

“Domestic Journal 1971 - 2017: The Notes of an In-form-er” Ion DUR

Review

**Jurnal domestic 1971 - 2017: însemn rile unui in-formator,
Cartea Românească , 2018**

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Ion Dur’s *Domestic Journal 1971-2017* is a genuinely personal combination of the inner and outer self. On the one hand, the book reveals “the image of a nostalgic man, somehow doubtful about the meaning of life”¹, a man who led “a rather ordinary life, with *human, all too human* trivialities.”² The journal is “*a tribute to the petty things, the simple joys of the human being, of the secondary*”³, in whose wide range the diarist oxymoronicly places himself as “*a nonconformist, but balanced critical spirit*”.⁴ The subtitle of the journal is interesting because it covers a large amount of content: *the notes of an in-form-er*. In this case, the *In-form-er* is nothing else but the professor who, from an Aristotelian philosophical perspective, in-forms by re-shaping and re-modelling the matter. He is “the one who had so far shaped in a certain form (an essential one) dozens and hundreds of students”.⁵

On the other hand, the journal consists of the ideas Ion Dur wants to share with the other people: ideas about freedom as wreckage, about *the instant-culture*, the degradation of the symbols, memory, time, the stages of apprenticeship, the hermaphrodite discourse of philosophy, *the spa philosophy*, television as the perfect means of manipulation, Romanian culture, etc.

Most readers will undoubtedly be interested in the pages about Emil Cioran, whom he had actually invited to the first symposium in his honor at Sibiu. They will also be drawn to his notes about Gabriel Liiceanu or the written records of his P Itini

¹ Ion Dur, *Jurnal domestic 1971 - 2017: însemn rile unui in-formator* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească , 2018), 13.

² Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 10.

³ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 289.

⁴ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 14.

⁵ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 9.

meetings with Noica, the “lay monk”, a role model of the exceptional youth who were willing to actively get involved in spreading genuine culture. Ion Dur reminds his readers of Noica’s famous notebook in which he used to write down the development stages of 22 young disciples – or even more – whom he intended to train into what he called *the culture of performance*; the notebook was finally destroyed for fear of not ending up in the hands of the State Security during Ceau escu’s dictatorial regime. Without Noica’s little “grade book”, we can only guess the names of those who really interested the philosopher. “Is Noica’s phalanx merely a binomial made up of G.L. and A.P.?” Ion Dur was asking himself rhetorically after the one who wanted to found the elite school passed away. Lenient with the cultural tourists, Noica was conversely demanding with his disciples whom he expected to follow the development stages of a genuine man of culture: the critical attempts, the translations, and only afterwards the original works. When Ion Dur engages in his research project of the Romanian culture having Eminescu at his core, Noica does not hesitate to raise objections: “Romanian identity (...) should not be analysed, but *left alone*”.⁶ Likewise, he does not hesitate to scold him when he thinks he makes a series of missteps: “nobody, but absolutely nobody, cannot aspire to the open sea, to *universality* as long as he did not *assimilate* – and did not allow himself to be assimilated by – the shape of his own *national identity*”.⁷ The text reveals a Noica who was strict with his disciples, but also weak in facing a totalitarian regime: “he would rather read Platon than rise against Ceau escu”.⁸

Among other things, Noica confesses to Ion Dur: “I cannot say I had any revelatory ideas, my life was an ever-growing experience. I cannot say like Kant that one day I had a revelation (when he thought of the dissertation foreseeing *Critique of Pure Reason*). What I can say, though, is that I have always been discontent. More precisely, I could not say either that I failed or that I completely succeeded. I felt like in Creang ’s words: «It also seems that he must have come since he has not come after all.»”⁹ Three months before his death, the philosopher was saying that “as far as he was concerned, he has about three more works to finish: the book of quintessence (he does not call it the book of *archetypes* anymore), the book in which he returns to the concept of holomer to endow it with a pure logical status, and, finally, the book of *the avatars of ideas* in his work.”¹⁰

In one of his notes from July 1980, Ion Dur honestly shares his opinion: “journals are meant to be read and rarely to be reviewed because the writing *about*

⁶ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 167.

⁷ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 169.

⁸ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 237.

⁹ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 111.

¹⁰ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 176.

seems to kill the discrete charm of the confession.”¹¹ Nevertheless, I would like to mention the names of the very few who got involved in the delicate and risky endeavour of making comments on the deceiving journal of ideas. In “The Exigence of Pudicity and the Exigence of Truth,”¹² Radu Vancu goes into depth about the chronological details, enumerates all the outstanding scholars mentioned, met, or known by the diarist, and bets on a description in contrast with his “cultural alterities”, Constantin Noica and Dan C. Mihăilescu. For Horia Pătruț, the extensive review in *The Philosophy Magazine* is also an opportunity to digress on the topic of the philosophical journal or to force the interpretation of the *domesticity* of the journal into the story of an *ubicuu domus*.¹³ I would be rather wary of such an interpretation since Ion Dur does not strike me as someone who “*would feel everywhere at home*,”¹⁴ especially during the time he spent in Craiova, a place where the only times when he felt at home were his rare meetings with truly exceptional people like Ion D. Sîrbu. It would have been impossible not to have somebody who would question the diarist’s confession. Victoria Murrescu Guăan, always on the lookout for inaccuracies, does just that. This is the reason why her chronicle, “A Book of Self-Discovery, of an Embellished Sincerity” rests within the confines of doubt as she wonders whether Ion Dur is a scriptor or a *criptor*,¹⁵ whether the journal is authentic or embellished, *genuine truth* or fictionalized truth, etc. In “The Adiabatic Individual”, Sorin Lavric talks of “the biography of a vectorial individual who is determined to build a cultural identity for himself despite the adversary circumstances.”¹⁶ He even dares to detail upon the author’s great love, a chapter I have respectfully chosen to avoid, leaving the *hic sunt excelsis animae* to the exclusive pleasure of the readers.

Bibliography:

1. Dur, Ion. *Jurnal domestic 1971 - 2017: însemnările unui in-formator*. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2018.
2. Guăan, Victoria Murrescu. “O carte a regisirii de sine, de o sinceritate agrementată.” *Saeculum* 2 (2018), 162.
3. Lavric, Sorin. “Insul adiabatic.” *România literară* 29 (2018), 20.

¹¹ Dur, *Jurnal domestic*, 79.

¹² Radu Vancu, “Exigența pudorii și exigența adevărului,” *Transilvania* 2 (2018), 23.

¹³ Horia Pătruț, “Ion Dur, *Jurnalul domestic*. Însemnările unui in-formator 1971–2017, Cartea Românească, 2018”, *Revista de filosofie*, Tomul LXV, 3 (2018), 305.

¹⁴ Pătruț, “Ion Dur, *Jurnalul domestic*,” 305.

¹⁵ Victoria Murrescu Guăan, “O carte a regisirii de sine, de o sinceritate agrementată,” *Saeculum* 2 (2018), 162.

¹⁶ Sorin Lavric, “Insul adiabatic,” *România literară* 29 (2018), 20.

4. P tr a cu, Horia Vicen iu. “Ion Dur, *Jurnalul domestic. Însemn rile unui in-formator 1971–2017*, Cartea Româneasc , 2018.” *Revista de filosofie*, Tomul LXV, 3 (2018), 305.
5. Vancu, Radu. “Exigența pudorii și exigența adevărului.” *Transilvania* 2 (2018), 23.