**Incursiuni în imaginar 8. Imaginar, identitate și alteritate în literatură/
Incursions into the Imaginary 8. Imaginary, identity and alterity in literature**

**Aritina MICU-OȚELEA, ALTERITATE ȘI IDENTITATE ÎN SPAȚIUL MAHALALEI
LITERARE (ALTERITY AND IDENTITY IN THE SPACE OF THE LITERARY OUTSKIRTS)**

Abstracts: The extent to which Bucharest or any other dwelling of the Romanian cultural space finds itself on the map of the great cities of literature also depends on the manner in which writers manage to illustrate their specificity, as they should go beyond what we usually call downtown by covering the outskirts as well. The protein appearance of the city, this "cultural construct of all happenings" is outlined by the various tunes in which it allows itself to be depicted because it "regulates its functions and paints its face depending on the chimeras of the individual who conceives it". In an antithesis with the Greek polis, defined by its unitary appearance in tight connection with its smaller dimensions, the nowadays metropolis is defined/characterized by fragmentation, by cleavage: the downtown/center from the outskirts, the black from the white, the rich from the poor. The city thus becomes a space of paradoxes: poverty and richness, civic liabilities and individual needs, public and private. As long as it is associated to a protective space, offering the individual identity and stability, it is conferred positive connotations. As long as the city is traumatized by an industrial, uniform and suffocating landscape meanings degenerate, the contemplating attitude being infected by a form of negativism. Incorporated in the literary area dedicated to the urban space, the outskirts rounds the image of the city, completes it both at a geographical level and especially at a human level, by typologies, by the mentalities which it brings forth/proposes. The relational binomial illustrated by the slum being - the urban downtown being opens» towards a „complex, multi-layer imagological equation" which implies multiplications of each member's hypostases: the real slum man, his image about his self, the real downtown man, his image about his self, the image of the slum man about the downtown man and the downtown man's image of the slum man. These relations must be reshaped within the wider background of the collectivities to which each belongs: „As long as a collectivity (confessional, ethnic or of any other nature) attempts at defining the identity of a different collectivity, it unavoidably relates to the coordinates of its own identity, outlining the resemblances and especially the differences. The reciprocal is nonetheless real: we need «them» to better define «ourselves»".

Keywords: slum/ outskirts; identity; alterity; poetry slum; center and periphery;

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