

Overview of Romanian Emigration to America during Communism and Postcommunism: Cultural Dimensions of Quality of Life

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Abstract

The changes that have taken place in Central and Southeastern Europe over the past decades are remarkable in terms of speed and profound re-settings experienced. All these changes have put a decisive mark on the individuals' perceptions on quality of life dimensions. Even though the major part of current scientific literature is dedicated to social and economic facets, social scientists are shifting focus to cultural dimensions of quality of life as determinants for emigration. This paper takes a close look at Romanian intellectual emigration movements during the Cold War and after in order to understand the changes taking place in cultural dimensions of quality of life and the transition from exile to diaspora and transnationalism in the case of Romanians. Opting for a non-biased look at various insertions into the subject, the study raises the Romanian experience to cosmopolitan dimensions rendering it part of the contemporary quality of life re-evaluations.

Key-words: diaspora, transnationalism, emigration, quality of life perceptions

1. Introduction

The changes that have taken place in Central and Southeastern Europe over the past decades, allowing former communist countries to re-join the non-communist world and the market oriented types of economies, are remarkable in terms of brevity of the switch and the profound changes they had to experience during the transition path, diagnoses Hall Gardner in 2000. It is also true that the political and economic change is in itself difficult and it has taken shape against a background of technological and social change unprecedented in magnitude due to increased globalization phenomena and rapidness of communication. Hence, these systems changed themselves on the back setting of global change. In the same time, people tend to perceive their quality of life in a very relative manner. These perceptions are not only highly relative to surrounding social issues but also very sensitive to cultural issues.

In this context, Romanian intellectual emigration during the Cold War and after represents an original case of transplantation of “the local genius trying to evade the rigors of a furious ‘localism’ (‘isolation’, ‘claustration’), unequaled – at the level of intentions – in present-day Europe” (Moraru, 1999). Choosing to leave their country proved to be the only solution for the Romanian intellectuals trying to escape a “rudimentary, even if comfortable, idiomatic vision, with an oficialized “specific” in its most deplorable meaning, made even worse by an obvious campaign against professionalism and value” (Moraru, 1999). Abroad, Romanian intellectual diaspora did not cease to activate and it succeeded in creating a genuine culture in exile. Critics studying the literature of the Romanian diaspora, insist on diaspora literature as exile literature, and usually place it in relation to one’s native country, insisting that its importance comes from “well-defined traits, it created influential institutions and it produced a highly original literature which, faced with the new cultural environment and the literary realities in the home country, has succeeded in developing important specificities” (Behring, 2001).

In 1998, Georgeta Filitti added that “we are never to truly know our history as long as Romanian exile continues to remain a confusing, controversial, ignored notion”. The same alarming note is re-asserted in Christian Moraru’s article “Intellectual diaspora and critical spirit” where

it is high time to discuss the status of ‘literary diaspora’, as Romanian culture is fundamentally and definitely, one sole culture thanks to its representatives, who remained in or left this country – that it could participate, to a greater or smaller extent, of course, but most dynamically in the maintenance of a salutary integrity of our spiritual being, invigorated by a permanent inner communication” (Moraru, 1999).

The majority of the writers have pointed the conditioning of literature by the political factor whose doctrinary absolutism imposed all sorts of subaltern manifestations, from interior/internal exile leading to dissidents, to overt external outbreaks leading to departure and diasporic formations abroad. It has been said that there is yet to be found a hidden “drawer” of Romanian literature which, after the 1989 Revolution would reveal extraordinary pieces of writing closed before to the eyes and senses of the totalitarian regime. But as Dumitrescu (1997) argues, it has not been found and it has remained hidden because there was no such drawer with prohibited writings. The real drawer of Romanian literature from the years of persecution is the literary creation of exile, since the liberty of expression was on hold for almost 40 years in the country.

In an interview Monica Lovinescu affirmed that “exile under communism represents an unique phenomenon in the history of Romania and it must be researched; such an exile lasting almost half a century is an unprecedented phenomenon” (Lovinescu in Cristea 1994). Also, as Octavian Paler adds in the preface to Mihaela Cristea’s *Experiență inițiativă a exilului*, “...not so long ago, for us exile was tantamount to dying; before ’89, exile constituted one of the most radical forms to stay true to oneself. Many Romanians ran away from a sick history to defend their own spiritual health” (Paler in Cristea 1994). The necessity to go back and re-visit exile literature is all the more important as there is no such thing as one exile, but many. Each exile is a personal story that cannot be judged correctly from the outside. As Cristea (1994) warned, “us, the ones in the country, and the exiled Romanians represent two halves of the same historic tragedy; the major risk now is not finding the way to re-discover each other”, especially since Romanian intellectuals chose to leave the country at a time when

in Romania no integral texts by classic authors are allowed to be read. The purge of our libraries, started years ago, continues with greater violence. The majority of Romanian writers cannot publish anymore. The few writers who went overseas cannot remedy this rupture of Romanian literature and culture. But these few writers abroad have something that in our country the writers do not have: the freedom of writing and publishing. (Cristea, 1994)

Not only literature was in this position. Researchers in science had trouble in keeping with international scientific circles and discoveries, as they were not allowed to travel abroad and very few of them managed to travel outside the country in few years after the 2nd war, while the Cold War severely tightened the borders.

Referring to the Romanians immigrating to the United States, Tânjălă and Turturică agree in 1997, that not all left because of political or religious persecution. Many of the ones that have taken the final step of leaving the country simply felt that Romania under communism had become a place where intellectual development and affirmation had become goals impossible to attain. Irrespective of the personal motives that led to their departure, they all wanted to surpass their condition. In mind with Romania’s onward direction towards international integration, the experience of the Romanian intellectual diaspora is of high interest because these transplants exposed themselves and entered the arena of international competition, the only place to make proof of real value, and Tânjălă and Turturică (1997) consider that the way in which they reacted after exposure to another culture, the ability to live and become known in a community with multiple ideologies and cultural models might be relevant for the difficulty or easiness with which Romania would achieve its dream of becoming an integrated part of the Western world. As documented, after the 2nd World War and during the Cold War, Romanian emigration is described mostly in terms of exile, many Romanians fleeing the communist regime and its prolonged persecution.

2. A short history of Romanian literary exile in America

The reconstruction of a troubling history during the Cold War and after is necessary in order to understand and explain the post ’89 transformations of Romanian intellectual diaspora.

At the beginning of the 70s, Mircea Eliade talked about two types of Romanian exiles leaving Romania in two subsequent waves (Cazaban, 2002), respectively the '40s-'50s - the first wave - refugees going West, mainly to France, Spain and America, afraid of the Stalinist regime and eager to share with the world Romanian tradition and spirit and also to inform correctly and constantly the Occident on the situation in the East and the '70s - the second wave - when Ceaușescu's regime begins to show its real face - a wave of young people wanting to live "à la manière occidentale".

Eliade makes a clear distinction between the two waves, obviously siding with the first wave, and criticizing the second. The exiled of the '40s leave a country of prosperity and keeps to the Romanian roots upholding the Romanian spirit in the world and promoting it outside; on the other hand, the exiled of the '70s, '80s, leave a country of poverty, of endless staying in line and persecution, seeking to quickly integrate and blend-in the Western fabric. For the exiled of the '70s the opposition between Romania and the West is a reality and leaving the country is the equivalent of a sought after break, while the exiled of the 40s believes in an equal sign between Romania and the West, re-inserting thus, most naturally, in a culture which resembles the Romanian one.

In a very accurate and documented work, Eva Behring (2001) proposes three waves of exiles during 1945-1989, as follows: first wave: '40s-'50s, second wave: '60s-'70s, third wave: '80s. Each wave bears its own characteristics, has its own representatives, chronology and duration of literary exiles, centers of formation and communication, as well as mechanisms of functioning. However, the reasons for leaving the country between 1945 and 1989 range between political persecution, discrimination, jail/ jail threatening, interdiction to publish, censorship. As Behring (2001) underlines, exile is a classical category of banishment, of the antinomies abroad/at home, disintegration/integrity. This category is strictly delimited from emigration - motivated personally or economically, from diaspora, borrowed from church vocabulary and symbolizing community essentially, or from asylum which puts forward the assurance of newly found security, temporally limited, preceding a return and, at the same time she notes that during the entire post-war exile period there were three levels of cultural identity for the Romanian intellectual emigrants. The first comprised the ones who completely lacked the confidence that they would ever integrate into the host setting. They maintained Romanian as work language and consequently, a Romanian readership (eg. Paul Goma). The second level came to terms with the second cultural identity and began to combine the two, mastering the native language and the second one, targeting audience at home and in the new culture and most Romanian exiles subscribe to this category, while, third, some writers totally abandoned their native language, writing exclusively in the language of the country which adopted them (egs. Emil Cioran, Eugen Ionescu - occasionally still wrote in Romanian).

In a study endowed with sociological precision, Laurențiu Ulici (1994) concludes that during 1945-1989, 50 writers have left Romania. The ones that left represent over 12% of the total of Romanian writers and this percentage is more significant than in any other country in South-East Europe (Ulici, 1994). In the same study, Ulici (1994) divides post-war Romanian emigration into three waves, respectively: first wave, '40s-50s, second wave '60s-'70s, last wave '60s-'80s on criteria such as individual reasons, destiny and activity in exile. Attention is given to paradigmatic cases, relevant for each type of migrant movement and for each wave, while a selection is made based on the position of the author in Romania before departure and then activity diffusion in the receiving country. Starting with the second wave, the political regime in Romania reveals its true nature, especially after the 1971 visit of Ceaușescu to China and Korea, when he proclaims upon return the so-called "small cultural revolution" with the purpose of ideological stabilization. The '60s and '80s are years of growing insecurity regarding literary creation, opposition to political and cultural servitude, pressure and blackmail from the Securitate, the certainty that the coming years will bring forceful interventions from the ruling power in the private and professional life in the country. Ioan P. Culianu is among the intellectuals leaving the country during this period.

The exodus of writers during the '80s includes Norman Manea, Ion Caraion, Dorin Tudoran. The latter leaves in 1885 in the United States, establishes there the foundations of two magazines, Meridian and Agora, while also publishing, *De bunavoiebiografia mea/Willingly, my autobiography* in which he sensibly describes the years of a growing discontent and the circumstances of his departure. Towards the end of the '80s, other intellectuals leave the country, Matei Vișniec, Bujor Nedelcovici, Virgil Duda, Nicolae Balota, Mircea Zăciu and others.

According to Ulici, much along the lines of Eliade's remarks concerning the waves of emigration and their characteristics, cultural communication in exile has as first impulse to organize, during the 40s and the 50s, mostly in France (L'Association Franco-Roumaine-1945, Center Roumain de Recherche 1949, the Literary Circle in Neuilly-1951), and the works cited so far give an accurate, general description of the Romanian exile. Within this general framework, we turn our attention towards Romanian exile in America during communism and post-communism.

Alexandru Nemoianu (1997) argues that there are two coordinates along which the history of the Romanian diaspora in America articulated itself namely, this history shows how the American nation and civilization constitutes itself with each day in the eyes of the foreigner and second, it shows the resourcefulness and capacity to adapt of the Romanian existential model.

As direct consequences of the two coordinates, the literature of the Romanian exiles in America follows: one, the identity in transformation of the Romanian writer in America and two, how he/she perceives and constructs reality there. There are the works preoccupied with the Romanian literary diaspora integration in America and the fundamental problems encountered by the Romanian writer in America (Pleșea, 2001; Toma, 1978; Raica & Nemoianu 1995; Nemoianu, 1997; Hartular, 1996; Vulcănescu, 1991), respectively in exile (Ulici, 1995; Behring, 2001; Filitti, 1998; Florescu, 1998). In terms of cultural dialogue, in 1952 in Indiana is established "The Nicolae Bălcescu Association" and in 1954 "The Romanian Social, Cultural and Charitable Committee". In America, Romanian organizations are dedicated to the study of the Romanian cultural contribution to the universal culture and its position in a wider world context and "The Romanian Studies Association of America" established in 1972 in New York presents comparative perspectives. Starting with 1968, The American-Romanian Institute of Research in Pennsylvania is preoccupied with the correct perception from a historical point of view of the Romanian culture in the host country. With the same purpose is established The American Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1975.

The 80s represent a sustained effort to unite forces via different organizations (in 1986 "The Cultural Center of the Romanian Field in Hamilton", in 1988 "The Romanian Institute of Historical Research in California") as a reaction to the ever harsher conditions regarding free cultural and artistic expression in Romania and the intervention of the secret police (Securitate) in the activities of exile. In fact, in 1988, one of the projects of this latter Institute entitled "the Anthology of Romanian Cultural Personalities and Associations in Exile" counts 20 cultural associations and 220 personalities, 158 newspapers and Romanian magazines published in exile, out of which 91 in the U.S. In between 1820 - the date signaling the first Romanian emigrants in America and 1980, 180.000 Romanians fled to the United States, as the 2nd World War drove many Romanians away from the country. What the Cold War did afterwards was to politicize the emigration phenomenon and in terms of intellectual life, to transform it in an exile phenomenon. As throughout the rest of the world, Romanian refugees became instruments and tools in the camps of the Cold War, balancing rapports between East and West. As such, exiles become symbolic as "effective weapons instrumentalized by both sides through propaganda" (Stan, 2006). The formative power of associations in exile is completed by radio and the two most popular stations, Free Europe and The Voice of America. Among the writers who have activated in the Romanian sections, Noël Bernard, Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca, Octavian Vuici, Emil Hurezeanu, Vlad Georgescu, Ion Ioanid, Nicolae Stroeescu-Stănișoară, Mircea Carp etc. The whole array of magazines and publications contribute to clarifications regarding cultural identity, the relation of exile cultural elite with the West world and Romania, relations with the opposition or allies in the home country.

3. Features of Romanian exile during the Cold War

The cultural and political strategies used by Romanian intellectuals in exile are part of the on-going effort to survive the Cold War, to inform the West about the realities of the East and to counter the Romanian communist party's actions to avoid full disclosure to the West. In fact, one of the dominant features of Romanian exile during the Cold War is the demarcated distinction the exiles make between the country and their love for it and the total abhorrence of the communist regime installed in the country. This loyalty towards the nation is a general characteristic of all the Cold War emigrants and it shows the forced removal of the emigrant subject from the homeland. The strong voices against the regime declined in intensity during the Cold War as hope of overthrowing the communist rule seemed to fade and Ceausescu's ruling became a force to be reckoned with.

As Livia Stan (2006) contends, during the first decade of the Cold War, “Next Year in Bucharest!” was the standard New Year’s Eve greeting for Romanian exiles, but the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the non-intervention of the West in the matter marked an end of the hope to ever escape communism back home. Many of them considered the Soviet occupation only a ‘temporary’ one and pended on Western powers to intervene. They tried to use personal contacts to get to officials in the West and made efforts to convince and provide accurate information abroad about the real situation in Romania. Another characteristic of the Romanian exiles is that although voicing protests, they failed to organize and be united, as Yossi Shain (1999) also points “Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Yugoslav and Polish exile organizations all failed in their effort to maintain unity against the communist regimes at home”. On the other hand, as evidenced by Stan (2006) there were group initiatives to take a stand as “misunderstandings between the refugees mean the sabotage of our real and democratic position from which we can speak to the West” (Cazaban cited in Stan, 2006). In 1954 Mircea Eliade founded a literary and artistic Romanian club at the Romanian Catholic Mission in Paris and until 1970 it received writers coming from Romania, as part of the effort to coagulate (Lovinescu, 1990).

During the 1960s, the tactics used by the communist regime to limit the possible effects of activity in exile comprised ‘lists’ of ‘dangerous’ exiles who “if identified, to be arrested” (Stan, 2006), strong anti-religious campaigns, appropriation of cultural exile figures, (Stan, 2006) attempts being made to repatriate the remains of personalities who died abroad, and publishing heavily-edited parts of works by writers in exile (Mircea Eliade’s fiction was published, unlike the studies on the history of religions) and further tactics involved not saying a word about the author’s leaving Romania while most of the published writings were literary pieces neutral of ideological content, anti-communist stance and void of references to the reality of leaving in Romania at the time. As documented (Behring, 2001; Dumitrescu 1997; Ulici, 1995), the successive waves of emigrants from the 1970s and the 1980s in Western areas, arrived with different expectations and a less loud voice against what they left home (Behring, 2001). Instead, they launched into humanitarian initiatives and informed the Western public on the contravention of human rights in Romania and lobbied for the right to emigrate in order to re-unite family members (Stan 9). It became usual practice during diplomatic meetings with Romania that a list of people be given the right to emigrate and the lists were compiled by Romanian organizations in exile containing people’s names whose lives or families were in danger if not allowed to leave or re-unite. Even though it was difficult through official channels to intervene, it was possible, but as Ceausescu tightened control, it was progressively challenging.

Irrespective of chosen years to emigrate during 1945-1989, as the majority of studies (Dumitrescu, Ulici, Behring etc) analyzing this period conclude, cultural identity and self-consciousness are the major themes approached by Romanian literary exiles. As Behring (2001) observes, one of the major problems is the necessity to define own cultural being, the experience of a cultural “other” is felt as a shock, the sudden change of cultures is perceived as a violent break from the constrictive norms experienced up to that moment. Re-orienting oneself towards the culture, language and traditions or customs of the host country are recognized among best strategies of survival; nevertheless, it leaves the writer’s being in pain and in difficulty to cope with the new realities in very different and individualized ways. The pre-conditions for a successful integration are, at the time, availability to emancipate and leave behind first culture, closeness and affiliation with the host country and ultimately, level of mastery of the second language (Behring, 2001). At the same time, the effort to maintain the creative potential of the Romanian language and the accompanying effort to become at ease with the adoptive country’s language, an entire new type of audience and readership to address, the controversy with the evolutions back home, the change of cultural identity and adapt are the constants of the writer’s being in exile. Nevertheless, the mechanics of Romanian emigration after 1989 change, marking the transition towards a transnational, cosmopolitan, in step with the transformations brought on in the country by dealing with post-communism and the turn towards the structures and characteristics of the free market regime.

In a study endowed with sociologic precision, Dumitru Sandu (2005) examines the dynamics of Romanian emigration and, according to the sociologist (also in 2000, 2004), the new migration in Romania is articulated along three types of spatial movement: internal migration, permanent emigration and temporary emigration, all of these marking inter-connections at macro-level and micro-level in the Romanian society. From a macro-level perspective, temporary migration abroad brings as constitutive streams the ones formed by permanent emigration, temporary emigration and migratory movements of population between different types of residences within the country.

From the micro-level approach, migration is examined as life strategy that individuals adopt as direct response to the challenges of post-communist Romania. As highlighted in the study, data come from official 2002 census, statistics from the Public Opinion Barometer of the Open Society Foundation with surveys from 2001 to 2004.

From the macro-level perspective, Sandu (2005) observes a great shift into internal migration post '89. As noted, right after the regime change, the total migration movement increased radically. Mainly, rural-urban movement was almost five times higher in 1990 than before. But, as Sandu argues,

before 1989 many people lived as temporary in-migrants in cities, coming from villages and not having the possibility to obtain a permanent residence. Thus, immediately after 1989, we witnessed a kind of compensation migration, specifically a compensation for the frozen political-administrative context that was dominant prior to the revolutionary change. (Sandu, 2005)

4. The postcommunist experience

Postcommunist transition brought to the forefront increase in urban unemployment, in general poverty, land restitution processes and the radical need for adaptive strategies meant coping with the new realities for the “transition losers” (Sandu, 2005). The dominant trait in internal migration for Romania remains, after 1989, the movement from the country side to the city, but the crisis period entailed by change from one regime to another reversed the movement, as in rural areas costs were lower, action was encouraged by land restitution, taxes remained minimum, so that while cities remained targeted future residences, people went back to villages as strategy of survival for large segments of the Romanian population. As pointed by Sandu (2005), “the average volume of the total migration reduced by more than double in the period 1990-96 compared with 1983-89” and even though rural urban migration continued to be mainstream well into 1996, a declining trend is to be noticed. This declining trend reaches a peak in 1997 when the rural-urban direction is reversed and there is a clear option for people to go back towards the rural areas, while there is a sharp increase in poverty from 20 % in 1996 to 31% in 1997 and 36% in 2000 and, even if the level of poverty decreases to 25% in 2003, the same urban-rural direction is maintained (Sandu, 2005).

From the perspective of external emigration the first two years right after 1989 reach high numbers of people leaving Romania to go abroad. According to Sandu (2005), 100.000 people left the country for permanent residence to be obtained in Germany. Many of these people were German ethnics who could not leave Romania before 1989 and consequently, after 1992, when the majority of Germans had already left the country, there is a sharp decline in the rates of external migration, continued further in 1998 with a second significant decrease, lowering the volume of migration to around 18.000 people each year after 1989 if compared to 29.000 a year between 1980-1989 (Sandu, 2005). It is obvious that if before people were fleeing afraid of and exhausted because of the communist regime, once with the '89 Revolution and the relaxation of free movement interdictions, people regained confidence and tried to improve their life at home, in the country. As Sandu notes,

Germany, the United States and Hungary were the main destination countries before and after 1989. Ethnic identities and relative networks were the main basis for this structural continuity in the structure of emigration. The German prevalence continued until 1996. After 1996, the dominant streams were those directed toward the United States and Canada. The pattern of a concentrated field of migration directed toward North America seems to be replaced in 2003 by a more dispersed field, with rather equal volume streams oriented to Germany, Canada, the United States, Italy and Hungary. (Sandu, 2005)

An interesting phenomenon to be highlighted by Sandu's study is the fact that temporary emigration seems to become the new pillar of the Romanian migration system after '89. As such, temporary emigration is the most dynamic segment of total migration and it is obvious that working abroad in the hope of a better future is a pattern that affected post-communist Romania. If up until 2002 temporary migration is composed mainly of people coming from regions in Romania that are not very poor and have a high degree of cultural diversity, after this year, to the previous ones, are added layers of temporary migrants from poorer regions of the country. In fact, what happened to Romanian emigration after 1989 was an alignment to the general framework of *nomadism* as cultural and factual movement of individuals marking further the borderless world of the 21st century. As Christian Moraru remarks in an interview in 2009, identity, in general, is nomadic by constitution, is organized by flow, on the go in evolutionary terms, it is the global reality of each day (Moraru, 2009).

The twist that the 21st century sets in is that the nomadic phenomenon happens nowadays with much more frequency and intensity than before, transforming the concept into *praxis*, the consistency and extensity of which are unmet previously. In this case, the newness of the nomadic turn does not reside in its resemblance to a 21st century innovation or event, but in the permutation and re-arrangement of already existing structures (Moraru, 2009). Consistent with Moraru's assertions, circular migration abroad started to be more obvious after 1996-1997 together with the increase in domestic poverty, the capacity to go abroad and start a-new, while the possibility of return migration becomes a viable option, resulting in the decline of permanent emigration (Sandu, 2005).

Following the logics of a world where free movement and constitution on the go are requirements and naturals at the same time, after 2002, after Romania's access to the Schengen area, the inner dynamics of Romanian emigration experience a new turning point associated with "a more dispersed migratory field, with streams directed toward more destinations" (Sandu, 2005). Under these circumstances, the easier the pendular movement abroad, the lower the probability of permanent migration taking place so that in 2003 permanent emigration decreased, while temporary abroad migration increased.

The micro-level approach focusing on migration as life strategy reveals that in the case of post '89 Romania, people are more inclined towards temporary emigration out of the country than internal migration within the country for better living. As Sandu observes analyzing data from the Public Opinion Barometer – October 2004, temporary emigration for work purposes is higher among men than women, among people with vocational education or among those who have traveled abroad and those who live in large communities with a rather high rate of unemployment. The temporary migrant type of individual is characterized as:

young, relatively well-educated man, raised in a religion other than Christian Orthodox. The social capital he may make use of abroad is significantly structured by having parents or children who have already settled there. [...] The ethnic profile of the community also seems to be important: in those areas where the Hungarian population is significantly represented, tendencies toward temporary international migration were a lot stronger than in the areas that are ethnically homogeneous. (Sandu, 2005)

Indeed, in the 2009 interview, Christian Moraru observes and accurately parallels from a cultural stance Dumitru Sandu's data driven precision, that many Romanians left their country especially after 1990 as *working class* and if there is to be observed a qualitative feature of the waves of immigrants following the Romanian Revolution, it is worth noting that these subsequent waves are more interested in the quality of life led, more inclined and willing to forget Romanian roots and succeed materially in the United States. In fact, as Moraru observes

both Romanian diaspora and the United States are passing through a post-exile moment. We cannot talk about exile anymore after 1989 for all the well-known reasons. The context has been favorable until 1989 for strictly political reasons; people left and remained in the United States with the help of political asylum. This was a rapid legal chance to get integrated into the American society. While after 1989, the people who left toward America and wanted to remain there and obtain a job at a university could do it only professionally. The argument of the political asylum did not exist anymore. [...] Until '89 people understood that the bridges behind had been burned, they did not exist and emigration was a one way option. This notion has no more meaning after 1989. There are people who come and go, who live on both sides of the Atlantic. The context is completely changed and this is why the relation with Romania is also changed. For me, at least, Romania is a piece in the global mosaic, 'here' and 'there' are entirely interchangeable and I think things are entirely different than they were for the previous generations. (Moraru, 2009)

Moraru's last remark, namely that Romania itself became part of the global mosaic, a place where 'here' and 'there' are not irreducibly opposable and mutually exclusive, but sides of a reality which indulges in trans-crossings and interchangeability, naturally leads to yet another dimension that has been acquired by the Romanian emigration in the 1989 aftermath; specifically, a certain undeniable cosmopolitan allure which was so hard to attach before '89 to Romanian emigration, but which gradually became a feature that sets Romanian movement within the parameters of international global individuals displacement.

This cosmopolitan feature is forcefully underlined in an interview with Domnica Rădulescu, one of the Romanian diaspora writers, representative for this turn in the characteristics of Romanian diaspora. Talking about her book *Trenul de Trieste/Train to Trieste*, the adventure of a Romanian woman escaping communist Romania to find new beginnings in America, Domnica Rădulescu argues:

what I really tried to accomplish – and, from the reactions of the people and the commentaries of the Romanians in Romania, of the Romanians in exile, but also from those of the Americans, I think I have succeeded – I tried to render a personal experience, but which, without trying to universalize it I came to represent a communality of the experience of many Romanians from that period and an experience of emigration, of exile. In a way I wanted it to be problematic and I tried to combine this love story with history, and with politics, between something very intimate and personal and aspects of everyday life, culture, society, politics. The book somehow raises the personal to a larger dimension, many can identify with – at least this was the reaction of many people who read it in Romania, and also exiles from here who wrote to me. I receive emails from readers every week since the book was published in August 2007, from Romanians, but also from Americans. The public is very varied: many young girls, Romanian exiles, people from various social strata, that are all drawn by something in the book. (Radulescu, 2008) [translation ours]

Although the talk with the author takes place in 2008, she is still hung on the exile vocabulary and refers to before 1989 experience. Nevertheless, the fact that the writing manages to “raise the personal to a larger dimension”, the idea that one person’s experience may be perceived as or representative for a “communality of the experience of many Romanians” and maybe other nationalities as well going through similar life events, the warm and varied response to the book, raises the Romanian experience to cosmopolitan dimensions, making it a part in the gallery of experiences defining a by now world in perpetual motion.

5. Conclusions

As documented, 20th and 21st century migrations are creating not only new perceptions on quality of life but also new types of displacements, respectively new type diasporans and diasporic communities. Once the Cold War period reached an end, the more loose movement of people between East and West and the proliferation of border crossings enriched the concept of “diaspora”. Closely observing the national and international parameters of the Romanian emigration post 1989, the study allowed an informed look at the individual and collective transformations of the Romanians after the revolution that wholly changed life perceptions. Gradually moving away from the exile ethos couching ‘away from home’ experience into a pattern-like destiny of good home country - evil host country, Romanian diaspora in America develops a most original way of seeing the host country, displaying at the same time key features of quality of life re-orientations.

Inscribed within the larger rubrics of displacement and politics of location, the experience of the Romanian emigrant in America starts in the classical pattern of Romanian movement as described as exile. Previous to the end of the Cold War, the Romanian exilic experience is marked by feelings of estrangement, of loss in the new country, an inability to cope with new realities, new language and new quality of life standards. For these reasons, Romanian exile literature from this period is focused on identity study, personal initial loss and the experienced tragedy of forced removal and transplantation.

Late 20th century and early 21st century, writers and scholars leaving Romania or already living in America in the ‘90s, not as exiles anymore, but as citizens of the world. At a certain point, after torment, fight for survival and mental re-coordination, adaptation and integration become viable options. However, the representatives of the post-communist emigrant writers who subscribe their diasporic writings to new realities and new ways of perceiving America live not as exiles anymore, but as free people able to go back and forth between the home country and the host country, marking the opportunity to compare various cultural dimensions of wellbeing. All this does not mean that the concept of exile disappeared for as it has been shown, many writers and writings refer and revert back to the idea of exile, of exilic severance of roots, but the newer transnational underpinnings imply that the notion changed and became more limited, not entirely capable of encompassing the realities described. For Romanian diaspora, along with other non-Romanian representatives of the transnational turn, America is no longer seen as a long desired end to the journey, but just another switching point (Appadurai, 2003) and a chance to start anew.

The permanent tension between Self (Romanian emigrant) and Other (America) reveals fierce competition for survival in the first place and accomplishment in a foreseeable, desired future. Furthermore, successful integration of the Romanian transplant is distributed both inside and outside the chosen second nation-state. In the case of the traveling subject then, citizenship is changing nature; 'being' in its modern sense is not only the product of a nation-state generating national solidarity under the promise of immediate social rights, but the product of variables that count hidden and displayed beliefs and affiliations, imparted feelings between different quality of life standards, intricate social relations, opposite world/society views and differently made steps toward social recognition and re-insertion in the new space.

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