

# Adrian Marino and His Research on the Romanian Enlightenment

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Enlightenment.”*

*Adrian Marino*

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**I**F WE take into account the studies and monographs published during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we see that the research on the Enlightenment constituted one of the representative domains of Romanian historiography. Among the many Romanian historians, literary historians and historians of culture who participated in the investigation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century we find outstanding personalities such as Nicolae Iorga, Dimitrie Popovici, David Prodan, Alexandru Dușu, Pompiliu Teodor or Adrian Marino. The thematic variety and the multidisciplinary character of their approaches indicate the particular interest stirred by this topic.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation of Adrian Marino’s contributions to the research of the Enlightenment in Romanian culture opens the possibility of approaching his work from the vantage point of a frequent theme, namely, the history of censorship and the development of the idea of freedom, present in his writings even since the 1960s and up to his last published texts.

This work was supported by CNCIS-UEFISCDI, project number PNII-IDEI 2444/2008.

Adrian Marino's approaches include a number of articles in daily newspapers and in various reviews, differing in terms of their thematic pattern and orientation, scientific studies published in specialist reviews in Romanian and in European languages, studies within collective volumes, conference papers and papers presented at national and international conferences, or independent volumes.<sup>2</sup> Despite their diversity, Adrian Marino's writings on the Enlightenment maintain their methodological unity and thematic approach. They consist of an analysis of the ideas, the history and the ideology found in the space inhabited by the Romanians at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, this pattern of unitary interpretation is seconded by a systematic investigation of the impact of the Enlightenment upon Romanian society, within a multi-layered analysis: Enlightenment and politics (liberty, progress, equality, peace, and revolution), Enlightenment and culture (literature, theater, printing, and press), Enlightenment and society (progress, scientific progress, the colonial issue).

Confined to the domain of the "biography of ideas," Adrian Marino's contribution stands out in the Romanian culture of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on account of its authentic and refined intellectual openness, enlarging the area covered by historical sources by exploiting literary texts as primary sources for the analysis of the ideologies circulating at the crossroads of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

His interest in the Enlightenment may be interpreted at least from three perspectives: personal-intellectual, as a conscience crisis; as a possibility of socio-cultural reinsertion, a form of manipulation of the intelligentsia that survived incarceration, a pressure of the political system; an anti-communist attitude seen as a resistance through culture. The investigation of the Enlightenment from the perspective of intellectual history, of the ideas and ideologies circulating in the Romanian space, reflects Marino's intellectual pride as a thinker grounded in the core European values, manifest throughout his entire work. In this respect, the Enlightenment and its manifestations in the Romanian Principalities offered him the possibility of a constant recourse to the values of culture and civilization.

The study of the Enlightenment may be ascribed to an intellectual desire to escape from the "wilderness" of the Romanian culture of the communist period, to transcend the limits of the "cultural revolution," so uncomfortable for an intellectual trained in the context of an interwar liberal culture firmly opposed to any form of extremism. *Mutatis mutandis*, we are dealing with an intellectual crisis of conscience lived by the author after he traded the communist prisons for house arrest somewhere in the wastelands of Bărăgan, a crisis that Marino assimilated with the beginnings of modern Romanian culture as a form of "re-birth" along the Enlightenment model.

Beyond this, we also find an interest in political ideas and discourse seen as universal human values, promoted in Romanian society as a counter-weight to a communist regime that pretended to have the same universalist spirit. This possibility of intellectual affirmation was in fact a trap that the communist political regime in Bucharest laid for the intellectuals in the '60s, by creating the illusion of a separation from the sterile dogmatism of socialist realism, of culture as a weapon in the service of the proletariat. Of course, this judgment is post-historical, and it is formulated after the end of the communist regime. That it is why it has to be amended in light of the message that A. Marino formulated in his memories, of his anticommunist attitude that took the form of resistance through culture. Marino assumed a peripheral existence, beyond the institutional constraints of the regime, but nevertheless under its surveillance. In this fashion, he was able to pursue his own intellectual agenda, producing a work of universal relevance and becoming known in the academic world for his books and studies.

He is the representative of an authentic culture that managed to survive even under communism, “this unique barbarism . . . of unmatched violence,” as a “model of alternative culture . . . It is the pattern of my intellectual life. The alternative culture does not necessarily mean counterculture, no permanent and radical contestation.”<sup>3</sup> It is a form of surviving a cultural and social catastrophe. As Marino himself put it, “even at Hiroshima a lot of buildings were still standing, but this did not mean that there had been no catastrophe.”<sup>4</sup>

**H**IS INVESTIGATION of the Romanian Enlightenment began between 1959 and 1963, in the years of his house arrest at Lătești (Bărăgan), when he was supplied with books and newspapers by his future wife, Lidia Bote. It was a form of evasion from the restrictive rules concerning the access to information imposed by the communist regime.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning, his articles were oriented towards the investigation of the ideas of the Enlightenment that made their presence felt in Romanian society at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These contributions are indeed circumscribed to the program of a foreign policy magazine, *Lumea*, but they have true substance as they resort to the relevant texts of the period on the colonial problem,<sup>6</sup> the idea of peace,<sup>7</sup> European affairs,<sup>8</sup> the idea of progress,<sup>9</sup> scientific progress,<sup>10</sup> revolution,<sup>11</sup> political equality,<sup>12</sup> the role of the press,<sup>13</sup> human rights.

The articles deal with the topics favored by the political authorities and some of them indulge the obsolete propaganda of the regime (peace, progress, equality, colonialism). The ideological bias of the time can indeed be felt, but the contact remains superficial, limited to citations from the classical Marxists, to

the presentation of the progressive role played by the Romanian bourgeoisie in adopting the ideas of the Enlightenment, or their anti-religious character. The aforementioned aspects are real, but in fact they require a different interpretation, accepted by the academic world and by Marino himself in the studies published at the end of the eighties and in the nineties, when he discarded the elements manifestly exterior to his outlook.

These traces of the communist ideology and the attention paid to the dominant ideas of the culture of that time, such as the progressive culture, anti-mysticism, alphabetization and the elevation through culture to the rank of civilized people, as well as the idea of a pacifist progress, are found in the texts published between 1964 and 1965 in two scholarly reviews of the time, *Limba română*<sup>14</sup> and *Iaşul literar*.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, these pieces draw on the greater European culture, resorting to the known texts of the French and general European Enlightenment, to the very sources that had shaped the ideas and concepts of the Enlightenment's representatives in the Romanian provinces. In a biography of the concept of "Enlightenment" or of the "cultivation of the language," they show an evident propensity towards synthesis, understanding the Enlightenment as an ideology, in a double perspective, as a challenge of the European Enlightenment and as an ideology that manifested itself in all domains of the Romanian social life from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until A. I. Cuza's reign.

This synthetic investigation of the Romanian Enlightenment will be continued in a second episode of his intellectual biography, in the eighties, when he revisited the issue. This return was actually caused by the major subjects approached by the author, the biography and the hermeneutics of the idea of literature, as he investigated the evolution of ideas upon drama, poetry, literature, publishing, and reading.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, his entire work was meant to highlight the European origins of modern Romanian culture and civilization, and this required a discussion on the Romanian Enlightenment and on the discovery of Europe.<sup>17</sup>

A. Marino did not only demonstrate the European propensity of the Romanian culture and civilization in his studies upon the Romanian Enlightenment, but he actively participated in the academic dialogue with European scholars during some congresses and international events consecrated to the dissemination of Enlightenment ideas and ideology in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> At the beginning of the eighties, his texts published in various Romanian reviews were translated into French or English and included in the main thematic volumes dedicated to the Enlightenment in the Romanian provinces.<sup>19</sup>

His approach to the Enlightenment is not strictly authorial, as Marino was also the editor of the *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires*, a review of literary criticism, aesthetics and literary history. Two issues of the review, published in 1977

and 1979 and dedicated to the Fifth International Congress of the Enlightenment, had as general subject the impact of the Enlightenment in the Romanian space and the relationship with the European cultural system. Both issues include a bibliographical evaluation of the research on the Romanian Enlightenment, organized on sections: anthologies, texts, editions, syntheses, monographs, personalities of the time, ideology, ideological relations, literature, linguistics, and comparative literature.

The third moment when A. Marino turned to the topic of the Romanian Enlightenment occurred after 1989. The Enlightenment ideology was interrogated from the perspective of the emergence and evolution of the ideas of liberty and censorship. Thus, a project was born, frequently mentioned in his partially completed memoirs<sup>20</sup>: an encyclopedia of censorship<sup>21</sup> (published in Romanian<sup>22</sup>) and a synthesis presenting the birth and evolution of the ideas of liberty and censorship.<sup>23</sup> These have their origin in the Enlightenment ideology, gaining additional connotations following the assimilation of romantic elements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The references to the Enlightenment are also very frequent in Marino's cultural and civic discourse. The Europeanization of the Romanian post-totalitarian society and culture, a *sine qua non* condition of its existence at the beginning of the third millennium, to which Marino subscribes from the perspective of the "third discourse," led him to the actualization of the Enlightenment ideology in a programmatic text entitled "Pentru neopașoptism" (A return to the values of 1848).<sup>24</sup>

The three periods in which Marino approached the Romanian Enlightenment, between 1963 and 1969, the late eighties, and after 1989, outline the intellectual biography of an individual fighting for survival<sup>25</sup> and autonomy<sup>26</sup> within the system of communist culture, who eventually succeeds as a professional, with studies and books published in the West.

The research program of the Enlightenment as an ideology in the Romanian Principalities was outlined by Marino in a study also translated into French and German. However, the relevant passage was deleted from the translated versions, appearing only in the Romanian original: "Let us look for it in the lesser known texts and documents. The study of the Enlightenment needs a new and direct reading of the sources. This would rectify a lot of existing models, uncertified generalities, didactic exposés, repetitions of common places. Only a deep hermeneutics of the texts can regenerate and clarify the entire problem of the Romanian Enlightenment, which has not yet been the object of a true synthesis. This can only be drawn up on comparative bases and through the methods pertaining to the history of ideas."<sup>27</sup>

We are dealing here with an intellectual profession of faith converted into a coherent and systematic program for the investigation of the Enlightenment,

illustrated by his entire scientific and civic career. The paradigm under which the research of the Enlightenment is placed, thus formulated by Marino, may be divided into the three directions that are present in his studies. An essential dimension of his approach is, first and foremost, the return to sources. The sources that he used in order to explore the ideological history and the spreading of Enlightenment ideas in the Romanian Principalities include literary and historical texts, philosophical and linguistic contributions, political discourses, programmatic articles, political programs, translations and original texts, printed and sometimes in manuscript form. What really dominated in Marino's discourse was interest in a new reading of these sources: "I feel the vital need to come into a deep contact with the sources of Romanian culture."<sup>28</sup> Secondly, Marino proposed a new direction in the interpretation of these sources, a deep hermeneutics that should lead to the regeneration and clarification of the issues pertaining to the Romanian Enlightenment. In fact, regeneration and clarification had also been the two core directions of the Romanian Enlightenment.

The analysis of the hermeneutical type grants him a special status, and he was described as a bibliographical critic or a machine that makes reading notes. Marino himself spoke about his obvious archivist drive, his penchant for reclusion in the library, for systematic study, for synthesis and erudition.<sup>29</sup> In his studies upon the Enlightenment the synthesis takes several forms, from a biography of ideas to problematic history. These are themes present in his writings in the sixties or in the late eighties.

The final dimension of his research program concerning the Enlightenment, defined in 1979, refers to the research methodology, involving a recourse to the history of culture, to comparative history or to the history of ideas.<sup>30</sup> This intellectual option goes well beyond the mere definition of a research topic: "I am, through the structure of my spirit, a small ideologist, a small critic of ideas."<sup>31</sup>

Marino's intellectual choice in favor of comparativism does not lead to behaviorism or to an excessive subordination in regard to Europe. Instead, it is animated by a constant sense of equality and competition, without "mistaking the mountains around Sibiu for the Himalayas."<sup>32</sup> In Marino's opinion, the writings of the French and German representatives of the Enlightenment are the main starting points in the genesis of the Romanian ideology.

Such comments and observations are a constant presence in Marino's studies, from the texts published in *Lumea* to those found in the scholarly reviews and then included in thematic volumes. During the years of communist censorship and ideological restrictions, the comparative approach he employed in the studies concerning the ideas and the ideology of the Enlightenment was the expression of a liberal vision, "pro-European, opposed to censorship and to the rigidity of Romanian culture."<sup>33</sup>

Of course, the investigations in the field of the history of ideas applied to the concrete case of the Romanian Enlightenment already had a notable tradition and a distinct profile in Romanian culture, going far beyond the mere analysis of political ideas. Pompiliu Eliade, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, carried out such an investigation, focusing on the influences of French culture in the Romanian Principalities. However, this field of studies only gained prominence after the contributions of D. Popovici, a professor at Cluj University, continued by L. Blaga, Al. Duțu, P. Teodor, V. Georgescu or D. Prodan.



## Notes

1. See P. Teodor, *Interferențe iluministe europene* (Cluj-Napoca, 1984), 9–24.
2. Florina Ilis, ed., *Viața, opera și activitatea lui Adrian Marino: Cercetare bibliografică și de referință* (Cluj-Napoca, 2010), 6–7, 21–26, 67–70, 115–116.
3. *Al treilea discurs: Cultură, ideologie și politică în România: Adrian Marino în dialog cu Sorin Antohi* (Iași, 2001), 25, 102.
4. *Ibid.*, 39.
5. Adrian Marino, *Viața unui om singur* (Iași, 2010), 91–92, 113.
6. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și problema colonială,” *Lumea* (Bucharest) 2, 29 (1964): 18–19.
7. Adrian Marino, “Ideea păcii la ilumiștiții români,” *Lumea* 2, 32 (1964): 23–25.
8. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și ‘afacerile’ Europei,” *Lumea* 2, 39 (1964): 24–25.
9. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții și progresul,” *Lumea* 3, 31 (1965): 22–23.
10. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și progresul științific,” *Lumea* 3, 20 (1965): 21–22.
11. Adrian Marino, “Începuturile ideii de revoluție,” *Lumea* 3, 25 (1965): 23–24.
12. Adrian Marino, “Primele definiții ale egalității politice,” *Lumea* 4, 6 (1966): 23–24.
13. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și rolul presei,” *Lumea* 4, 10 (1966): 23–24.
14. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și problema ‘cultivării limbii,’” *Limba română* (Bucharest) 13, 5 (1964): 467–482; 13, 6 (1964): 571–586.
15. Adrian Marino, “Ilumiștiții români și idealul ‘luminării,’” *Iașul literar* 16, 3 (1965): 42–52; 16, 4 (1965): 29–40.
16. Adrian Marino, “Iluminismul românesc: idei despre teatru, poezie, literatură,” *Limba și literatură* (Bucharest) 1 (1977): 179–188; *id.*, “Iluminismul românesc: idei despre carte, editură, lectură,” *Limba și literatură* 2 (1977): 419–428.
17. Adrian Marino, “‘Luminile’ românești și descoperirea Europei,” *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Bucharest) 28, 1 (1979): 27–48.
18. See “Colocviu de literatură,” *România literară* (Bucharest) 3, 48 (1970): 4; *Les Lumières en Hongrie, en Europe Centrale et en Europe Orientale: Actes du Colloque de*

*Matrafüred, 3–5 novembre 1970* (Budapest, 1971), 26–29; *Les Lumières en Hongrie, en Europe Centrale et en Europe Orientale: Actes du Colloque de Matrafüred, 2–5 octobre 1972* (Budapest, 1972), 41–43.

19. Adrian Marino, “The Romanian Enlightenment: Ideas about Theatre, Poetry, Literature, Books, Publishing House, Reading,” in *Enlightenment in Romanian Society*, ed. Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj-Napoca, 1980), 21–39; id., “Les Lumières roumaines decouvrent l’Europe,” in *La Culture roumaine à l’époque des Lumières*, ed. Romul Munteanu (Bucharest, 1982), 39–61; id., “Les Lumières roumaines et l’illustration de la langue,” in *ibid.*, 307–361.
20. *Al treilea discurs*, passim; Adrian Marino, *Viața unui om singur*, 507.
21. Derek Jones, ed., *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (London–Chicago, 2001), 2043–2048.
22. Adrian Marino, *Cenzura în România* (Craiova, 2000).
23. Adrian Marino, *Libertate și cenzură în România: Începuturi* (Iași, 2005).
24. Item published in *Mozaicul* (Craiova), new ser., 1, 1 (1998) and reprinted in *Al treilea discurs*; Adrian Marino, *Descoperirea Europei* (Craiova, 2006), 17–24.
25. *Al treilea discurs*, 38.
26. *Ibid.*, 76–77, 101.
27. Marino, “‘Luminile’ românești și descoperirea Europei,” 28.
28. *Al treilea discurs*, 115.
29. *Ibid.*, 29, 87, 110.
30. Marino, “Les Lumières roumaines decouvrent l’Europe,” 39.
31. *Al treilea discurs*, 39.
32. *Ibid.*, 23, 89.
33. *Ibid.*, 77.

## Abstract

### Adrian Marino and His Research on the Romanian Enlightenment

The evaluation of Adrian Marino’s contributions to the study of the Enlightenment in Romanian culture opens the possibility of approaching his work from the vantage point of a frequent theme, namely, the history of censorship and the development of the idea of freedom, present in his writings even since the 1960s and up to his last published texts. Despite their diversity, Adrian Marino’s writings on the Enlightenment maintain their methodological unity and thematic approach. They consist of an analysis of the ideas, the history and the ideology found in the space inhabited by the Romanians at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, this pattern of unitary interpretation is seconded by a systematic investigation of the impact of the Enlightenment upon Romanian society, within a multi-layered analysis: Enlightenment and politics (liberty, progress, equality, peace, and revolution), Enlightenment and culture (literature, theater, printing, and press), Enlightenment and society (progress, scientific progress, the colonial issue).

## Keywords

Enlightenment, history of ideas, liberty, censorship, Transylvania