

„Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca
History and Philosophy Faculty
Doctoral School “History, Civilization, Culture”

**FAMILY: TEXT, ILLUSTRATIONS AND CARICATURES. AN
ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN PRESS FROM TRANSYLVANIA,
1868-1938**

Summary of the PhD. thesis

Scientific coordinator:

Prof. univ. dr. Ioan Bolovan

PhD. Student

Anamaria MACAVEI

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Introduction.

Arguments. Sources. Methodology. Structure.

Argument

Through time, family as a research topic has drawn the attention of specialists from various fields of research. Sociologists, historians and anthropologists have analysed this subject to a minute degree, and as a result they've published numerous essays, articles and books chronicling and illuminating the realities of social life in the 19th century. Nevertheless, this field still manages to offer researchers 'tiny surprises'. This paper examines specifically, how family is reflected in written press, not only in text, but in images and caricatures as well.

Why family? Why press? Firstly, because family has become a favoured topic amongst Social Human researchers. Published material and articles presented different aspects of this fundamental society cell, and the sources of the 19th century offered the opportunity to divine holes in and fill the in the empty pieces of, an already complicated puzzle. Secondly because the press of the 19th Century offers the unique possibility of revealing those aforementioned tiny surprises, and filling in some of the pieces of the complicated family puzzle. Presented through the voices of 19th century writers, the press presented problems encountered by society, and their opinions and reflections upon those problems. It painted a lost world, a world of which only fragments remain. Magazines such as *Familia*, *Amiculu Familiei*, *Școala și Familia*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Telegraful Român*, *Biserica și Școala*, *Unirea*, *Gura Satului*, *Cucu* etc., brought the atmosphere of 19th century Transylvania to life, showing the way in which marriage, family, the raising and educating of children, and gender roles were perceived.

Furthermore, thanks to these types of magazines, alternate sources including illustrations and caricatures, underlined and re-emphasised the messages presented in the written texts. Compared to traditional sources, these images stand as a different and original testimonial on family, family life, gender roles, issues between married couples, and women. Even

though these illustrations were designed to convey messages quickly, they were often of greater impact than lengthy written texts, as they possessed the ability to awake powerful emotional responses from their readers. Because of this, this research can also be considered a visual archaeological exercise.

Why this period of time? Within this period can be seen the diversification of the press; magazines start to write columns about day-to-day life. More frequently the reader can discover articles, which advise them on how to raise and educate children and guidance on how to manage problems encountered in family life. Regarding the conclusion of this research, I chose 1918 because after the end of the First World War, transformations can be seen in family life, the dynamic of the couple, as well as in the press and how its' authors treated these topics.

Historiography

In shaping this research I was influenced by several historians, whose work enabled me to construct Transylvanian family life in the 19th century. *Familia în satul românesc din Transilvania* (Bolovan, 1999) reveals demographical trends in marriage and divorce, and provides insight into the collective mentality of the people at this time. Bolovan formulates a general framework of private family life, in contrast with behaviours of public social life, and as such illuminates a complex and realistic portrait of the rural Transylvanian lifestyle.

Articles like *Considerații istorice și statistice privind căsătoria în Transilvania între 1851-1918* (Bolovan, 1999), *Legislația cu caracter matrimonial la românii din Transilvania în a doua jumătate a sec. al XIX-lea* (Bolovan, 1994), *Aspecte ale ciclului vieții familiale în satul românesc din nord-vestul Transilvaniei la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea* (Bolovan, 1995), *Biserica și familia la românii din Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bolovan, 1999), *Căsătoriile mixte în Transilvania la sfârșitul epocii moderne. Considerații demografice* (Bolovan, 2005), *Familie și comportament matrimonial în Transilvania între 1850 și 1914 (între tradiție și modernizare)* (Bolovan, 2007), *The impact of world war I on the family in Transylvania* (Bolovan), *War and Society: the impact of world war I on the family in Transylvania* (Bolovan, 2009), *Contribuții privind divorțialitatea în Transilvania la sfârșitul secolului XIX și începutul secolului XX*

(Bolovan, 2010), represented important contributions to the construction of the idea of Romanian families from Transylvania, but they also brought with them significant additions regarding the demographical evolution, and dynamic of, family relationships. With their own methodologies, these historians provided a rigorous mechanism through which family life in the Transylvanian space could be reconstructed. *Familie și societate în nord-vestul Transilvaniei: (a doua jumătate a secolului XIX - începutul secolului XX)* (Brie, 2008) și *Legislația ecleziastică și laică privind familia românească din Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (Bolovan, 2009) also made civil and ecclesiastical legislation available to researchers.

With the help of foreign resources I managed to establish a parallel between perceptions of married life and expectations of societal norms in European and Transylvanian society. I discovered information regarding family, gender, marriage ceremonies, divorce procedures, and concubinage, and I was able to observe the variances in the acceptance of, and adherence to, these expectations of societal norms. These resources are as follows: *Approaches to the history of the western family* (Anderson, 1980), *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (Frost, 2008), *Demographic Behavior in the Past: A Study of fourteen German village populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Knobel, 1988), *Untying the knot. A short history of divorce* (Roderick, 1991), *The family, Sex and Marriage in England* (Stone, 1988), *Gender, feminism and fiction in Germany, 1840-1914* (Weedon, 2006), *A Demographic and Social Analysis of Widowhood and Remarriage: The Example of the Castellany of Thoisse-en-Dombes, 1670-1840* (Bideau, 1980), *The history of widowhood: a bibliographic overview* (Blom, 1991), *Marriage* (Ehmer, 2002), *Romantic love and marriage. A study of age homogamy in 19th century Leuven* (Van De Putte, 2001).

In recent years historians started to use unconventional sources to study the past. In particular, images, have piqued the interest of a number of historians, and have generated polarised opinions as to their historical value. One recent and particularly valuable text, which tries to demonstrate the importance of images as an historical source is, *Eyewitnessing: the uses of images as historical evidence* by Peter Burke. Burke tries to encourage the use of these new sources in historical research, however also includes a cautionary note about the dangers and pitfalls of images as a source, to ensure awareness about their proper use. *Fotografia e Historia* (Kossoy, 2001) și *Realidades e ficções na*

trama fotográfica (Kossoy, 2009), are another two books, which detailed the theoretical aspects of image, the limitations of image, and answered the common questions of new users of images as an historical source. Another book *Una ventana indiscreta. La historia desde el cine* (Camarero, 2008), managed very convincingly to show the reader how image can be transformed into a useful research tool. *Doing family photography: the domestic, the public and the politics of sentiment* (Rose, 2010) proposed a new way of understanding domestic life, and the way in which family exposes itself to the public eye through photography. The photographic codes were explained and debated in works like *Sobre la fotografía* (Sontag, 2006), *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie* (Barthes, 2010), and *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (Rose, 2001). Sontag discusses the ‘grammar’ of the image, whilst Rose proposes a method through which hidden messages in images can be understood and Barthes brings forth the idea that image is text, and creates the concepts of ‘Studium’ and ‘Punctum’ defining the kinds of information and emotion a picture can transmit. Other authors completed this information, filling gaps in the historical debate and providing detail on things that were only superficially discussed.

In addition to these books, I also used articles, which attempted to bring a fresh perspective on and highlight the importance of photography, caricatures and illustrations in historical research. Articles like *Photography and the historical study. Possible interpretations* (Chiorean, 2008), *Pictures of the Past: Benjamin and Barthes on Photography and History* (Dant, 2002) sau *Expedições científicas, fotografia e intenção documentária: as viagens do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz (1911-1913)* (Mauad, 2009), *Introducción: La Imagen en Historia* (Barrado Diaz, 1996), *La fotografía como fuente histórica y su valor para la historiografía* (Dorotinsky, 2005), *La fotografía como documento históricoartístico y etnográfico: una epistemología* (Lara López, 2005), *La historia a través de la imagen: la fotografía como fuente de memoria* (Heras Herrero, 2009), *Composite past. Photography and family memories in Brazil (1850-1950)* (Maud, 2006), posed new ways of interpreting photography as an historical document, and serve as models for young researches, guiding them through the proper use of photography in historical research.

Methodology.

Regarding methodology, I used quantitative and qualitative analysis, description and data interpretation. I analysed these magazines to identify how family was represented, the key words used to transmit messages, and the information that their readers understood. The data gathered, allowed me to quantify the number of articles on this subject that had been published in this period, as well as the number of consumers who purchased these magazines, and the areas in which the magazines penetrated, thus aiding me in formulating an idea of the influence and impact such magazines had over their readers. I used descriptive analysis to illuminate the messages about family contained in cartoons and caricatures. The study of images represents another important aspect of this research because I consider illustrations and caricatures texts that offer a deeper meaning than that which has been established only by the written word. In most cases, images complete written texts and reaffirm their content. Through caricatures, the press managed in a particularly unique way to highlight unacceptable behaviours, and insight change through drawing attention to them.

Sources.

It was important for this research to contain a wide range of sources, and thus to include a broad number of historical opinions on this subject. I divided these sources into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are very important for this research because those sources revealed the mentalities of the time and were the basis for my analysis. By offering little clues and insights into the late 19th- early 20th century life, these illustrations and texts immersed historians in this period of time and enabled them to recreate it. The articles, illustrations, and caricatures were found in the following magazines: *Amiculu Familiei*, *Ardealul*, *Biserica și Școala*, *Buletinul eugenic și biopolitic*, *Cosânzeana*, *Cucu*, *Cultura Creștină*, *Familia*, *Familia română*, *Femeia satelor*, *Foaia diecesană*, *Foaia poporului*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, *Gura Satului*, *Lumina femeii*, *Patria*, *Revista Ilustrată*, *Românul*, *Școla și Familia*, *Sibiul*, *Societatea de mâine*, *Telegraful Român*, *Transilvania*, *Tribuna*, *Tribuna Poporului*, *Unirea*, *Viața Ilustrată*, *Vulturul*.

The secondary sources also represent an important component of this research, because they constructed the backbone and general framework. These sources allowed me give shape to existing Transylvanian realities from the late 19th century to early 20th century. Some authors provided written information regarding gender relations, marriage and the ideal family, while others posed new methods of research and used unconventional sources like illustrations and caricatures.

Structure.

This research adheres to the following structure: introduction, six chapters, conclusion and bibliography. The first chapter, entitled *Family and Marriage in the Transylvanian Press in the late 19th Century*, discusses the ways in which the realities of family, marriage, gender relations and raising and educating of children were presented and promoted through the press. The number of articles available on this topic shows its' importance in the written press in the 19th century. This late 19th century was a time of reorganisation, not only on a political level, but also on social level, and the press through the pens of its writers, expressed the problems that haunted society.

The second chapter, entitled *Family and Morality in the Pages of the Transylvanian Press of the First World War*, attempts to address the universe of the family, women and kids as it was depicted in the First World War press. Historians analysed aspects of 'couple' life, and the way in which the war altered couples behaviours, particularly morality, and signalled a new type of marital relationship. Historians further tried to show how innocent bystanders and children were affected by this conflict. Last but not least, historians tried to show how the life of women was changed, and how women and girls contributed to this dramatic event.

The third chapter, entitled *Family and Morality in the Interwar Period*, revealed a society that was continuously changing, and traditional institutions that were forced to adapt to new conditions and survive new challenges regardless of urban or rural location. It was the same in the case of family, which faced greater exposure to the public eye. In light of this exposure, I formed an interesting question. Could exposure account for the erosion of morality seen during this period and the relaxation of dialogue on traditional values and relationships? To illuminate and improve understanding about these changes, the press

was used as a principal source, because it provided surprising information about the evolution of this topic. Exactly how this topic evolved and the main subject of articles in this period was further considered, as well as the answers to questions such as: ‘Did these articles only try to inform the readers, or did they try to influence and modify those behaviours that were not approved of by society?’ and ‘Did they only try to expose situations, and signal them without offering solutions?’ The pages of the press showed a diverse range of reactions from the community as they were confronted with many sentimental problems; from astonishment to judgement and even disgust.

The fourth chapter, entitled *Image: Another Type of Source*, describes the theoretical frame, which is the basis of this analysis, reveals the various dimensions of the image, and presents the domains in which images are used. This chapter also discusses the use of image as an historical document, the positive and negative aspects of images, and attempts to present the manipulative and constructed nature of images. In the last years, historians asked themselves questions regarding the power, and social and ideological functions of images from the past. Their interest can be explained by an invasion of ‘new’ images, and virtual images in current society, which make us rethink the problems of production and the connection between creation and spectators. Throughout history, the life of individuals, groups and society at large, was as connected to image, as it was to reality.

The fifth chapter, entitled *Family in Illustrations in Transylvanian Romanian Press*, and the sixth chapter, *Caricatures of the Family in Transylvanian Press*, expose how women and men are presented, the dynamic of couples’ relationships, and ascertain whether it is possible to identify a ‘big picture’ of family life. The presence of women and men in the press can be framed in a rigid structure, because gender equality has yet to appear in press dialogue. Active participation in public life was seen in the press, as strictly assumed by men, while a women’s place was that of householder and mother. In the case of written articles, the family was promoted, the importance of marriage was accentuated, and the raising and educating of children was defined clearly through gender roles, and this chapter endeavours to clarify if the same could be found within illustrations and images also.

*

The press is a means of socialising, which conditions people's decision-making capabilities and behaviours, and perpetuates stereotypes and prejudices. It imposes social patterns, values and standards, and thus offered a window for researchers into a very different world of family life, illustrated by images and the words of articles. This research only tried to present the institution of family as it was exposed in the pages of the Transylvanian press in the early 20th century. Images in this case, represented a new type of historical document, which presented the reality of this period, and reinforced the conclusions already formulated in written texts. This research tried to follow two aspects; firstly it tried to create a story of the family, and secondly, provide a focus on analysing illustrations and the way in which family was promoted through them. Illustrations and caricatures offered the reader scenes from the couple and family life through humour, irony, and images.