16). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Hiemstra, P.A. (1987). *Alexandru D. Xenopol and the development of Romanian historiography*. New York: Garland.
- Hickman, H. & Porfilio, B.J. (Eds.) (2012). *The new politics of the textbook: Critical analysis in the core content areas*. Boston: Sense.

- Hingley, R. (1996). The “legacy” of Rome: the rise, decline, and fall of the theory of Romanization. In J. Webster & N. Cooper (Eds.), *Roman imperialism: Post-colonial perspectives* (pp. 34-48). Leicester, England: School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <https://ira.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/28433/1/3%20Hingley.pdf>
- Hingley, R. (2003). Recreating coherence without reinventing Romanization. In “Romanization”?: *Proceedings of Classical Studies, University of London, 15 November 2002: Digressus Supplement 1*, 111-119. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid.../bin57a47a75-2f9c-45b8-a4a9-854fcb5a0133>
- Histoire – Geschichte: L’Europe et le monde depuis 1945* [History: Europe and the world since 1945]. (2006). Paris: Nathan/Klett.
- Hodge, B., & Kress, G. (1993). *Language as ideology*. New York: Routledge.
- Holmes, J. (2015). *Nonsense: The power of not knowing*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Howell, M. C. & Prevenier, W. (2001). *From reliable sources: An introduction to historical methods*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hurezeanu, E. (2010). Cine este și cât este de român? [Who is, and how much are they, Romanian?]. In V. Boari, S. Gherghina & R. Murea (Eds.), *Regăsirea identității naționale* [Retrieving national identity]. București, Romania: Polirom.
- Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Idel, M. (2015). A Controversy over a Preface: Mihail Sebastian and Nae Ionescu. *Modern Judaism*, 35, 42-65.
- Ikas, K. (1999). Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa. In G. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Ionescu, N. (1990a). A fi “bun român” [To be “a good Romanian”]. In M. Eliade (Ed.), *Roza vânturilor: 1926-1933*. [The wind rose: 1926-1933] (pp. 194-198). București, Romania: Editura Roza Vânturilor. (Original work published in 1930)
- Ionescu, N. (1990b). Iluziile catolicizanților [The illusions of Catholicizants]. In M. Eliade (Ed.), *Roza vânturilor: 1926-1933*. [The wind rose: 1926-1933] (pp. 206-210). București, Romania: Editura Roza Vânturilor. (Original work published in 1930)

- Ionescu, N. (1990c). Noi și Catolicismul [Us and Catholicism]. In M. Eliade (Ed.), *Roza vânturilor: 1926-1933*. [The wind rose: 1926-1933] (pp. 198-202). București, Romania: Editura Roza Vânturilor. (Original work published in 1930)
- Ionescu, N. (2011). De ce suferă Iuda, de două mii de ani. [Why Judah has been suffering for two thousand years]. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://roncea.ro/2011/02/21/nae-ionescu-de-ce-sufera-iuda-cain-tismaneanu-tu-nu-simti-ca-te-cuprinde-frigul-si-intunericul> (Original work published in 1934 as a preface to Sebastian, *De două mii de ani: Romantexte, fapte, oameni*. [For two thousand years: Noveltxts, facts, people]).
- Ioniță, G. (2008). *Reconsiderarea istoriei: Geto-dacii* [Reconsidering history: The Getae-Dacians]. București, Romania: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.
- Iorga, F.-L. (2013). *Strămoși pe alese: Călătorie în imaginarul genealogic al boierimii române* [Hand-picked ancestors: A journey into the genealogical imaginary of Romanian nobility]. București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Iorga, N. (1970). *A history of Roumania. Land, people, civilisation* (J. McCabe, Trans.). New York: AMS Press. (Original work published in 1925)
- Iorga, N. (1991). *În luptă cu absurdul revizionism maghiar* [Fighting the absurd Hungarian revisionism]. București, Romania: Editura Globus. [Originally written in 1939]
- Jackson, M. (1998). *Minima ethnographica*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jobling, M.A., Rasteiro, R. & Wetton, J. (2016). In the blood: the myth and reality of genetic markers of identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39, 142-161.
- Jordanes. *Romana* (B. Regan, Trans.). Retrieved on June 30, 2019 from <http://www.harbornet.com/folks/theedrich/Goths/Romana.htm>
- Kanpol, B. (1997). *Issues and trends in critical pedagogy*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Kanpol, B. & Yeo, F. (1997). Series forward. In B. Kanpol (Ed.). *Issues and trends in critical pedagogy* (pp. ix-xiii). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Kent, S.J., Sibii, R. & Napoleone A.R. (2011). Checkpoint: Turning discourse into dialogue. In Nasser, I., Berlin, L.N. & Wong, S. (Eds.). *Examining education, media, and dialogue under occupation: The case of Palestine and Israel*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Khalife, L. (2017, January 12). DNA analysis proves Arabs aren't entirely Arab. *StepFeed.com*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://stepfeed.com/dna-analysis-proves-arabs-aren-t-entirely-arab-4864>

- Kideckel, D.A. (1996). What's in a name? The persistence of East Europe as a conceptual category. *Replika, Special Issue 1*. Retrieved on June 27, 2019 from <http://www.c3.hu/scripta/scripta0/replika/honlap/english/01/03ckid.htm>
- KimTallBear (2018, October 15). Statement on Elizabeth Warren's DNA test. [Twitter post]. Retrieved on June 12, 2019 from <https://twitter.com/kimtallbear/status/1052017467021651969?lang=en>
- Kincheloe, J.L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy: An introduction*. Montreal, Canada: Springer.
- Korostelina, K.V. (2013). Best practice models and scholarly concepts: Theoretical and methodological framework for joint history projects. In Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects* (pp. 230-241). New York: Routledge.
- Korostelina, K.V. (2013). Introduction part 2: Peace education and joint history textbook projects. In Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects* (pp. 19-25). New York: Routledge.
- Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). (2013). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects*. New York: Routledge.
- Lakoff, G. (1986). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't think of an elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
- Lakoff, G. (2016). *Moral politics: How liberals and conservatives think* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lässig, S. (2013). Introduction part 1: Post-conflict reconciliation and joint history textbook projects. In Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects* (pp. 1-18). New York: Routledge.

- Lê, T., Lê, Q. & Short, M. (Eds.) (2009). *Critical discourse analysis: An interdisciplinary perspective*. New York: Nova Science.
- Lewis-Kraus, G. (2019, January 17). Is ancient DNA research revealing new truths – or falling into old traps? *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/17/magazine/ancient-dna-paleogenomics.html>
- Macbeth, D. (2008). The moral order of questions and answers: “What kind of person is Dee?” In D. Bloome, S.C. Power, B. Christian, S. Madrid, S. Otto & N. Shuart-Faris. *On discourse analysis in classrooms: Approaches to language and literacy research* (pp. 105-119). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Macdonell, D. (1986). *Theories of discourse: An introduction*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Maci, M. (2015, May 15). Istoria la feminin [History in the feminine]. *Contributors.ro*. Retrieved on June 24, 2019 from <http://www.contributors.ro/cultura/istoria-la-feminin/>
- Maciu, V., Pascu, Ș., Berindei, D., Constantinescu, M., Liveanu, V. & Panaitescu, P.P. (1964). *Outline of Rumanian historiography until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*. București, Romania: Publishing House of the Academy of the Rumanian People’s Republic.
- Matei-Popescu, F. (2007). Imaginea Daciei romane în istoriografia românească între 1945 și 1960 [The image of Roman Dacia in Romanian historiography between 1945 and 1960]. *SCIVA*, 58:3-4, 265-288. Retrieved on June 23, 2019 from [www.instarhparvan.ro/pagini%20institutimag%20lucru/reviste%20pdf/sciva%203-4\\_2007/05.pdf](http://www.instarhparvan.ro/pagini%20institutimag%20lucru/reviste%20pdf/sciva%203-4_2007/05.pdf)
- Maza, S. (2017). *Thinking about history*. The University of Chicago Press.
- McGee, M.C. (1980). The “ideograph”: A link between rhetoric and ideology. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 66:1, 1-16.
- Merryweather, A.D. & Prag, J.R. (2003). Preface. In “Romanization”?: *Proceedings of Classical Studies, University of London, 15 November 2002: Digressus Supplement 1*, 5-6. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid.../bin57a47a75-2f9c-45b8-a4a9-854fcb5a0133>
- Mihăilescu, V. (2015, April 30). Istoria României: Noul val? [The history of Romania: The new wave?]. *Contributors.ro*. Retrieved on June 17, 2019 from <http://www.contributors.ro/cultura/istoria-romaniei-noul-val>

- Morris, M. (2006). *Identity anecdotes: Translation and media culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moya, P.M.L. & Hames-García, M.R. (2000). *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Muller, H.J. (1957). *The uses of the past: Profiles of former societies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mungiu-Pippiddi, A. (1999). *Transilvania subiectivă* [Subjective Transylvania]. București, Romania: Humanitas.
- Murgescu, B. (2000). *A fi istoric în anul 2000* [To be a historian in the year 2000]. București, Romania: All Educational.
- Nasser, I., Berlin, L.N. & Wong, S. (Eds.) (2011). *Examining education, media, and dialogue under occupation: The case of Palestine and Israel*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Nestor, I. (1970). From the early inhabitants to the Dacians. In Oțetea, A. (Ed.) *The history of the Romanian people*. NY: Twayne.
- Neumann, V. (2013). *Neam* (Romanian for *kin*) and *popor* (Romanian for *people*): The notions of Romanian ethno-centrism." In V. Neumann & A. Heinen (Eds.). *Key concepts of Romanian history: Alternative approaches to socio-political languages* (pp. 377-401). Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press.
- Neumann, V., & Heinen, A. (2013). *Key concepts of Romanian history: Alternative approaches to socio-political languages*. Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press.
- Niculescu, A. (1993, October 27-November 2, 1993). "Nația" și limba ["Nation" and language]. *România Literară*, 42, 3.
- Niculescu, A. (1997, November 12-18). "Neamul." Considerații filologice și nu numai ["The nation." Philological considerations and more]. *România Literară*, 45, 3.
- Niculescu, G.A. (2007). Archaeology and nationalism in *The History of the Romanians*. In P. L. Kohl, M. Kozelsky & N. Ben-Yehuda (Eds.), *Selective remembrances: Archaeology in the construction, commemoration, and consecration of national pasts* (pp. 127-163). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Noë, A. (2016, February 12). Can you tell your ethnic identity from your DNA? *NPR.org*. Retrieved on June 12, 2019 from <https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/02/12/466379200/can-you-tell-your-ethnic-identity-from-your-dna>

- Oldson, W.O. (1973). Nicolae Iorga: The Romanian nationalist as historian. *East European Quarterly*, 6/14, 473-486.
- Olson, S. (2003). *Mapping human history: Discovering the past through our genes*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Oțetea, A. (Ed.). (1970). *The history of the Romanian people*. NY: Twayne.
- Panaiteșcu, P.P. (1969). *Introducere la istoria culturii românești* [Introduction to the history of Romanian culture]. București, Romania: Editura Științifică. [Acquired through Scribd.com]
- Papacostea, Ș. (2002a, March 11). O nouă sinteză de istorie românească: Metodă și probitate [A new Romanian history synthesis: Method and probity]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved on January 16, 2018 from <https://revista22.ro/3/.html>
- Papacostea, Ș. (2002b, July 15). O carte de istorie și istoria ei [A history book and its history]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved on January 16, 2018 from <https://revista22.ro/146/.html>
- Papacostea, Ș. (2006a, January 10). Istoriografie și actualitate [Historiography and the present]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved on January 16, 2018 from <https://revista22.ro/2363/.html>
- Papacostea, Ș. (2006b, July 7). Istoriografie și actualitate II [Historiography and the present II]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved on January 16, 2018 from <https://revista22.ro/2867/.html>
- Papacostea, Ș. (2007, August 10). Tratatul academic Istoria Românilor: O percepție străină [The academic treatise The History of The Romanians: A foreign perception]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved on January 16, 2018 from <https://revista22.ro/3943/.html>
- Pascu, Ș. & Ștefănescu, Ș. (Eds.) (1986). *Jocul periculos al falsificării istoriei: Culegere de studii și articole*. București, Romania: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.
- Pârâianu, R. (2005, November 11). The history textbooks controversy in Romania. *Eurozine.com*. Retrieved on June 24, 2019 from <https://www.eurozine.com/the-history-textbooks-controversy-in-romania-3/>
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1996). *History and the learning of history in Europe*. Retrieved on June 24, 2019 from <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=15317&lang=en>



- Pârvan, V. (1926). *Getica: O protoistorie a Daciei*. București, Romania: Cultura Națională. [Acquired through Scribd.com].
- Patterson, L.E. (2013). Geographers as mythographers: The case of Strabo. In S.M. Trzaskoma & R. S. Smith (Eds.), *Writing myth: Mythography in the ancient world*. Walpole, MA: Peeters.
- Pecican, O. (2008). *Dicționarul celor mai bune cărți de istorie românească*. [Dictionary of the best books of Romanian history]. Timișoara, Romania: Bastion.
- Pereltsvaig, A. & Lewis, M.W. (2015). *The Indo-European controversy: Facts and fallacies in historical linguistics*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Petre, Z. (2004). *Practica nemuririi. O lectură critică a izvoarelor grecești referitoare la geți* [The practice of immortality: A critical reading of the Greek sources concerning the Getae]. București, Romania: Polirom.
- Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. & Vulpe, A. (Eds.), *Istoria românilor: Vol. 1: Moștenirea timpurilor îndepărtate* [The History of the Romanians: Vol. 1: The heritage of ancient times]. București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. & Vulpe, A. (2001). Cuvânt înainte [Foreword]. In Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. & Vulpe, A. (Eds.), *Istoria românilor: Vol. 1: Moștenirea timpurilor îndepărtate* [The History of the Romanians: Vol. 1: The heritage of ancient times] (pp. xvii-xxiii). București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Phillips, N. & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pohl, W. (1998). Conceptions of ethnicity in early medieval studies. In L.K. Little and B.H. Rosenwein (Eds.), *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and readings* (pp. 13-24). Malden, MA: Blackwell. Retrieved on June 30, 2019 from [http://www.kroraina.com/bulgar/pohl\\_eticity.html](http://www.kroraina.com/bulgar/pohl_eticity.html)
- Pop, A. (1999). *O fenomenologie a gândirii istorice românești: Teoria și filosofia istoriei de la Hasdeu și Xenopol la Iorga și Blaga* [A phenomenology of Romanian historical thought: The theory and philosophy of history from Hasdeu and Xenopol to Iorga and Blaga]. București, Romania: Editura ALL.
- Pop, I.-A. (1996). *Romanians and Hungarians from the 9th to the 14th century: The genesis of the Transylvanian medieval state*. Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Centrul de Studii Transilvane.

- Pop, I.-A. (1998). *Națiunea română medievală: Solidarități etnice românești în secolele XIII-XVI* [The Romanian medieval nation: Romanian ethnic solidarities in between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries]. București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Pop, I.-A. (2014). *Istoria, adevărul și miturile: Note de lectură* [History, truths and myths: Reading notes]. București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Pop, I.-A. & Bolovan, I. (2013). *Istoria Transilvaniei* [The history of Transylvania]. Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Editura Eikon.
- Popa, N.C. (2016). The significant past and insignificant archaeologists. Who informs the public about their 'national' past? The case of Romania. In *Archaeological Dialogues*, 23:1, 28-39.
- Porter, E. & Russell, K. (2018, June 20). Migrants are on the rise around the world, and myths about them are shaping attitudes. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on July 2, 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/20/business/economy/immigration-economic-impact.html>
- Programme of the Romanian Communist Party for the building of the multilaterally developed socialist society and Romania's advance toward Communism.* (1975). București, Romania: Meridiane.
- Quinn, J.C. (2003). Roman Africa? In "Romanization"? : *Proceedings of Classical Studies, University of London, 15 November 2002: Digressus Supplement 1*, 7-34. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid.../bin57a47a75-2f9c-45b8-a4a9-854fcb5a0133>
- Ramazanoğlu, C. with Holland, J. (2004). *Feminist methodology: Challenges and choices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Raport final: Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste în România* [Final report: The presidential commission for the analysis of the Communist dictatorship in Romania]. (2006). Retrieved on June 19, 2019 from [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/RAPORT%20FINAL\\_%20CAD%20CR.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/RAPORT%20FINAL_%20CAD%20CR.pdf)
- Râpeanu, V. (1979). *Cultură și istorie* [Culture and history]. București, Romania: Editura Militară.
- Reich, D. (2018, March 23). How genetics is changing our understanding of "race." *New York Times*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/23/opinion/sunday/genetics-race.html>

- Reich, D. (2018). *Who we are and how we got here: Ancient DNA and the new science of the human past*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Renan, E. (1992). *What is a nation?* (E. Rundell, Trans.). Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from [ucparis.fr/files/9313/6549/9943/What\\_is\\_a\\_Nation.pdf](http://ucparis.fr/files/9313/6549/9943/What_is_a_Nation.pdf) (Original lecture delivered in 1882)
- Reuter, T. (2006). *Medieval polities and modern mentalities*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Reynolds, S. (1998). Our forefathers? Tribes, peoples, and nations in the historiography of the age of migrations. In A. C. Murray (Ed.), *After Rome's fall: Narrators and sources of early medieval history. Essays presented to Walter Goffart* (pp. 17-36). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Rogers, R. (2003). *A critical discourse analysis of family literacy practices: Power in and out of print*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rojek, C. (2003). *Stuart Hall*. Cambridge, England: Polity.
- Roller, M. (Ed.). (1947). *Istoria României: Manual unic pentru clasa a VIII-a secundară* [The History of Romania: Sole textbook for secondary 8<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Editura de Stat. [Acquired through Scribd.com].
- Roth, R.E. (2003). Towards a ceramic approach to social identity in the Roman world: Some theoretical considerations. In "Romanization"? : *Proceedings of Classical Studies, University of London, 15 November 2002: Digressus Supplement 1*, 35-45. Retrieved on June 28, 2019 from <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid.../bin57a47a75-2f9c-45b8-a4a9-854fcb5a0133>
- Royal, C.D., Novembre, J., Fullerton, S.M., Goldstein, D.B., Long, J.C., Bamshad, M.J., et al. (2010). Inferring genetic ancestry: Opportunities, challenges, and implications. *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 86, 661-673.
- Rura, M. J. (1961). *Reinterpretation of history as a method of furthering Communism in Romania: A study in comparative historiography*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Sand, S. (2009). *The invention of the Jewish people*. (Y. Lotan, Trans.). London: Verso.
- Sharansky, N. with S. Wolosky Weiss (2008). *Defending identity: Its indispensable role in protecting democracy*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Schegloff, E.A. (1997). Whose text? Whose context? *Discourse & Society*, 8:2, 165-187.
- Schegloff, E.A. (1998). Reply to Wetherell. *Discourse & Society*, 9:3, 413-416.

- Schiffrin, D. (1994). *Approaches to discourse*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Scott, D. (2005). Stuart Hall's Ethics. *Small Axe*, 9, 1-16.
- Sen, A. K. (2006). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Sibii, R. (2007). "Romanianism" and "Romanianness": Two frames of Romanian identity. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Sibii, R. (2012). Imagining nation in Romanian history textbooks: Towards a liberating identity narrative. In Hickman, H. & Porfilio, B.J. (Eds.). *The new politics of the textbook: Critical analysis in the core content areas*. Boston: Sense.
- Stoenescu, A.M. (2013). *Tratat de istoriografie generală: Introducere în studiul istoriei* [A treatise of general historiography: Introduction to the study of history]. București, Romania: RAO.
- Strabo (trans. 1961). *The geographies of Strabo* (H.L. Jones, Trans.). [Vol. III]. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Strobel, K. (1998). Dacii. Despre complexitatea mărimilor etnice, politice și culturale ale istoriei spațiului Dunării de Jos [The Dacians. On the complexity of ethnic, political and cultural entities in the history of the Lower Danube area]. *SCIVA*, 49:1, 61-95.
- Stubbs, M. (2002). Whorf's children: Critical comments on critical discourse analysis (CDA). In M. Toolan (Ed.). *Critical discourse analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics* [Vol. III: Concurrent analyses and critiques] (pp. 202-218). New York: Routledge.
- Szakács, S. (2007). Now and then: National identity construction in Romanian history. A comparative study of Communist and post-Communist school textbooks. In *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 29:1, 23-47.
- TallBear, K. (2013). *Native American DNA: Tribal belonging and the false promise of genetic science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Thomas, M. (2013, February 25). To claim someone has "Viking ancestors" is no better than astrology. *TheGuardian.com*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2013/feb/25/viking-ancestors-astrology>

- Toolan, M. (2002). What is critical discourse analysis and why are people saying such terrible things about it? In M. Toolan (Ed.). *Critical discourse analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics* [Vol. III: Concurrent analyses and critiques] (pp. 219-241). New York: Routledge.
- Trywhitt-Drake, H. (1999). Resisting the discourse of critical discourse analysis: Reopening a Hong Kong case study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1081-1088.
- Țurcanu, I. (2006). *Istoria: Receptare, cercetare, interpretare* [History: Reception, research, interpretation]. Iași, Romania: Junimea.
- Ungheanu, M. (2005). *Românii și "tâlharii Romei": Război religios – război de imagine?* [The Romanians and "Rome's bandits": Religious war – image war?]. București, Romania: Phobos.
- United Nations. *The universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights> (Original work published in 1948)
- Urban, T. (2015, December 17). Everyone on Earth is actually your cousin. *QZ.com*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://qz.com/557639/everyone-on-earth-is-actually-your-cousin>
- Vaida, P. (1983). Dimitrie Cantemir – Conceptul de civilizație [Dimitrie Cantemir – The civilization concept]. In D. Ghișe & A. Botez (Eds.). *Cultura, creația, valoarea – Motive dominante ale filosofiei românești* [Cultura, creation, value – Dominant motifs of Romanian philosophy] (pp. 39-43). București, Romania: Editura Eminescu.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1997). The study of discourse. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed.). *Discourse as structure and process*. [Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction, Vol. 1] (pp. 1-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2013). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H.E. Hamilton (Eds.). *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 353-371). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Veyne, P. (1999). *Cum se scrie istoria* [How history is written]. București, Romania: Editura Meridiane.
- Verdery, K. (1991). *National ideology under socialism: Identity and cultural politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Vlăducă, I. (2012). *Pagini din istoria neamului românesc* [Pages from the history of the Romanian people]. Suceava, Romania: Fundația Justin Pârvu.

- Vulpe, A. (1998). Geto-dacii? [Getae-Dacians?]. *CICSA*, 1-2, 2-11.
- Vulpe, A. (2001). Dacia înainte de romani [Dacia before the Romans]. In Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. & Vulpe, A. (Eds.), *Istoria românilor: Vol. 1: Moștenirea timpurilor îndepărtate* [The History of the Romanians: Vol. 1: The heritage of ancient times] (pp. 399-450). București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Vulpe, A. (2001). Istoria și civilizația spațiului carpato-dunărean între mijlocul secolului al VII-lea și începutul secolului al III-lea a.Chr. [The history and civilization of the Carpathian-Danubian space between the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC]. In Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. & Vulpe, A. (Eds.), *Istoria românilor: Vol. 1: Moștenirea timpurilor îndepărtate* [The History of the Romanians: Vol. 1: The heritage of ancient times] (pp. 451-500). București, Romania: Editura Enciclopedică.
- Vulpe, R. (1970). The Geto-Dacians. In Oțetea, A. (Ed.) *The history of the Romanian people*. NY: Twayne.
- Wang, Z. (2009). Old wounds, new narratives: Joint history textbook writing and peacebuilding in East Asia. *History and Memory*, 21:1, 101-126.
- Weber, M. (1919). Politics as vocation [Lecture]. Retrieved on June 13, 2019 from [anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Politics-as-a-Vocation.pdf](http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Politics-as-a-Vocation.pdf)
- Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse & Society*, 9:3, 387-412.
- White, M. (2017, December 20). How slavery changed the DNA of African Americans. *Pacific Standard*. Retrieved on June 11, 2019 from <https://psmag.com/news/how-slavery-changed-the-dna-of-african-americans>
- Widdowson, H.G. (1995). Norman Fairclough: Discourse and social change. Polity Press, 1992. [Review of book]. *Applied Linguistics*, 16:4, 510-516.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1996). Reply to Fairclough: Discourse and interpretation: Conjectures and refutations. *Language and Literature*, 5:1, 57-69.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1998). The theory and practice of critical analysis. [Review of three CDA books]. *Applied Linguistics*, 19:1, 136-151.
- Widdowson, H.G. (2002). Discourse analysis: a critical view. In M. Toolan (Ed.). *Critical discourse analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics* [Vol. III: Concurrent analyses and critiques] (pp. 131-147). New York: Routledge.

- Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The discursive construction of national identity*. (A. Hirsch, R. Mitten & J.W. Unger, Trans.). (2nd ed.). Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- Yang, D. & Sin, J.-B. (2013). Striving for common history textbooks in Northeast Asia (China, South Korea and Japan): Between ideal and reality. In Korostelina, K.V. & Lässig, S. with Ihrig, S. (Eds.). *History education and post-conflict reconciliation: Reconsidering joint textbook projects* (pp. 19-25). New York: Routledge.
- Yeo, F. (1997). Editor's preface: Critical pedagogy within classroom practices. In B. Kanpol (Ed.). *Issues and trends in critical pedagogy* (pp. xv-xviii). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Xenopol, A.D. (2003). *Principiile fundamentale ale istoriei* [Fundamental principles of history]. București, Romania: Albatros. [Originally written in 1908]
- Zub, A. (1994). *În orizontul istoriei* [On history's horizon]. Iași, Romania: Institutul European.
- Zub, A. (1995). Între cercetare și didactică [Between research and pedagogy]. In *Xenopoliana*, 3:1-4, 4-12.
- Zub, A. (2006). *Clio sub semnul interogației: Idei, sugestii, figuri* [Clio under the question mark: Ideas, suggestions, figures]. București, Romania: Polirom.

#### Textbooks

- Băluțoiu, V. & Vlad, C. (2012). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a V-a* [History: A textbook for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: All Educațional.
- Barnea, A. (Ed.) (2008). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IX-a* [History: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Corint.
- Barnea, A. (Ed.) (2014). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [History: Textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Corint Educațional.
- Barnea, A., Bohâlțea, F., Căpiță, C., Lung, E. & Madgearu, A. (2003). *Istorie antică și medievală: Manual pentru clasa a IX-a* [Ancient and medieval history: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: RAO Educațional.
- Brezeanu, S. (2004). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a 9-a* [History: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: BIC ALL.

- Burlec, L., Lazăr, L. & Teodorescu, B. (2005). *Istoria românilor: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [The history of the Romanians: A textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Editura ALL.
- Dumitrescu, N., Manea, M., Niță, C., Pascu, A., Trandafir, A. & Trandafir, M. (2004). *Istoria românilor: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [The history of the Romanians: A textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Humanitas Educațional.
- Giurescu, D.C. (Ed.) (2006). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: Textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Sigma.
- Manea, V.A., Stamatescu, M. & Teodorescu, B. (2004). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a X-a – Școala de arte și meserii* [History: Textbook for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade – School of fine arts and professions]. București, Romania: Corint.
- Mitu, S. (1998). *Istoria romanilor: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [The History of the Romanians: A textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Sigma.
- Oane, S. & Ochescu, M. (2004). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IX-a* [History: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Humanitas Educațional.
- Oane, S. & Ochescu, M. (2006). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: Textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Humanitas Educațional.
- Oane, S. & Ochescu, M. (2013). *Istoria Românilor: Manual pentru clasa a VIII-a* [The history of the Romanians: Textbook for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Humanitas Educațional.
- Peneș, M. & Troncotă, I. (2006). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: A textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Editura Marcela Peneș.
- Petre, Z. (Ed.) (2008a). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IX-a* [History: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Corint.
- Petre, Z. (Ed.) (2008b). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: Textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Corint.
- Scurtu, I., Dondorici, F., Ionescu, V., Lica, E.E., Osanu, O., Poamă, E. et al. (2007). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [History: A textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. Târgoviște, Romania: Gimnasium.
- Stan, M. & Vornicu, C. (2012). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [History: A textbook for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Editura Niculescu ABC.
- Teodorescu, B. (2006). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IV-a* [History: Textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Corint.



Vulpe, A. (Ed.) (2000). *Istorie: Manual pentru clasa a IX-a* [History: Textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade]. București, Romania: Sigma.