



Through Costică Acsinte's lenses: romanian national identity at the beginning of the 20th Century (1920-1940)

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Abstract

This research project intends to analyze some pictures of the romanian Costică Acsinte (1897-1984) with a chronological focus between the decades of 1920 and 1940, given as specific theme the photographs which allow a deeper exam about the romanian society's organization around national identities and the creation of a romanian nationalism.

Key words:

Romania, Nationalism, Photographs.

Introduction

Based on some pictures of the romanian Costică Acsinte (1897-1984), taken between the decades of 1920 and 1940 while he had a photographic studio in Slobozia, the research purpose is to deal with the theme of romanian national identity. The photographs that show the population from that romanian town are considered to think how images can also influence and help on the formation and consolidation of a belonging sentiment, like the nationalism.

Results and Discussion

The research is divided in three stages, which will also be transformed in three chapters of a bachelor thesis. In the first part of the work, along with other authors, Benedict Anderson's book "Imagined Communities" is used as a basis for thinking about the formation of the idea of a community and a feeling generated by it in individuals, which reflects on the population's creations about itself. Afterwards, Walter Benjamin's text "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" is included to extend this analysis adding images as also former of a certain community and national sentiment.

The second part of the research focuses on better understanding the romanian context from the decades that were analyzed in this work (1920-1940). And since the contact with the historiography about Romania is very small in Brazil, it is important to read texts and books which present a perspective about this country's History at the beginning of the 20th Century, in order to reflect on the matter of national identity in the country in which at the first half of last century occurred territorial disputes, wars and people from different ethnicities were living together.

The third part of this work is the result of a systematic analysis of the photoalbums available on the Flickr's page about Costică Acsinte. This balance was made from the creation of charts from each album, and they contain informations about the number of pictures, type of materials (like developed photographs or glass plate negatives or sheet films), dates and places, when informed, and notes about the main themes. In this way, it is possible to have an overview about the photographer's work and to select the best images to compose the conclusion of this work: analysing the specific case of Costică and how his pictures allow an information exchange and an identification among that city's population. Therefore, there is a connection between the

two other points of this research when I speak of the photographs and the specific case of Costică Acsinte.

Conclusions

After having discussed all the themes previously mentioned, like one community's identity created from texts and images of themselves and noticing the romanian context and its specificities at the beginning of the 20th Century, the purpose was to look at Costică Acsinte and his work as representatives of the population of that region of Romania: Ialomița county, whose capital, Slobozia, is where the photographer had his studio. In other words, the work intended to think that his photos created a feeling of proximity and identification among the people from that romanian region and then considered if that could make it possible to speak of a national identity.

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