

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

PH.D. THESIS
ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN THE ROMANIAN ART (1848-1947)
SUMMARY

Scientific advisor
Prof.univ.dr. **SORIN MITU**

Ph. D. Student
FLORIN-ARON PĂDUREAN

Cluj-Napoca
2011

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
I. THE PHYSICAL PORTRAIT	9
1. TYPES AND TYPOLOGIES	9
1.1.IDEAL AND REAL TYPE (RACE, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY).....	11
1.2.ETHNIC AND ARTISTIC TYPE	16
1.3.ISSUES OF (SELF)REPRESENTATION	20
2. ON RECOGNIZABILITY	23
2.1.PHISICAL INDICES	24
2.2.IS THERE A NATIONAL PHISIOGNOMY?.....	26
2.3.CULTURAL ATRIBUTES	30
2.4.IT IS THE SUIT THAT MAKES THE MAN.....	31
3. HUMAN PHYSIQUE.....	35
3.1.ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	35
3.2.CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	39
4. EXPRESSING THE CHARACTER.....	43
4.1.ON HUMAN HEADS	49
4.2.THE RED AND THE BLACK.....	52
4.3.THE FACE, A MIRROR OF CHARACTER.....	58
II. A SENSITIVE TOPIC: FEMININE AESTHETICS	73
1. SO MUCH BEAUTY	73
1.1.THE ORIENTAL WOMAN.....	75
1.1.1.ISSUES OF IDENTITY	76
1.1.2.SEXUAL PRESENCES.....	81
1.2. "NIGRA SUM SED FORMOSA"	87
1.3. THE GYPSY WOMAN	91
1.3.1.FIERY AND BEAUTIFUL	91
1.3.2.FLOWERS, SEX AND EXHIBITIONS	96
1.4. THE JEWISH WOMAN	100

1.5. THE LATIN GOOD LOOKS	102
1.6. A RARE BEAUTY: THE ENGLISHWOMAN	105
2. AND A BIT OF UGLINESS	108
III. SYMBOLS AND STEREOTYPES.....	125
1. SYMBOLIC FIGURES	125
2. REPRESENTATIONS AND SELFREPRESENTATION.....	129
3. ZOO-BOTANIC ICONS	135
3.1.ONE IS WHAT ONE EATS.....	137
3.2.THE GERMAN MENAJERIE	139
3.3.THE HUNGARIAN METAMORPHOSIS: FROM PIG TO TIGER.....	143
3.4.A BEARISH MAN: THE RUSSIAN	147
3.5.THE JEWISH PARASITISM.....	151
IV. THE IMMEDIATE OTHER.....	157
1. ETHNIC MINORITIES	157
2. AN ENDLESS VAGRANCY.....	159
2.1.THE WANDERING JEW	159
2.2.A DIFFERENT KIND OF SHOW ROAD.....	167
3. PROFESIONAL PROFILES	170
V. IN SEARCH OF A MODEL	179
1. AN IMPLICIT MODEL, THE FRENCH.....	180
2. LATIN COUNTRIES CONVENTIONAL MODELS	184
3. THE NORTHERN REGIONALISM.....	192
4. THE JOURNEY TO THE EAST.....	197
4.1.A ROMANIAN ORIENTALISM?.....	197
4.2.A NEW MAN	201
4.3.THE ROMANIAN ORIENT	207
VI. A DANGEROUS PROXIMITY.....	217
1. A NECESSARY ENNEMY	217
2. A REMARCABLE SOLDIER.....	218
3. YET STILL VINCIBLE	225
4. ETHNIC CRIMINALITY.....	232
4.1.HOMO BALCANICUS.....	234
4.2.THE SCHOLAR BARBARISM.....	240

4.3. "RĂU ERA CU «DER, DIE, DAS»/DA-I MAI RĂU CU «DAVAI CEAS»"	242
4.4. THE INNER ENEMY	246
5. A RIDICULOUS COMBATANT	249
CONCLUSIONS	261
BIBLIOGRAPHY	265

Key-words: ethnic stereotypes, Romanian art, imagology, typologies, history painting, ethnography, documentarism, nation and nationalism.

Ethnic stereotypes are potentiated when transposed in visual arts. They become motifs. For that matter, we have to discuss about mental (literary) stereotypes and formal (visual) stereotypes, just as much as we discuss mental images and real images. The formal stereotypes are artistic clichés, they can be structures deprived of the ideological content of social stereotypes (a charging soldier, for example, can become a motif, a formal cliché that can be assumed and circulated by other artists). Equally, we are commenting upon two ways of diffusing the stereotypes: vertically (accepted or compulsory prejudices) or horizontally (catching up). If, in the first case, the artist is influenced by the social background, expressing general mentalities, in the second case, he is influenced by other artists, adopting elements from them.

Let us discuss the concept of Romanian art that was used in the title. I confess, which won't seem spectacular, that this concept covers, essentially, the thematic field of painting, graphics and sculpture. "Romanian Art" has, firstly, the classic meaning developed by the manuals of art history, which minimize certain fields such as photography and monumental (religious) painting. But we couldn't stop here, as this methodological approach would imply ignoring several other domains of interest. Therefore, this widely circumscribed field of visual arts contains, besides the traditional painting, drawing, etching and sculpture, some minuscule divisions such as philatelic art, post cards, posters, caricatures, book illustrations, overlooked by the general studies of art history but so useful to the present research. However, the purpose of this study did not consist in classifying domains or elaborating repertoires, but rather in discovering motives, themes, trends, that could replenish, iconographically, the ethnic anatomy of this period of one century. Regarding the reproductions, I tried to choose less familiar or even

unknown images, due either to their neglectable nature, in a traditional methodology, or to the fact that they were never made public. Considering the difficulties of reaching such sources, I want to thank the museums and institutions that supported me and allowed me to discover an unsuspected material in their collections: The Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca; The Central University Library of Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca; The National Museum of History and The National Philatelic Museum, Bucharest; The National Military Museum, Bucharest; The Theodor Aman Museum, Bucharest; The *National Museum of Art of Romania*, Bucharest, and the art museums of Cluj-Napoca, Arad, Târgu-Mureș, Brașov, Ploiești, Brăila, Galați, Iași, Pitești, Timișoara, Constanța și Sebeș.

Another issue concerning the concept of Romanian art are its geographical boundaries, determined by the very limits of the present-day research. The deficient communication, in the interwar period, between the associations and the artistic groups from Bucharest, Chișinău and Cernăuți, deprived the book funds and the art collections of today's Romania of an eloquent material, compulsory in initiating broader considerations. Regarding the art in Transylvania, due to the thematic requirements, we didn't resort to the works of the Hungarian and German artists with the same consistency, as they correspond to some other visions. Certainly, the Romanian art operated cultural adoptions, foreign artists ending up in representing this phenomenon, but in this case, we are discussing of another horizon of appreciation and creation. As a normal echo of a general process for the studied period, when the great names of the Romanian art clustered, even if sometimes only temporary, around the cultural life of Bucharest, the general coordinates of this study have also been calibrated and centered around this nucleus.

Although we are on the terrain of the fine arts, we should not forget that main topic of this study is represented by ethnic stereotypes. It is difficult to delimitate a methodological level, as the present undertaking could be easily classified either as an imagological study or as an art history study. Consequently, disciplinary claims could come from other directions: the history of nationalism, ethnography, sociology etc. This is why I consider, in our methodological approach, anthropology should remain the first voice, but sequentially accompanied by the art history instrumentation.

An explanation of the chosen time context is also needed. The conventional setting of one century is validated by the demarcation created by two major historic moments, the Revolution of 1848 and the definitive and official instauration of the communist regime at the

end of 1947. Around the Revolution of 1848, the Romanian painting experiences an admixture of content. Next to portraits and landscapes, the historical painting comes out, a new genre that disseminates iconographical clichés referring to our own national identity or the others, such as the Turks. Regarding the 1947 moment, this marks out, symbolically, the end of the cultural directions and the beginning of a new type of art, proletarian, controlled by the state.

Structurally, the present study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter, *The physical portrait*, tries to reconfigure the general directions of the Foreigner's effective making in the visual arts. The leitmotif of this chapter is represented by typologies, and especially, by the methods by which ethnic typologies are transferred into artistic typologies. The portrait of the Foreigner is dependent on its recognizability, thus, its exterior aspects - physiognomy, body structure, clothing - concur to the achievement of static and conventional motifs. Some physiognomic features and cultural components become indispensable elements of the ethnic identity; this is the reason why they role is often accentuated. The physical portrait is replenished with the psychological portrait, which determines specific physical expressions, the outer features of the foreigner being often a mirror of his inner character.

The second chapter, *A sensitive topic: feminine aesthetics*, is a necessary extension of the previous one. The physical portrait receives special additional meanings, the woman being discussed especially in esthetic terms, essentially beauty, but also ugliness. The judgmental criteria rested upon erotic appreciations and national xenophobic appreciations. But, as a normal consequence of the artistic consistency, the stylistic typization involves also the making of a series of patterns of feminine beauty, independent of nationalist requirements. The discussion focuses on the motifs of interest, those appearances that gained visibility through debate and repetition. The beauty of the oriental women, of the gypsies, the elegance of the Jewish women are but a few of the centers of analysis of this chapter. At the opposite side, we will discover indictments of ugliness towards Englishwomen and Germans. The labels are alternative, making it possible for certain foreign women to be consequently renowned for their pleasing and unattractive appearance.

In the third chapter, *Symbols and stereotypes*, we analyze the official typologies, the allegorical representative figures of the nations. The sources under observation are offered, by choice, by the press graphic. Defining the ethnic typology in its totality, solves also the problem of an alleged ethnic representativity. The typical citizens of a nation that have been catalogued

come, by a compulsory metonymy, to represent the entire ethnic community they are part of. We are discussing of symbolic delegation, that allows the individual to literally assume the function of a symbol. If, in the first case, the symbolic figures are metonymical projections of several typical representatives (John Bull for the Englishmen, Bai Ganio for Bulgarians etc.), as we continue, the symbolic area is extended. We discover tutelary characters of the nations, such as Uncle Sam or Marianne, but also animal symbols. In this last case, we are referring to an international bestiary, which is now analyzed in detail.

Chapter IV, *The immediate other*, sets up an incursion in the multiethnic universe from the Romanian regions. The Foreigner is now visualized as a defining element of social dynamics. Thus, the public space and especially the street are plastically translated into a standard compositional frame. The most numerous ethnics, the Jews and the Gypsies, benefit by an impressive number of pictorial appearances. The social roles the foreigners fulfil become clearer when discussing a series of professions correlated with certain nations, such as the Gypsy flower girls, the Turkish milletbeer seller, the Jewish usurer etc. They complete the ethnic typologies previously discussed. In art, the etnotypes function if supported by visual "enumerations" (what the physical appearance of the subject is, how he dresses, what specific behavior he manifests and, now, what is his occupation). The professional shaping allows a supplementary conclusion, in the process of ethnic delimitation.

Chapter V, *In search of a model*, offers an inverted perspective as the of the previous chapter. The relation between the artist and the model involves, regularly, a real contact. But what happens when the model cannot come to the artist? According to a simple rule, the artist will go to the model. The journey of study often proved to be an initiatic moment for the artists. We will once more discuss the central motifs and offer priority to those artists that seek human motifs, not landscapes. For that matter, the artist that tried to discover a remote model, initiating only a fictitious trip, has more eligibility for this study than the artist that effectively travelled there, but neglected the human types. The models the artist searched proved often to be highly conventional, no matter if the artist traveled in the West or the East (Italian pifferari, spanish matadors, Egyptian fellah women etc.).

In the last chapter, *A dangerous proximity*, the Foreigner is build up more than before as a definitory alterity: the role of the Other is clearly delimited, he is now an elementary enemy of the nation. The sources that were used now are provided by the genre of the historic painting,

but also by the militant graphics, the press caricature, the poster. He fulfils different roles, transposed into iconographical postures. In a first situation, he is perceived as an admirable soldier, a standard topos of the documentarist art. The identitary construction of the foreigner become visibly utilitary, as his character is developed in relation with the Romanian nation. Further on, he plays the fallen enemy, consolidating the imagery of the victory of the Romanian national heroes. Another traditional role the foreigner played was that of the oppressor. The balance of power is now overturned, a scenic turn interchanges the actors. The criminality of the Other is no longer a simply military manifestation, but a national particularity, and, so that it can be transformed into social oppression, the victim is not the Romanian soldier, but the Romanian citizen. Invader or infiltrated element, the foreigner is the enemy of the nation, he generates social traumatismes. His condition is reapprciated by the relation with the community in the middle of which ne manifests. In the end of this chapter, in one last appereance, the foreigner loses his power, and the opprobrium turns into mockery. He becomes a combatant incapable of standing against the courage and the fair military training of the Romanian army.

Essential in the making of this study was a process of discovering the primary models that stood at the base of a general fond of stereotypy, manifesting at the level of the entire continent and retrieved, to some extent, in the Romanian art as well.