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MULTICULTURALISM

Margit Feischmidt

Multiculturalism: A New Political and Scientific Perspective on Culture and Identity	5
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The introductory study signed by Margit Feischmidt presents the main trends of the theoretical debate on multiculturalism, as it developed in the social sciences through the time. Based on how the alterity was/is viewed by different scholars, the author approached the history of those paradigms with the "eye" of the cultural anthropologist. The result is a wide image which shows us the evolution or transformation of how multiculturalism was seen, from modernity to post-modernity.

The defintory event of the end of 20th century represent the experience of diversity, difference, and of the heterogeneity of society. As a result of the trans-national processes of production, consume, and communication, all goods produced far from us, and all events which happened at thousands of kilometers, became daily. The experience of alterity, of strangerness became more critical in those places which are targets of migration, especially in metropolis. The social and cultural differences between those with different origins, represent a challenge for the political sphere, interested to get solutions for such situations, as well as for those social sciences which are engaged in the interpretation of them. The answers generated by this challenge was created a new discourse: the multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism represents a specific discourse for a late modernity which assume the social experience of diversity and difference, reinterpreting and reevaluating it. In the construction of social identities, the multiculturalism is conceived in opposition with the homogenization strategies characteristic to modernity. It starts from the repressive or unsatisfactory essence, and emphasize the difference and diversity. Thus, culture, identity and politics became central categories of the debate and of the public discourse, a context in which they are getting new senses. At different level of the social identity (ethnic, cultural, racial, and, in accordance to some interpretations, also sexual etc.), the multiculturalism validates similar techniques of the representation, but in different alternatives, based on the political goals, or theoretical or moral premises assumed.

Monica Spiridon

The Splendor and Misery of a Concept: Multiculturalism	26
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Multiculturalism became in the last years a well-known subject in the Romanian public discourse. But, unfortunately, being presented particularly by politicians and journalists, rather than by representatives of the academic sphere, it remained just a well-know subject, not also a well-known concept. So, the paper of Monica Spiridon is a trial to clarify the concept and to seat the Romanian debate on multiculturalism in an international framework. Presenting us "the both side of the story", the paper, as it is suggested in the title, provokes the reader to reflect about the perspectives, alternatives and limits of multiculturalism.

As an equivocal and highly debated word, the multiculturalism succeeded paradoxically to became in Romania a sort of unproblematic tool, transparent and multifunctional. One of the causes why the term became rapidly famous, poisoning the incompetents, is its capacity to be perceived (partial or totally) as a false synonyms with other, apparently familiar terms as cultural pluralism, trans-culturalism, cosmopolitanism and others.

Finally, the most important thing what we need to retain is the career of the term of multiculturalism. More exactly, the fact that is dated and signed by the seal of a specific cultural moment and space. A category with a pre-history, a pick period — including the overbids and abuses — followed by a irreversible wear and decline.

Isabela Corduneanu

Identity, Memory and Multiculturalism:	
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More than to redefine the alterity, the paper underlines the role and usefulness of the concepts of memory and identity in approaching multiculturalism. Starting from the way in which identity politics are implemented, the author presents the "competition" between official and unofficial discourse in reinventing the past (history, national symbols etc.), and how memory and identity can maintain/change the status quo. As an example, she takes the dilemma of national vs. regional identity in the case of Transylvanians (Romanians as well as Hungarians), and the role of both component groups to (re)construct an identity, maintaining/changing the memory. Finally, the paper presents the debate on the new critiques of the cultural studies on liberal multiculturalism.

The concept of identity appears frequently in the discourse of minorities. At the same time, the identity politics as well as those linked to collective memory, maintain these discourses. On the second hand, the discourses of multiculturalism are ignoring still now the relation between the auto-representation of a minority (including here identity discourses sustained by the collective memory odd the respective minority) and the hetero-representation (the manner in which a minority is presented by the majority, a discourse which, similarly, is based both, on the collective identity and memory of the majority).

Will Kymlicka

The Theory and Practice of the Canadian Multiculturalism

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This attractive paper of Will Kymlicka is presenting us the story of Canadian multicultural policy (starting from 1971, when it was officially introduced in the House of Commons by Pierre Trudeau), with the public debates and the reaction of the Canadian public opinion. Starting from the two main critiques of the policy — of Neil Bissoondath and Richard Gwyn — Kymlicka deconstructs point by point the arguments of them. Its conclusion is that, finally, the multicultural policy is one of the main exported product of Canada. Except Australia, there is no other state, nor United States or western European countries, where multiculturalism leads to such a successful integration of the immigrant group.

The idea of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework can be seen as precisely an attempt to negotiate such terms. And in my view, the vast majority of what is done under the heading of multiculturalism policy, not only at the federal level, but also at provincial and municipal levels, and indeed within school boards and private companies, can be defended as promoting fairer terms of integration.

Consider the sorts of policies commonly associated with multiculturalism, whether it be curriculum reform in schools (e.g., revising the history and literature curriculum within public schools to give larger recognition to the historical and cultural contributions of ethno-cultural minorities; bilingual education programs for the children of immigrants at the primary school level), or institutional adaptation (e.g., revising work schedules or dress-codes so as to accommodate the religious holidays and practices of immigrant groups; adopting workplace or school harassment codes prohibiting racist comments; CRTC regulatory guidelines about ethnic stereotypes in the media), or public education programs (e.g., anti-racism educational campaigns; cultural diversity training for the police, social workers or health-care professionals), or cultural development programs (e.g., funding of ethnic festivals and ethnic studies programs; providing mother-tongue literacy courses for adult immigrants), or affirmative action (e.g., preferential treatment of visible minorities in access to education, training or employment). All of these, I would argue, are promoting integration into common institutions, but they involve fairer terms of integration. Whereas the old approach required immigrants to integrate on our terms, the new policy demands integration on fair terms.

Thus immigrants accept the principle of integration into common institutions: they are simply seeking fairer terms of integration. If Canada is going to pressure immigrants to integrate into common institutions operating in either English or French, immigrant groups understandably want to ensure that the terms of integration are fair. This demand is not only justified, but long overdue.

I have tried to present in this paper an optimistic view about the role of multiculturalism in Canadian society, and to dispel some of the common misconceptions of it. I wish I could end with the even more optimistic hope that recognition of our success with multiculturalism will give us the confidence and courage to tackle the difficult issues regarding Quebec and First Nations. But my own view is rather more pessimistic. In the end, the claims of immigrant groups have always been hostage to the power-struggle between English, French and Aboriginal groups in Canada. Since the odds of a dramatic improvement in relations among these groups are slim to none, this suggests that it may be awhile before Canadians are in the frame of mind to recognize immigrant claims for what they are: reasonable claims for fair terms of integration.

ANALYSE

Daniele Conversi

The Bilingualism in Catalonia

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How can a language survive? Which are the dramas of a linguistic minority under an authoritarian regime? Which are the advantages of a bilingual society? How can be difficulties solved and how can tolerance be lead to viable programs? These are the questions picked up by Daniele Conversi in his essay. The answers constitute arguments and pleadings for the richness of a bi/plurilingual society.

The Catalan was for a long time marginalised in the civil life because of a radical policy of elimination from any public space and, principally, from the school and mass media. Only after the monolingual dictatorship of Franco, a process of deep, almost revolutionary changes was started, which lead to the actual stage of institutional bilingualism. The Catalan experience could be an interesting reference point for anyone who wants to study minority languages.

DIALOGUE

Romania in "A Europe of Regions"

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When the tenth issue of Altera (Regionalism and/or Regionalisation) was presented in Timișoara in the spring of this year (in the period of the last Kosovo conflict), The Inter-cultural Center of Pro Europe League organized at the headquarters of the Writers Union a round-table debate on this topic. The material presents the discussions. Participants: Gabriel Andreescu, Marius Turda, Valeriu Leu, Brândușa Armanca, Ioan Almăjan, Ludovic Orban, Mariana Cernicova, Adriana Babeți, Elek Szokoly, and, the host and moderator of the debate, Mircea Mihăieș.

DOCUMENT

Kosovo Between Legitimacy and Necessity

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The issue contains three texts: The Declaration of the President of UN Security Council regarding to Kosovo, The Resolutions adopted by the of UN Security Council regarding to Kosovo, and The Declaration of the General Secretary Kofi Annan at the 55th Session of the Human Rights Commission, the first two of them concluded by a comment signed by Valentin Stan and entitled The UN Dilemma: Between National Sovereignty and Human Rights, which is a juridical interpretation. Here are some of the authors ideas:

"The UN documents presented in this issue of Altera are significant for the evolution of the outlook about human rights and international security. Even if the crisis from Kosovo opened a hot debate on the legitimacy of the international intervention in the region, to stop the serious violation of the human rights, means to recognize or not the exclusive role of the Security Council to authorize such an intervention, is absolutely clear that there are no zones with absolute internal jurisdiction of the state in the domain of respecting human rights.

It is clear that in the interdependence system which is functioning now at a global scale, a political or military conflict, which might have even economic or social causes, between international actors, but also inside states, will affect the system as such. The internal conflict could be caused even because of the non-observance of the human rights affecting the regional security and being under the incidence of the societal security's aspects."

FACES OF EUROPE

Edmund Pech

The Sorbs from Germany — Continuity and Discontinuity in Politics Towards National Minorities from 1945

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The Sorbs constitute an ethnic minority without a motherland. Their destiny is similar with of the Bascs, Britons, and Frisians. Like these ethnic groups, the Sorbs are keeping their national specificity, their own language and culture still present days, in spite of different trials to be assimilated.

Mainly at the beginning of 19th century the Sorbs were obeyed to a strong assimilationist pressure. The objectives of the German policy, especially in the last third of the 19th century, was to de-nationalized the Sorb people and to assimilate it in the German nation.

The first results in minorities protection were gained by the Sorbs immediately after 1945. In 1946 it was founded the Sorb Pedagogical Institute, which solve the problem of Sorb language teachers. Following this, in 1947 they have got the license for a printing and a publishing house, also for right of editing a newspaper.

Inside of the politics towards minorities, the political leaders have to play — and this is a very clear aspect — an extremely important role. After the centralization of the DRG state structure in 1951-52, and together with the elimination of the lands as political-administrative governments, all of the ambiguities in minority education turned up. In the school curricula of 1951-1952 the Sorb was not taken into account, a fact which lead to organizational conflicts in the schools.

In actual Federal Republic, the rights equality and the state support to maintain the Sorb language and the culture is stipulated by law. The Sorbs' situation is settled by numerous decrees from different levels. In many cases, there were used structures and institutions already existed in the former DRG. The Fundamental Law of FRG does not contain, comparing with the DRG Constitution, any article about the protection of minorities.

RESTITUTIO

Adrian Majuru

Modernity vs. Multiculturality:

Bucharest in Modern Era (1848-1940)

143

Probably the most stereotyped and known naming of the Romanian Capital is "Little Paris". If we accept this metaphor (based on the francophil character of Bucharest in the inter-war period, in sense of language, legislation, architecture, arts etc.), the paper of Adrian Majuru complete and underlines this specificity of a reproduced culture. Bucharest, in the period mentioned in the title, absorbs a huge number of ethnic groups (near the Romanians, Albanians, Arabians, Armenians, British, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Poles, Russians, Spanish, Turks etc.), and this mixed structure gave to the Romanian Capital its cosmopolitan color.

Modernity vs. Multiculturalism. This is the most interesting, complex, and dynamic period of the history of Bucharest between 1848-1948. It is a period when the modernization of the whole Romanian society was swivel by Bucharest and, implicitly, the colorful society of town.

This paper tries to catch the essential aspects of the modernization of Bucharest, regarding to the allogeneous elements, which dynamised substantially the process of modernization. The allogeneous communities are, generally speaking, urbanized elements as mentality, cultural models, socio-professional background, which gave to Bucharest a cosmopolitan character. The ethnic component of these elements were very diverse, a fact which create an ideal framework to affirmation of multiculturalism. If at the beginning of 19th century, the language used in high society was Greek, it was replaced gradually by French. Except their native language (depending on their ethnic origins), the bourgeois families spoke other languages as English, German, Italian, and, of course, Romanian.

ECUMENICA

Leo Tolstoi

The Church and the State

170

The article was published for the first time in Germany. In Russia it was published in 1904 and 1906. Both Russian edition were confiscated by the authorities and burnt. This first Romanian edition is a trial to recover the Russian classic writers, especially its writings on religion and politics.

The Church and The State represent a violent critiques against the Church and its contradictory relation with the State/Politics through the history. Tolstoi sustain that a symbiosis between these two institutions are unacceptable because of their goals and of means to gain these goals, as well as for their supposed value systems. Unfortunately, argue Tolstoi, the practice prove the contrary: mercantile priests, an immoral „marriage” with the State, and a corrupted institution of Church, which managed the faith as a lie trying to impose it to the people.

REVIEWS

Carmen Maria Andraş

Romanian-Hungarian Literary and Cultural Proximities 180

In the multi- and inter-cultural space of Transylvania, the Romanian-Hungarian/Hungarian-Romanian relation was the mobile of the differentiation which gave the specificity of the region, comparing with other zone from its neighborhood. The book present the dynamic of this relation in the literature of the two cultures, with its positive and negative aspects.

Andrei Roth

Central and East-European Perspectives 185

A short presentation of the volume published by Balla Bálint and Anton Sterbling (Eds.): Ethnicity, Nation, Culture and East European perspectives, which constitute the second publication from a series of five, the work of the Permanent section for Central and East-Europeans Research of the German Sociological Association. Those volumes present "diverse social reality from the present, as well as the past (...) of Central and East-European countries approached from different point of views", underlying its multicultural dimension.

István Haller

The Multiculturalism of the Regions 189

It is a selection of some publications edited by Intellect Society from Great Britain in its collection European Studies. The themes included in these "euro-centric" volumes are suggestively contained also in each of the titles: Regionalism in the European Union, Language, Community and the State, Humor and History, Policing in Europe Uniform in Diversity and The New Russia.

Andrei Roth

Naționalism sau democratism?

Editura PRO EUROPA

„La acest sfârșit de veac ne aflăm încă, sau iarăși, în fața sarcinii de a opta pentru o formă contemporană a modernității (sau postmodernității) structurilor mentale și socio-economico-politice. Pornind de la aceeași recunoaștere a incompatibilității dintre naționalism și democratism, însă în opoziție cu A.C. Popovici și cu toată linia de gândire pe care a reprezentat-o emblematic, opțiunea mea clară și univocă este pentru democratismul consecvent al gândirii și pentru democrația împlinită în practica vieții publice, împotriva naționalismului. Analiza celor două concepții antagonice și argumentarea detaliată a propriei opțiuni este intenția asumată a volumului de față.

Sînt sigur că o atare luare de poziție va fi întâmpinată cu repulsie de cei pentru care naționalismul constituie o paradigmă indiscutabilă, intangibilă. Nu-mi fac nici o iluzie că i-aș putea convinge pe cei ce nu vor să gîndească în chip rațional și să se debaraseze de prejudecățile lor. Mă adresez oamenilor dispuși la o discuție în cadrul și conform regulilor raționalității științifice. Supun atenției acestora date empirice și argumente teoretice, invitîndu-i să le cîntărească și să judece în consecință.”

Autorul

