looked for in the critical examination of the cultural-ideological and (geo)-political relations between "East" and "West" in postcolonialism, in a methodology similar to that used by Edward W. Said in his works, adapted, of course, to the realities of the region. This is in fact what the author does.

Offering thus this type of interpretation to Melegh's article, I think we should give up the claim to any pure scientific approach (understood as objectivity), as Ioana Bunescu does. Such a claim is not functional, but simply formal. There are cases (for example Arab-American-Palestinian relations or the interregnum in ex-Yugoslavia) in which objective and scientific points of view are meaningless, critical positions being preferred if they are open to dialogue. I would say that Ioana Bunescu, instead of continuing the discussion, really closes it. The very aim as Said understands it, that of cooperation among equals, liberated from any Occidentalizing and/or jingoistic rhetoric, is lost.

Melegh's article is one of the principal items among the socio-political analyses of the region. I would like to remark, as a conclusion, upon the symbolism of the situation: an article written by a Hungarian, published in Romania, in an international journal which focuses on socio-political realities. It is beyond any doubt that the future, whatever it holds, will belong to each and every country from Central and Eastern Europe in an equal manner.

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Andrei Oisteanu, The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture

Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001.

The issue of *cultural stereotypes* as result of the relation in between different identities proves to be of great interest for contemporary specialists in different social sciences. It is obvious that this topic could be successfully assessed by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, specialists in social psychology interested in it.

The recent years attest a deep involvement of many specialists of the above mentioned fields in various approaches that focus "cultural stereotypes". Even if their methodology and discourse are a bit different from one to another (depending on the researchers' background), the final tasks seem to be the same: to perceive the deep mechanism of creating cultural stereotypes, to see how and why they are or had been perpetuated at the level of daily practice, ideologies and other forms of discourse, to deconstruct them.

I assume this process started in the field of postcolonial studies, as an effort of reevaluating the main discourses that the West had about the Rest (to

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make use of Stuart Hall's title). In that frame, it was just an analysis of the way in which western discourses on " the Rest" were the only available ones and how, because of that, the other voices were simply impossible to be heard, to be perceived. This type of approach was the first one constructed around the concepts of Otherness and cultural stereotypes and I think it was worth to mention that.

If the first analyses of cultural clichés were framed as mentioned above, in the effort of deconstructing the dominant, one sided discourses, the up to date assessments of this issue are more diverse in terms of areas of investigations, research methodologies, goals. For example, the stereotypes on Balkans (as these are patterned in Western mentality) could be investigated as well; or clichés that had been constituted in the intercultural life of different ethnic communities in Eastern or Central Europe.

In this respect, the topic of study would be the views on any other ethnic community (marginalized or not) The investigation has to be conducted towards perceiving the ways in which a peculiar community is seen by another, the strategies that are developed in constructing a certain discourse on it.

I assume that Andrei Oisteanu's book *The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture* is a study of this kind. The author's attempt is obvious, from the very beginning : to investigate the representation of the Jew in a certain culture (in this specific case, the Romanian one). It is an ambitious project, as Oisteanu does not focus just a certain cultural source (for example: the Jew in the Romanian folklore or any other). He intends to cover up in his assessment, all the bits that compound culture: starting from folklore or oral sources, ending with different forms of elite discourses.

The intention is to see how the stereotypes on Jew are generated and perpetuated at different levels of Romanian culture, which are the elements that have a special, important role in these processes, who are the main agents who are responsible for creating a certain discourse, rather odd and dangerous.

The process of creating the negative stereotypes on Jews (for certain reasons, the author prefers the term Jew, a simplifying way of naming an identity, a cliché in itself) is simple and it does not specifically belong to the Romanian culture. The Jew is wherever in the imagery of people an incarnation of the idea of Otherness, the permanent rejected Stranger.

Anyway, the specific way of depicting the Jew in Romanian culture is pointed out following different stages: the *physical portrait* is the one that it is stressed first. As the author assesses, there is no realistic background for such negative clichés (the physical anthropologists demonstrating that there are no racial differences between Jews and Europeans). All these images are symbolically created to mention that the difference exists, to perpetuate the gaps in between communities.

Then after, Andrei Oisteanu approaches the *moral and intellectual portrait* of this identity, following the same pattern (how it is viewed in the Romanian culture). The same too simplistic mechanism of stressing the difference (another system of values) is the one that gen-

erates clichés on the morality and intellectual abilities of the Jew.

The last two chapters of Oisteanu's book (*The Mythical and Magical Portrait* and *From Deicide to Ritual Infanticide*) focus the symbolic faults that are attributed to the Jew, obviously existing just at the level of imagery.

The author's effort is to demonstrate how damaging this process of accusing the Otherness could be, how the difference is not usually accepted and understood, how the manners of segregation could be profiled.

It is quite accepted that all these processes are not developed according to a realistic view, they are almost always induced by ideological discourses as they have the capacity of stimulating the imagery of a certain community and sometimes its emotional responses to certain stimuli.

The researcher's approach is considerable as he focuses all the levels of creating these products of imagery (beginning with the physical portrait , ending up with the spiritual one). It is also remarkable, as I mentioned before, how large is his area of investigation (in terms of sources that he analyzes, different stages of forming the discourses on Jew).

Even if his study is focused just on the Romanian culture, Oisteanu is always tempted to make references to other cultural contexts, pointing out quite often, the similar ways of rejecting this homo alienus (the Jew), wherever in the world. All the links that the author establishes, proves his capacity for synthesis and of course, his erudite way of assuming this topic.

This book is remarkable as it succeeds to deconstruct the basic ways in which the Jewish identity is profiled in Romanian culture, considering as mentioned, several types of discourses that could illustrate this process.

Andrei Oisteanu is not just an intelligent observer and analyst of this mechanism, but also a gifted writer, in the strict sense of the term, as the literary features of this text are obvious.