

INTERCULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY NARRATIVES IN TRANSYLVANIAN LITERATURE AFTER THE TRIANON TRAUMA

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The Trianon trauma intensified and deepened Romanian-Hungarian intercultural communication that had been disturbed for historical reasons in the first place. Woundedness of national identities involves the possibility of manipulation on both sides manipulation, which is dangerous in and by itself. The special situation of nationalities pushed into minority or diaspora existence demands and yields different strategies of identity-crisis management, diverging identity narratives in life and literature. What directly follows from such identity-crisis management is that intercultural communication undergoes a transformation and, abandoning its former patterns, it assumes forms different from the ones before: split cultural identity, conforming renunciation of identity, changed level and intensity of the degree of cultural identification, alienated collective identity (collective identity being, perhaps at variance, with culture) as well as the individual's alienation from collective identity. I also talk about colonization of identity, and the phenomena it entails, cultural mimicry being one example. These issues posed by a world of such crises of identification will be examined, using relevant and representative literary examples, taking into account also the narrative techniques of presenting identity in literature. In discussing literary examples of crisis-laden intercultural communication – cultural theory, theories of identity, postcolonial theory, and narrative theory will be applied.

Keywords: cultural identity, intercultural communication, collective identity, colonization of identity, cultural mimicry

Of all the stormy events of history that Hungarians witnessed in the Carpathian Basin, it was perhaps the Trianon trauma, which was most difficult to absorb, its consequences the most distressing to suffer. The political dictatum of June 4, 1920 meant that the Hungarian Kingdom lost two-thirds of its territory (of 282.000 km² 92.000 km² were left), its population shrank from 21 million to 7.6 million. Transylvania and extensive territories of Eastern Hungary (Partium and Eastern Bánság) were given to Romania – 103.093 km² in all, 31.78% of the Hungarian Kingdom, 1.6 million Hungarian citizens. (This essay will focus on Transylvania only, but

it goes without saying that the other disannexed territories that went to other countries did also undergo tribulations of their own.)

The Trianon trauma made disorderly and antagonistic Romanian – Hungarian relations more acute, making the disintegration of intercultural communication more rapid. Both Romanian and Hungarian identity suffered serious injuries, a development that radically enhanced the possibility of something dangerous in itself: manipulation. Literary works created in a world befuddled by the crisis of cultural intercommunication abound in relevant and representative examples to illustrate the situation, works by Áron Tamási, Rózsa Ignác, József Nyíró, Mária Berde, Albert Wass, Sándor Makkai, and Miklós Bánffy among others. In the present study I intend to address the following issues, using the text of Rózsa Ignác's novel *Moldovában született* (*Born in Moldova*):

1. What strategies of identity-crisis management (the term I am going to introduce to describe this phenomenon) is demanded by, and emerges as a result of, the special situation of nationalities pressured into minority and diaspora existence?
2. What does the transformation of intercultural communication mean, and what form does it assume on the different (individual, group, regional, social, national, and state) levels of communication?
3. What are the protective functions of collective identity for the alienated individual?
4. Is it possible to talk about what I call “identity colonization” and its collateral phenomena like cultural mimicry?

Transylvania was characterized by coexisting cultural multiplicity at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries already – a multicoloured culture in which the Hungarians fulfilled a majority role for a long time. The great variety of cultures mutually impacting each other through the centuries had been a natural process, which can be described as spontaneous, nonviolent, ground-up, decentralized interaction. It must be noted that Hungarian culture, dominant for a long time, did itself exert a top-down, violent, *transitory* pressure of “culturalization,” which harmed the multicultural society of the time. These late-nineteenth century movements of Hungarianization set up, among other things, great associations of public education (like EMKE in Transylvania), whose purpose was to increase the ratio of Hungarian-language education, to promote Hungarian language, and to foster national consciousness (Voit, 2002:10-11). It must be noted, however, that – as József Sándor reminds us – in EMKE's draft articles of association one can read lines like: “Fostering brotherly relations among the inhabitants of Transylvania as a goal,” to be achieved through setting up and supporting cultural and economic institutions. In the course of thirty-five years of its operation EMKE allotted c. 12 million Hungarian crowns to aids of this nature (Sándor, [2004]). As opposed to this, when majority/minority positions changed, Romanian culture now become majority exerted an aggressive pressure of assimilation and acculturation on the minority, in a clearly top-down and resolutely centralized fashion. The Romanian cultural association ASTRA served as an energetic agent in the process.

Theoretical tools Postcolonial theory

I find certain categories of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory useful to describe the phenomena that manifest themselves in the intercultural communication of posttraumatic Transylvania. The conceptual sphere of colonial – postcolonial can itself be adopted to characterize the situation, since it was a dominant cultural discourse that decided (metaphorically speaking) to colonize a subjected (“subaltern,” Bhabha and Spivak would say) culture. Bhabha introduces his well-known term *mimicry* to express the reaction of the colonized to that subjection in the colonizer-colonized discourse, according to which the colonized simulates acceptance of the colonizer's culture, behaviour, and habits. Simulated acceptance may yield three results. The colonized subject

- goes into hiding, thus protecting his/her culture;
- makes a show of pretended cultural conformity, but *himself/herself undergoes a certain degree of transformation* under the influence of the colonizing culture;
- may develop *a series of mixed cultural reflexes*.

In Bhabha's view, the colonized-colonizer discourse is unstable, fragmented, and *hybrid*; consequently, “in the very practice of domination the language of the masters becomes hybrid” (Bhabha, 1994:33). We are born “linguistic animals,” but the use of language is *basically unstable*; therefore, *any attempt at homogenizing or fixing language* is bound to abort. A racist stereotype or fixed discourse is doomed to failure (Bhabha, 1994:191).

Cultural Identity

I find Jan Assmann's theory (2011) concerning cultural memory and identity very useful in my context. Assmann argues that “[i]dentity is a matter of consciousness that is becoming aware of an otherwise unconscious image of the self. This applies both to individual and to collective life” (Assmann, 2011:111, emphasis added). Identity has two forms: “*I*” identity and “*we*” identity. The latter (collective identity) does not exist without the former. While “the part depends on the whole” (Assmann, 2011:112), the whole comes about through its constituting components. This is where the “sociogenic” nature of identity lies (“identity” is a social phenomenon”; *ibid.*). For the sake of a better understanding of how collective sociocultural identity works, the “I” must be divided into “*individual*” and “*personal*” identity (*ibid.*, emphasis added). Individual identity “builds itself up in the consciousness of the individual”; personal identity falls to the lot of the individual from society, it follows from his or her “special place in the social network.” “Both aspects of ‘I’ identity are *determined sociogenically and culturally*” (Assmann, 2011:113, emphasis added). “The collective or ‘we’ identity is the image that a group has of itself and with which its members associate themselves” (Assmann, 2011:113-114). So collective identity is a matter of association and “recognition”; it “has no existence of its own” (Assmann, 2011:114).

Assmann observes (discussing M. Erdheim's contribution) that cultures can become heated up by conflicts, and in such societies (and, let me add, Romanian society can indeed be regarded as hot in this sense) it is “state-

organized cultures” that “lean toward cultural heat.” It is always the subjugated who press for change whereas oppression is in control of “every available means of communication,” and it will employ those means in ways in which the channels of communication will serve the best interests of power. In such circumstances “memory can become a form of resistance” (Assmann, 2011:55-56). Using H. Cancik and H. Mohr’s definition of religion, according to which religion conveys „non-simultaneity through memory [...] and repetition,” Assmann goes on to argue that non-simultaneity may appear as “the other time” (that translates into yet another form of cultural *otherness* in my context) “and then memory becomes an act of resistance” (ibid., 67). By contrast, the general tendency of modern civilization in general (Assman’s point) and of post-Trianon Romanian cultural colonization in particular (to add my topical point) is to work through “coordination and communication,” as Assman puts it so well (ibid.). Cultural memory opens up “a second dimension, a second time” of non-simultaneity for the simultaneous “one-dimensionality” of modern everyday life. But the cultural colonizer does not want the colonized to remember the past, cultural memory is bad news for the oppressor. “Remembrance of the past may give rise to dangerous insights,” Assmann continues, quoting Herbert Marcuse, “and the established society [in our case: the cultural colonizer] seems to be apprehensive of the subversive contents of memory” (ibid. 68-69).

Communication

Karl Erik Rosengren maintains that *communication* is a fundamental condition to every human community. It is a process through which collective knowledge is expanded, but the latter will also incorporate conflicting interests and views, thus, instead of *collective consciousness*, conflict will arise. But clashing parties also need to communicate with each other. The nature of their communication will depend on the size and degree of complexity of the communicating sides as well as on the distance of time and space between them (Rosengren, 2000:1).

Conflict is a main characteristic feature and propelling force of society. Conflict and *consensus* do not exclude each other, the difference between them being a matter of shifting emphasis. Actually, Rosengren suggests a difference between the humanities, behavioural sciences, and social sciences based on how they position the role of the two (conflict or consensus) (Rosengren, 2000:5). In my study I will be guided by the consensus-oriented concept; i.e., conflicts do exist, but no society can be conceived without consensus that transcends conflicts, thus making societal survival and progress possible. Conflict can be masked; the strategy of such concealment is to generate and foster – Rosengren adopts the Marxist term here: – a “false consciousness.” Opposed to “false consciousness” is “ideological critique,” which is bent on unmasking received social ideologies (ibid. 35).

Human communication can take place on different levels. The ones that are most relevant to us of those that Rosengren distinguishes, in the light of what is going on in the literature under discussion are what Rosengren specifies as individuals; groups; communities and networks (local, regional, national, and international); formal organizations; communities of various municipalities; societies, nations, and states (ibid. 46). What matters to us first and foremost in this work is cultural communication that takes place inside any or all of these frameworks of communication, in various situations, under post-Trianon traumatized conditions.

Rózsa Ignác: *Born in Moldova*

The novel presents the history of the Hungarians of Moldova and Bukovina between the two world wars, in authentic fiction, in multicultural environment, in a work of literary merit. The communication patterns manifested in the Ignác characters' interpersonal relations, also in group and social relations typify the problematic of intercultural communication in post-Trianon multicultural Moldova and Bukovina. The novel was first published by Dante in 1940. Since then it has been reprinted by Püski, Fapadoskönyv, and Szkítia publishers.

Rózsa Ignác was born in Kovászna (Székelyland), as the child of a Reformed Church minister. Both her father and her future husband (János Makkai) took part in politics (Pomogáts, 2008:383). No wonder, then, that the actress-writer had keen insights as far as political games were concerned. Nevertheless, she never joined any political party, nor was she aligned with any political ideology. Her oeuvre is informed by a deep commitment to her native land: her explicitly avowed Seklerhood and strong national consciousness are present in every work of hers in such a fashion that we also get to know a liberal, free thinker standing up for human freedom.

Her most important feature is the focus on Hungarianness, a stylistical mark of her work as it were. Her messages address the community, dealing with issues of national fate, mission, and tasks in each case. She identifies with the challenges Hungarian society has to face and employs every device to convey the sense that Hungarian culture represents value which must be preserved. *Born in Moldova* is a “diagnostic book,” which condenses all the troubles of displaced Hungarians into the life of a single child. It is a multigenre piece of writing as it is a psychological novel, a novel of Hungarianness, of adventure, a belletristic work about eastern Hungarians, about the Csángós of Moldova, and the Hungarians of the Balkan (Gazda, 2009:232-233).

Born in Moldova was published but also written in 1940. Tibor Lackó, who reviewed the manuscript for the publisher, spoke in praise of the novel, admitting that it addressed major social and national issues and was “the product of a masculine talent, a well-written piece, a contemporary, real novel” (Gödriné Molnár, 2009:89). The writer's first trip beyond the Carpathians occurred in 1938, when she got acquainted with the Csángós and the Székelys of Bukovina for the first time. The novel comprises her experiences, her painful and anxious thoughts, focusing on the abandoned Hungarian population. László Bogdán argues that this undeservedly forgotten great novel represents an artistic quality which is in no way below that of Géza Páskándi's *A sírrabló* (The grave-robber) (Bogdán, 2009:339).

Characters of the novel

Dávid Gergely (Ghergheli) – the Hungarian figure, a „bangyen” (i.e., a Romanian who used to be Hungarian). A Hungarian boy who became an orphan whose father had been an embodiment of identity-relinquishing conformity. The father is guided by political and economic reasons when he consciously denies his Hungarianness, switches from Reformed to Orthodox faith, changes his name to Romanian, and marries a Romanian woman. Béla Gergely – who thus transforms himself into Adalbert Ghergheli – does not attach importance to his being Hungarian, he is unconcerned with facts of history and sees no point in defying the new Establishment. He does not

want to look back, to identify with his past, his roots. He embodies the idea that one must look ahead, into the future, and seek happiness and success wherever one can find them. If in Moldova, then in Moldova. His justification for his identity-relinquishment is that he is doing all this for the sake of his son Dávid, to save Dávid from becoming an alien in his own country, submitted to the fate of a “bangyen.” After the death of Dávid’s Hungarian mother, he erases the very memory of the mother from the son’s life, not leaving him a chance to cherish his mother’s memory. Leaving his son in the care of a Romanian family in the village, he disappears in the sea of the Greater Romanian population, only to return later as a Romanian, to become, step-by-step, deliberately more Romanian than the Romanians. Thus Dávid has lost both his family and his mother tongue. He is socialized in the Romanian community although his sense of identification with that community is haunted by disturbing memories. His life is molded by double constraint: his cultural memory, with deep roots in his soul, prevents him from full identification with the community that receives him. He has no national consciousness and suffers torments on account of the cultural influences that reach him. He meets people (Máté, Mihály, and Éva in chronological order), who make him aware of the power his Hungarian cultural origin exerts. He comes under another formative influence in the course of his Moldovian Romanian secondary school studies: his history teacher, a man with forceful Romanian consciousness does his best to steer his student of dual identity towards Romanian consciousness. He tries to manipulate the confused identity of the young adolescent with misinterpreted, twisted falsities of history. It is a deliberate act on his part that he sends his student to spend his summer vacation in the community of a Csángó village, figuring that the bright, intelligent, and erudite boy will be repulsed by the backwardness, the medieval mentality of the Csángó and therefore unable to identify with them, suppressing his latent Hungarian cultural memory even more. A grave identity crisis grips Dávid, and the crisis-management strategies he employs depend on the group-effects that he is subjected to, and on how “we” identity impacts the personal identity segment of Dávid’s “I” identity. Namely,

- stage 1: accommodation. He accepts the Romanian community that attends to him, thus making spiritual, cultural, linguistic, and communal compromise.
- stage 2: confrontation. He gradually awakens to the realization of his national identity, encounters Hungarian language and culture, and deep down in him his cultural memory is stirring slowly.
- total relinquishment of identity, alienation from cultural identity, assimilation. Although the plot is not developed exactly along the same lines, the end is cultural annihilation, the tragedy of total assimilation is complete – Dávid is ground by the mills of history. Éva, with her hands full with managing the Reformed Church (she is one of the powerful representatives of Hungarian national consciousness and cultural memory as well as of ideological critique) has no time left to go to war against the aggressive false identity that Dávid submits to against his will. He joins the Iron Guard, thus Romanian society liquidates him, totally irrespective of the fact that he possesses no Romanian social and cultural national consciousness. It is perhaps due to this weakness that he has no energy to swim against the current of life and history; rather, he becomes a victim, a senseless, tragic, defenceless victim.

On the individual level he does communicate successfully, no matter on which cultural turf he is standing, and no matter whether his actual communicative partner is deploying the toolbox of false consciousness or ideological critique at any given moment; and he communicates with no problem on group-level too (although with noticeable and palpable change). As his national consciousness and cultural memory are slowly awakening, his still efficient communication undergoes a transformation. His story is a case-study of typical intercultural communicative relations and transformations. It exemplifies how, if the individual knows, grasps, and understands the cultural Other, s/he will be able to keep his/her channels of communication in operation, and no unavoidable conflict will develop. Conflict does indeed appear on each level, in varying manifestations, but its nature is not aggressive, it is not inevitable and irreconcilable. As conflict arises, so does consensus in each case, which two factors keep intercultural communication within bounds and in operation. In the course of his or her identity management, false consciousness breaking through the surface as well as the struggle of ideological critique are constant factors. As false consciousness gets the upper hand of Dávid, so his strategy of crisis-management changes. In his case the phenomenon I describe as “identity colonization” manifests itself in all three of its forms.

Niculaj – the Romanian figure in the novel, a poor, upward striving Romanian peasant boy of Moldova. He grows up lacking parental love, traditions, and faith. He has no mother either, as his friend Dávid does not; his father does not abandon him (as Dávid’s does him), but Niculaj’s father is a shepard in the nearby hills, far from his home. The two little boys grow up in total lack of adult company practically, united in close brotherhood. But close as Niculaj may feel to be to his friend Dávid, he can never accustom himself to the social position of the “young gentleman,” always there in the background; he is always othered by the “otherness” of his Hungarian friend – an antipathy that he can never get over with. First he lives in bad conditions, but is a gifted boy, with a remarkably strong sense of national and cultural identity, of which only the former (the national) reached the level of consciousness in him. He is driven by defiance, the sense of being minority in the presence of Hungarian cultural superiority. Both sides of his “I” identity are highly developed. He does not suffer from identity crisis and has no need for developing strategies. He is unrestrained, a drifter in the whirlpools of politics and joins the Iron Guard. At this point his friendship with Dávid is sustained by the memories of a common childhood only, and the distance between him and his friend is growing in direct proportion to the extent to which he falls victim to the falsification of history that he is bombarded with in the course of his school education. His secondary-school history teacher deploys peculiar educational methods intended to propel the adolescents entrusted to him (Niculaj, Dávid, Mihály) in a direction that leads to the development and affirmation of determined Romanian national identity. The latter goal is achieved in an educational process that foregrounds the sole and absolute rule of the Romanian nation in a multicultural country. His ability to communicate is still there on the individual level, but it gradually decreases and then disappears on the group level. His conflicts, however, are on the increase and more intensive (the group-level communicative problems set in as soon as he comes under the history teacher’s potent sway), to the point when he is no longer capable of intracultural communication. He falls prey to the collective false consciousness of extremist ideology, thereby becoming totally estranged from his own cultural and national identity too. After the fall of the Iron Guard Niculaj fares better than Dávid does: the orthodox Romanian priests

receive him into their community (no matter that Niculaj had never had faith), they hide him, providing the Romanian youth the possibility of a new beginning. He can carry on with his extremist communication inside the bosom of the Church. This religious community of his nation takes him in and protects him, thereby making it possible for him to survive (together with the Church) the raging storms of extremist Romanian nationalism (i.e., the Iron Guardist can survive the perishment of the Iron Guard). Aided by the collective identity of the Orthodox Church, Niculaj can grab at another chance: the collective sense of that community suspends the individual's sense of alienation fostered by „false consciousness” and sets him on a new orbit. It is another question whether Niculaj is able to benefit from this opportunity and can surmount the obstacles that he encounters on the various levels of communication. It is unlikely that he will be able to.

Máté – the man who escapes from Transylvania and embodies all aspects of the “misery” that minority Székely(or Szekler)-Hungarians were afflicted with. This Calvinist is one facilitator of Dávid's awakening to his national consciousness. He meets Dávid when the latter is still receptive to the influences that reach him; in a phase of childhood development in which Dávid, deprived of his parents, can find not only a surrogate father in the Székely young man, but also a partner who can provide explanations to clarify the so far unanswered questions that torture him deep inside. Máté replaces his parents to become his father and tutor, who makes the little boy believe in the family, in the nation, in belonging again. He erects a due memorial in Dávid to the memory of the boy's long-dead mother by teaching him his long-forgotten mother tongue. He uses prayers, songs, ditties, and poems to revive the boy's slowly awakening cultural memory. Máté is a man of determined national and cultural identity, qualities that will make him a victim. His strategies of crisis management are confrontative, and giving up Hungarian language and identity is no alternative in his case. The Catholic Csángó village accepts him but does not receive him into the community. Csángó collective consciousness is alien to him and alienates him; group-level intercultural communication disintegrates. He marries a Csángó woman and does his best to live up to the expectations of the strictly closed Catholic village community. Máté works his head off, yet the Csángó Catholics cannot come to terms with his Calvinism. They regard themselves as Catholics (not Hungarians) primarily, and their subconscious Hungarianism manifests itself through that religion. They isolate the Székely man through artifice, thus isolating themselves too even more. Máté does not care for artificially generated and maintained false consciousness, his strong national and cultural identity protects him against it. He is miserable with cultural mimicry, protecting his identity in cultural make-belief, so much so that it costs him his life. This is one tragedy of assimilation, exemplifying the individual's successful “cultural colonization.”

Mihály (Mihai) – the Csángó boy being schooled in the Romanian community, who exerts an influence on Dávid's hidden cultural memory and latent national identity. The Csángós, engulfed in the sea of Moldovan Romanians, speak a mixed language, but preserve remnants of Hungarian national identity in the subconscious of their Catholic faith. Their cultural memory is religion-based, a mixture of memories of national consciousness in general and of Catholic, quondam great-power Hungary in particular. Their deep, medieval-like religiosity protects them from the pressure exerted by Romanian orthodoxy to assimilate, but their spiritual simplicity can be a source of danger too. They declare themselves Catholics, not Hungarians. Their ignorance, plain thinking, and their insistence on their religious faith motivates them in sending their talented sons to Romanian secondary

schools so that they can then return and serve the community as ordained priests. Their adherence to their Catholic faith is so strict that, in the hands of the Romanian Establishment, it is utilized as a good means of romanianization and “cultural colonization.” The sons that are meant to study to become priests are transformed, turned into janissaries. Taking advantage of their confused sense of identity, sense of otherness, they turn Csángó boys against Hungarians, in fact make them hate Hungarians. By the time those boys emerge as graduates of the devilish machinery of Romanian seminaries, they become the greatest enemies of their own people. The Csángós have reached the last stage of assimilation: their language is cultivated by uneducated women only. It is also the outermost point of crisis management: total surrender of identity, the endresult of a process that lasted for centuries. Their sense of cultural identity survives inside the framework of religious faith. Bhabha’s observation concerning the dominance-hybridity relation does not apply in the case of the Csángó since the dominant culture’s attempts at the homogenization of the language of the mixed-culture community have indeed made themselves felt. The centralized pressure maintained by the dominant language slowly but steadily broke the “linguistic animal” in Csángó-Hungarians into pieces, and what could be called a “linguistic identity-shift” took place. They still do have a highly developed sense of collective identity (Assmannian cultural memory), and it does protect the individual from total individual alienation. Individual communication is still functional, but group communication is weak and unsteady; and one more level up, social communication is a mute issue – with no partner left to communicate with on the social level. “False consciousness” takes possession of the Csángós, with no chance left for “ideology criticism” to break through to this closed community. So what “cultural mimicry” yields in this case – to use Bhabha’s term again – is a series of mixed cultural reflexes, in which only one Hungarian cultural element remains: Catholic religion. The cultural siege launched by majority society, or identity-colonization launched by dominant culture, if you like, has reached its goal.

Lenkuca – the rich, intellectual Romanian farmer’s daughter. The little girl’s life is closely entwined with those of her two childhood friends Dávid and Niculaj. Hers is the role of “the woman” to play in the novel, she drifts in and out of situations. Her national and cultural identity is not conscious. All that her consciousness amounts to is that through exploiting her chances, she wants to achieve the best that life can offer, no matter at what cost. Her rich Romanian, first-generation, intellectual farmer-father and her teacher-mother provide her with high-standard education, but she develops no sense of national identity even when coming close to the Iron Guard and becoming witness to its operation, goals, and aggressive methods. As the girlfriend of the extremely rich Iron Guardist prince, she apparently assists the movement, but instead of national consciousness, it is the love of adventure that propels her under the surface. A confirming proof of this attitude towards life is that years later we find her in Paris, on the arms of another man, in different commitments. Her childhood friends are merely means for her to achieve her goals. If she is attached to anyone seriously at all in the real sense of the word, it is to Niculaj because it is in him that she senses the will and determination, the persistence and stubbornness – characteristics that describe her too. The difference between the two of them is that while Niculaj does everything in his power to aid the rise of the Romanian nation, inclusive of hard study and breaking out of Romanian peasant existence, Lenkuca is not interested in anything at all but her own needs, her getting ahead, and her lifegoals. She is unable to, and does not at all want to think in

terms of nation. The radiantly beautiful young woman is playing, primarily and ultimately, the role of “the woman” (the WOMAN bent on making her way in life with the help of her beauty and inborn intelligence), she could not care less for belonging to Romanian (or any other) nation. She remains a woman in Paris too, after a tragic escape, and is not a Romanian political refugee. She is all negativity if appraised on the scales of our theoretical categories or moral values.

Éva – the organizer of the Hungarian Reformed Church from Bucarest, who will be an elementary influence in awakening the sense of Hungarian national identity in Dávid. She is the opposite of Lenkuca in every respect. A daughter of the Bucarest diaspora Hungarian community, *Éva* sacrifices years of her young life, her working energies, and meagre fortune to keeping young Székely girls and boys forced into servitude in Bucarest from sinking, to help them remain on the surface. Her sustained efforts concentrate on keeping defenceless Székely girls earning their bread as housemaids from sinking in the morass of prostitution. The mission is undertaken but with not much result, since to execute such a task a partner is needed too. The only layer of the Székely youth pushed into servitude that can get away without assimilation and social marginalization is the one with strong national and cultural identity, faith, and determined perseverance. In their case group coherence and relatedness, group communication, protestant faith, the Hungarian mother tongue have the sustaining power that keeps them above the sea of assimilation. *Éva*, deeply committed to Protestant belief, tries to bring Dávid back to the Hungarian native language, Hungarian culture, as well as to faith. She attempts to reanimate the cultural memory hidden deep down in him – with seeming success. In Assmannian terms, she tries to “heterogenize” time for Dávid, to introduce the non-simultaneity of cultural memory into his life of false consciousness and simultaneity. This way she could enable Dávid to resist false consciousness through cultural memory. (For Assmann’s theoretical terms see 2011:67.) The boy often slips out of the value system that *Éva* set up for him, but she does not give up. The romantic threads woven in the novel also highlight the theme of Dávid’s latent Hungarian identity. *Éva* introduces the boy to the secrets of Hungarian language and Hungarian Reformed liturgy step by step, and she is doing that through the other language, Romanian. She does not force it on him, lets Dávid’s cultural memory work for it – she serves only as a catalyst in the process she launched. She has figures like Niculaj and Lenkuca as the enemy camp, but this does not discourage her. It is her profound conviction that the roots of national affinity, even if buried deep and cannot break to the surface by themselves, determine an individual’s course of life. The false consciousness that Dávid internalized is a challenge to her – *Éva* is ideological critique personified. It is not her fault that (plot developments aside) her ideological critique is bound to fail because she cannot save the reanimated Hungarian in Dávid Gergely from annihilation, that is, from indirect assimilation. His identity had been colonized and thereby his time de-heterogenized before he noticed after all.

Summary

This paper was an attempt to grasp the national identity types, intercultural communication, and subsequent conflict types of three communities (Székely-Hungarian, Romanian, and Csángó-Hungarian), through a literary example, with the help of the theoretical toolbox of three relevant theories. I drew up a synoptic *table* to sum up the possibilities and impossibilities, variations and various tendencies of intercultural communication as fictionalized in the specific interrelationships of the fictional characters and communicative agents of the Ignác novel's posttraumatic, multicultural world.

Table.

	Strategies of identity-crisis management	Intercultural communication	Collective identity	Cultural mimicry
Dávid-David Ban-gyen	Three stages ACCOMODATION CONFRONTATION RELINQUISHMENT OF IDENTITY	Individual level operates Group level operates in a transforming form Social level operates	VARIABLE	All three forms: HIDING TRANSFORMATION MIXED CULTURAL REFLEXES
Máté Szekler - Hungarian	Second stage CONFRONTATION	Individual level operates Group level works irregularly Social level is out of order	ALIENATION	One form HIDING
Nicolaj Romanian	First stage TOTAL ACCOMODATION	Individual level operates Group level works irregularly Social level is out of order	OVERWHELMING	-
Mihály - Mihai Csángó - Hungarian	The last stage TOTAL RELINQUISHMENT OF IDENTITY ASSIMILATION	Individual level operates Group level works irregularly Social level does not exist	SAVIOR	The 3rd form MIXED CULTURAL REFLEXES

The purpose of my work was to find answers to the four questions that I proposed to address at the start. The answers that can be concluded on the basis of the Ignác novel are as follows.

1. It is safe to say that strategies of identity-crisis management on the different levels of communication depend, to a great extent, on the kind of influence “we” identity exerts on the individual as well as on personal segments of “I” identity. Unstable, constantly changing national consciousness generates shifting strategies; whereas highly developed and conscious national identity leads to confrontation and/or identification. The strategy of diaspora existence is outright tragic: cultural memory (grounded in religion) is not enough to avoid assimilation. Even linguistic identity is inadequate to hold on to cultural identity in this case, as – contrary to what we would expect on the basis of Assmann’s theory – aggressive hegemonic pressure shattered linguistic identity to pieces.
2. Intercultural communication works differently in the case of the two nations (Romanian and Székely-Hungarian) and the latter nation’s subgroup (Csángó). Group communication of agents that have highly developed national consciousness works on the level of individuals only; it is less and less efficient as we move upward (conflict gains ground more and more), until the manipulative generation of powerful false consciousness cuts it off completely. Intercultural communication can function only if the personal segment of “I” identity can maintain continuous cultural contact with the other agent (the communicative Other) in the course of the former’s development.
3. The role that collective identity plays in shaping the individual can be variable, alienating, devastating, or preserving. It seriously correlates with “I” identity and its degree of development.
4. The final note it all ends on is identity colonization, both existing and in the process of being realized – hand in hand with cultural mimicry that yields different results.

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