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REPRESENTING REALITY THROUGH VISUAL IMAGES

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ABSTRACT. The paper aims to present different theories referring to the representation of images in order to understand the way they represent reality. Also, our purpose was to highlight a few steps in the evolution of modern art and how we can use visual images to create new forms of art.

Keywords: cognition, perception, representation, mental images, modern art, digital art

There are several different approaches on how people come into contact and interact with the reality in which they live. The behaviorist theory deals with observation and measuring of the world directly. On the other hand, phenomenologists are exclusively preoccupied with the introspective experience of the individual. Semioticians and rhetoricians try to see the links between the individuals' internal world and the external world, which is always mediated by the senses and the mind. Rhetoricians investigate the way in which people create and manipulate symbols in order to construct a persuasive discourse. Both rhetoricians and semioticians try to reveal the mechanism through which signs mediate the external and the internal worlds, or those through which a sign can stand for something, can signify something from the real world in the mind of a person, so they deal with the process of representation.

Theoretical approaches

The neurologist Semir Zeki compares the process of an image forming in the brain to the process artists use to activate their sight for obtaining information and expressing a unique truth in an ephemeral world. The ways art and the brain function are similar. They both try to find and represent the constant essential features of objects, surfaces, faces and situations. Zeki uses cubism as an example. Cubism tried to find the essence of objects in a multitude

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of changing perspectives, using the ability of the brain to successively integrate different perspectives on objects and individuals in their environment, or the perspectives of the receiver in a single image (Zeki 1999). We need to mention that Zeki's observations refer to the process of representation, which integrates the perceived information, thought and memory to create the image of the visualized objects.

Representation has been conceptualized as a relationship between two, three or four parts. The model based on two parts is associated with the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who defined the linguistic sign as a psychological entity, with two aspects consisting of sign (signifier) and meaning (signified). The three part model is attributed to the American philosopher Charles Peirce, who defined representation as a relationship between sign, object and interpreter. The semiosis (the process of understanding, the interpretation of a sign) happens when an existent sign is connected to the signified object to produce meaning in the mind of the interpreter. To Peirce, the explanation of relationships between sign and object is essentially visual. The four part model is associated W.J.T. Mitchell, who adds a new dimension, that of the maker of representation (Mitchell 1986). Mitchell describes a quadrilateral model with two axes, one linking the representational object to what it represents, like in Saussure's didactic model, called the representational axis, and the second axis, called communication axis, linking the maker and the interpreter of the sign. This last model has the advantage of underlining the intentionality of communication, and is very useful in the analysis of photography or images created either with the purpose of communicating the maker's intention, either to provoke an emotional reaction among the readers.

Semioticians distinguish three types of relationships between the sign and the represented object: iconic relationships (that emphasize the similarities between the object and the representation), symbolic relationships (that are arbitrary), and indexical relationships (that are based on cause and effect or proximity or connection). The majority of representations use more than one type of relationship between sign and object.

Theories referring to the representation of images are based mainly on four types of relationships between signs and objects: the theories of causal relation, the theories of resemblance, the theories of convention, the theories of mental construction (Keith Kenney, 2005).

The theories of causal relation emphasize indexical and iconic relations

The theory of transparency claims that photographs or video sequences are transparent in that we look at reality through them as through lenses to see things that we could not see with our own eyes. For example, in photography

there is a mechanical causality between the real phenomenon and the captured image. This theory does not make reference to the maker or the viewer, because it assumes that viewers are convinced that they are watching the objects themselves when they see an image of them. If viewers could control the angles and the distance, then one could say photography is a transparent medium and there is no intention on the part of the creator, eliminating him from the process of representation. Many times people implicitly, if not explicitly, view images as a way to see the world directly, like through a lens: people continue to look at photos of their loved ones, photographs or videos are used as proof in court and media institutions use images to convey information about people or events.

The theory of recognition claims that an image represents a phenomenon because that image looks exactly like that phenomenon. The iconic relation between the sign and the object is emphasized, and the symbolic relation is disregarded. An important part of the theory of recognition is aspects, which can be defined as distinctive features (Wilkerson, 1991). First of all, seeing the aspects of something implies noticing the similarities (we recognize an appearance through focusing on the similarities between representation and reality). Second of all, seeing the aspects is an imaginative activity (we can imagine reality even if we do not witness it). Third, seeing the aspects is a subject of will (we can try not to see an aspect, and someone can guide us drawing attention to the important parts of the image). Fourth, seeing the aspects is detached from conviction (we can see an aspect of an object in an image, but this will not make us believe that the image is literally that object). Lastly, seeing an aspect of something often implies exact experience (such as suddenly noticing a new aspect or the change of an aspect).

The theory of recognition claims that representation through images is generative. This does not mean that we do not have to learn the meaning of images that are not familiar to us just like we learn unfamiliar words. We can generate meaning out of any image of a known object as long as we know the representation system. So, when we meet a new system we must first learn its rules. To understand the symbolic relationship between sign and object we must first learn the codes, the grammar, the language or some other system based on social convention, which allows us to decipher or understand a certain representation.

The theories of resemblance are based on the idea that images resemble the objects they represent. The emphasis is on the iconic nature of the relationship between the sign and the object.

The theory of non-perceptual resemblance claims that images represent through similitude with their subject. Resemblance is a symmetrical relationship: if the color photograph is similar to its real subject, then the real subject should look like its image in the photo, else the representation cannot be symmetrical.

The theory of perceptual resemblance claims that in the initial stage of seeing, we only receive a few pieces of visual information, and what we perceived is not affected by beliefs, values or context. In this case, instead of noticing aspects, we will recognize the objects contained in a visual representation. This point of view implies that we will not be able to distinguish an image of a subject from the actual subject, but seeing as this does happen, and it happens effortlessly, we must accept that there is a series of processes that takes place, having to do with accessing culturally educated convictions. Also, sometimes seeing the representation of certain subjects may stir emotions stronger than seeing the actual subject.

The theory of convention claims that an image represents something by observing the system of rules or conventions that tie the image to the external reality. In this case, the relation between sign and object is mainly symbolical.

The theories of mental construction explain the representational process by referring to mental states such as illusion, make-believe and seeing-in.

According to the illusion theory, images offer a false perceptual belief that we are in the presence of the subject. Art historian E. Gombrich thought that we participate integrally in the game of illusion by willingly ignoring certain inaccurate aspects of representation. The experience of watching an image alternates between the perception of the subject and the perception of a flat object (painting, drawing, and photograph). The two experiences cannot exist simultaneously, because in that moment the illusion would disappear (Gombrich 1962). Gombrich also recorded the history of western art as a series of experiments of artists who used new methods and techniques to paint objects, people or landscapes as naturalistically as possible. In time, artists abandoned old habits and representation conventions. Artistic changes have taken place through the use of an initial technique that was then successively refined and corrected up until the moment of obtaining a satisfactory result. For example, they suggested tridimensional space by making objects in the background smaller and exploited the fact that parallel lines seem to converge in the distance. Although these techniques are in themselves conventions, Gombrich anticipated the gradual movement towards the completely accurate representation, which requires fewer codes to be deciphered to see the subject. The sign-object relationship is therefore iconic and symbolic. The theory of illusion cannot be applied to abstract representations that use other means of coding.

The theory of make-believe claims that the function of images can be independent of the maker's intention. The image is not seen as a means to communicate, but as a support for the viewer in perceiving a fictional world. The person who sees an image envisions what that image represents as a fictional object. However, some images offer information, and the idea that to extract this information we have to engage in an imagination game is hard to support.

The theory of seeing-in claims that we see the subject of the image in the lines, the strokes or the textures on the surface of the image. We also can see subjects in things other than pictures, such as in a cloud formation or a blob of ink. The difference between the two kinds of seeing-in, however, is that what we see in pictures was intended by a picture-maker and what we see in clouds was not. Still, this theory does not explain the way in which we recognize the subject in the image.

Representation is a key concept for semiotics, phenomenology and rhetoric, even if each one uses its specific vocabulary, hypotheses and ways to approach the study of images. We need to mention that the result of the process of representation is a mental image, which, unlike the perceptive image, schematically presents the concrete characteristics of objects and phenomena, in the absence of direct action of these on the analyzers. Mental images are the results of mental actualizations, constructions and reconstructions, reorganizations and reconfigurations using the ability of memory to reconstruct and fully and simultaneously restore all the information about an object. The image such created is very generic, closing on a concept. Resulting from a complex process of mental reconstruction, mental images easily integrate with the various cognitive processes that can contribute, together with the theories presented above, to the research on images and the way in which they represent reality.

The modern art as perception and representation

According to Rene Huyghe, in fine arts the image is a figurative sign that activates the public's conscience and that contemporary society is a civilization of the image (Huyghe, 1971). The modern spirit becomes ever more sensitive to the perception of forms. However, the proliferation of forms can undermine discursiveness and reflexivity by the disappearance of the distance between the visual signifier and the signified. This disappearance of the distance between the signifier and signified may be caused by the individuals' impossibility to communicate in the first half of the 20th century. The attempt to erase the old in order to create a new form of art has as an effect the individuals' eagerness to explore new and more efficient forms of communication that would address to each human in an effort to personalize the message. Art history underlines the shifting process from the primary nature, to control and reflect on nature, to the increasing importance of means of communication and the subjectivity of the artist. Modern art reviews the values and bases on which a millennial culture was built, because accurate representation of the real was no longer more satisfactory than lines, volumes, forms and even logic, in expressionism. The result is a lack of communication between individuals, but also between the human and the unknown universe, which now seemed empty and absurd.

In the course of history, art seems to oscillate between real and unreal, but does not cross certain limits in order to not become a mere imitation or to dissolve. Regardless of the intensity of realism, the intrinsic value of the art work is closely linked to the internal order instituted by the author, by the coherence of the means used and the unity of vision. The appreciation of a work of art cannot be done unless one joins in the spaces of creation – a perfectly autonomous universe where laws of the real world are abolished in favor of those instituted by the author – and by language and the codes chosen by the author to express the message.

By defining artwork as an assembly of signs which produce certain significations, Erwin Panofsky (1977) suggests a strategy that might help the art work to reveal its content to the viewers. The reading process of a work of art starts with the initial description of the image's content; the author refers to the common expression of the subject and underlines the item and expressive values of the compositional assembly by deciphering the facts presented in the image. The second level of reading is the deciphering of symbolic significations. This refers to the conventional meaning of objects and facts represented through the image and identified in the first level. Now, the conventional sense of items is revealed, which populates the compositional frame and debates the intentionality of the work of art – in other words, the purpose of their production. These types of significations are cultural and attached through convention. The third level of reading concerns the iconological interpretation. Its purpose is to value the message through reference to a vast cultural perspective.

Thus, art is a language used to send a message. Language uses a repertoire, it has a structure, it has the means to establish communication between people. Plastic language has a magic that produces music, incantation and beauty through its principal elements: material, dot, line, color, rhythm, form, composition, proportion. Rene Huyghe (1971) shows that, in relation to the evolution of society at a given moment, in the creation process of the artwork, the material used by the artist to create the work of art, the methods and means of creation, which can be passive such as canvas, or active such as lines, colors incorporated in a certain order and the personality of the author, can contribute in different levels to the creation of the artwork. The artist seeks to express, to communicate to others the knowledge and sentiments that he has at that specific moment.

Following these statements, the theories of image representation and consideration referring to the major change brought to modern art can be complemented with observations on the ways in which elements of plastic language are used in modern art.

In paintings, the properties of the utilized material, aquarelle, pastel, oil, determine the plastic modality, space processing, chromatic concept; the support (canvas, wood, glass,) used demands different plastic solutions (kitsch

means to ignore the organic links between matter and form; changing marble with plastic or copying a painting in oil with aquarelle dissolves the solidarity between vision and matter). In sculpture the material used can be stone, wood, marble. The return to initial materials has been reflected in modern art by the appearance of a painting method named action painting in the works of Jackson Pollock. This method that presumes casting paint on canvas, visible movements of the brush, spontaneous and dynamic gestures, has been borrowed by other artists in order to express the inner tensions of the artistic act. In its turn, modern sculpture prefers to express the essence of objects and the idea of action through polishing the fluid magma, abrasion of materials, in the works of Brâncuşi.

Concerning the use of colors, in contrast to other periods of time that prefer a value perspective as rendering the fluidity of light by variation of color intensity, modern artists favor the chromatic perspective as a use of equally saturated colors. This lends itself to flat representation, simple colors being incompatible with relief and profoundness. These were found in religious icons, but more close to our time they are present in Matisse (The Dance, 1909) or Gaugain. Paul Cèzanne discovered and illustrated the modulation process – law of simultaneous contrast of colors, according to which complementary colors produce reciprocal intensification, and the light intensity and the apparent dimensions of a blot of light color on a darkened background are increased through irradiation (this procedure can be understood if we observe how color is arranged in stained glass). The pure mode to use color detaches painting from the natural model. Impressionism redeemed color in its own right. The chromatic palette opposes intrinsic logic of reciprocal reference between colors (Matisse, Franz Marc) by using colors for the sake of colors (this modality of using colors appeared also in the medieval Persian miniatures).

In its essential aspects, modern art redefines the real in contrast with naturalist photography. We can refer to the blue and pink period of Picasso. From a naturalist perspective, the artist has reintroduced certain aspects that belong to realist representation. The difference of the palette of colors is reduced to blue, pink, and orange. The naturalist criteria was no longer valid, painting does not present classic themes, grand ideas, mythological subjects and intends to surprise human spirit and essence, the profound experiences. This return to essence was probably best underlined in expressionism and contrasting colors and distortion of reality from Eduard Munch's The Scream is a living evidence of creation freedom that imposed expression over form.

We believe that the novelty found in the works of modern artists may be also explained through the way of using light and shadows. The represented light from an image is related with color and space. Representation of three-dimensional space uses different light source: day light, candle light, electric

light. In the course of time, we can find a gradual transition for portrays with a darkened background, with the light concentrated on the figure exposed, to an opening of backgrounds, to the use of shadows to offer an impression of profoundness and tri-dimensionality of the image. Romanticism promoted either hope inspiring light or dark, obscure light. In realist art we find an equal distribution of light and shadow, an objective representation of reality. However, the custom of impressionists to paint outside surrounded by nature offers luminosity to paintings, so beyond the impression left on the canvas, impressionist painting represents a celebration of light. The excessive presence of light determines the gradual disappearance of shadows and, implicitly, of profoundness. For the cubists, the chromatic unity (tincture of beige, brown, Nile green, grey, bleu – George Braque, *Guitar and candles*, 1910), the uniform treatment of surface disbands the hierarchy between figure and background. From now on, real world object can also be presented in the foreground and this fact allows the decomposition of figures in component elements, their geometrization and their recreation according to the logic of each artist. If impressionists proposed the creation of image on the eye of the viewer, from the blot of colors set on the canvas, cubism means the creation of the whole using fragments randomly put together by the artists according to a code that we, the viewers, must learn and decipher.

Cubism has essentially changed the way in which we view the world. Picasso has fragmented the continuity of representation by dismembering objects, characters and space. Geometrical elements (circles, squares, triangles) have been redefined as being a configuration of essential elements (*Woman on sofa,* 1913).

The objects are now composed of cubes or other simple geometric forms which represent the same object simultaneously studied from different positions and angles. Initially, cubists have produced representations that could be easily recognizable, and then they recede. The artists establishes new relations between the forms, however, an intellectual effort of the viewer is required in order to reconstruct reality from a series of lines and forms.

The borders between reality and construction of reality have become unclear. Any aspect can be reduced to a sketch or diminish to disappearance. Some paintings do not have colors, lines or background, just white areas. In this matter, some paintings can be partially painted or they can present a variety of drawings and colors, but what is important now is to show how color was applied or the frame as an integrated part of the painting. Consequently, the modality of representation suggests distance to the facts of life or denies representation showing something that simply exists.

The transition to postmodernism underlined the illusion of natural aspects of life inasmuch as art resumes itself to its photographic repetition, in Pop Art. Andy Warhol is an example of the beginnings of postmodern art, by

using symbols and common cultural artifacts that can be infinitely multiplied (i.e. portrait of Marilyn Monroe or the multiplication of *The Scream* in colors and on different areas). Thereby, postmodern art denies the distinction between low and high art by preferring eclecticism, a mixture of ideas and forms which are presented fragmentary, ironic or joyful. Postmodern artists prefer the representation of the fragment or the underlining of a detail in a whole, the use of vivid colors and contrasts or, conversely, art is reduced to a symbolic gesture, collage and unusual materials for plastic arts, insisting to innovate the techniques of representing reality. Just as in the case of modernists, the dialogue with tradition consists in taking over the themes of the old artists and their transposition in a new manner, on a different base, with other materials and techniques of representation.

In other words, modern art is no longer interested as much in the subject; it is merely a question of representation that necessitates effort of interpretation, in which each viewer can bring interpretations on the given reality. In this matter, the viewer is prepared to perceive and understand certain forms of interpretation, but we understand that viewer participation in the creation of signification determines the level in which the viewer is recaptured in representations. From a social point of view, representation credibility differs from individual to individual or is different if the individual belongs to certain interpretative community. While art is increasingly combined with graphic design, new technologies and advertising, the level of appreciation can be high so that the new forms proposed by the artists pass in the forefront of culture.

Digital art

Following innovative ideas about representation and the free use of materials in Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism – particularly in the work of Duchamp – artists abandoned strict adherence to traditional media and embraced any means, including technology, which best served their purposes. Ideas about time and duration have reinstated narrative in art, via film-making and video, the theatricality of happenings, performance and installation art, digitally manipulated photography and virtual reality.

Christian Paul, curator at Whitney Museum of American Art digital technology interferes with art in two ways: the art approach as medium and as tool. (Christian Paul, 2003). The art approach as medium uses specific concepts: interactivity, immersion in virtual space; the digital art approach as tool uses digital processing with purpose to produce art works on traditional support: prints, sculptures, photos. It is not so important the nature of the support and the tool, but the concept and the context of a digital artwork (Elena Abrudan,

Art nouveau revival). This is the main artist contribution, because producing an artwork using information technology does not involve physical artist intervention as in the modern works of art mentioned above. It is a difference between using handling brush, chisel, knife and handling mouse. What interest us are the creative process and the result of moving digital work of art from PC screen to other support. This action is changing the lightening of artists' work. So it is a challenge to keep the same light intensity, in order to not change the work concept and to not alter creation process which assures the authenticity.

In the new technologies era and the rise of digital art, the rules established on the art market are changed. We refer to the idea of the originality; no matter the novelty of ideas witch animates an artist, works of digital art need a context with software and hardware, special abilities to use various programs. Thus, to be a piece of artwork, digital art must be valuable from content and aesthetical point of view. Also, to be digital art, a piece of work uses visual language specific for new media devices and present the metacharacteristic of this medium. For this kind of art are used interchangeably names like Compute art, Multimedia art, Interactive art or New Media art. These terms are used to describe projects that make use of emerging media technologies and are concerned with the cultural and aesthetic possibilities of these tools. According to Mark Tribe and Reena Jana (New Media Art, 1998), the technology that plays a significant role in Digital art is the Internet, which itself uses computer hardware and software – servers, routers, personal computers, database applications, scripts and files, governed by arcane protocols, such as HTTP, TCP/IP and DNS. Other technologies used in digital art include video and computer games, surveillance cameras, wireless phones, hand-held computers and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. Digital art includes video art, Transmission art and Experimental Film and it display a certain degree of conceptual sophistication, technological innovation, or social relevance. The conceptual and aesthetic roots of digital art are extended to the beginning of the 20th Century, to radically avant-garde artistic practices and ideas. Dadaist strategies like photomontage, collage, the readymade, performance, irony and absurdity, fragmented juxtaposition of borrowed images and texts reappear in digital art. Pop art also functioned as an important antecedent. After the 70s and 80s distinct art movements (such as Feminist art, Conceptual art, Media art, Performance art, Neo-Expressionism and Neo-Conceptualism), video and installations were dominant on the art market, in museums and galleries, but soon they made room to New Media art, at the end of 20th Century. Using the Internet, this new art became a world art movement, following a much larger historical trend: the globalization of cultures and economies. For many artists and users from other disciplines, computers became an opportunity to know

and to share artistic works and abilities with an international community of artists, critics, curators, collectors and art enthusiasts. Sometimes they work together as groups under shared names like Fakeshop or VNS Matrix. For other artists, the Internet is an arena, an accessible public space in which they can intervene artistically, in the same manner as street artists are making their works in a free or forbidden location. Many New Media artists are using the Internet as a tool to explore the construction and perception of Identity. Even they can create a fictive online persona setting a home page and inventing race, gender, age, sexual orientation and nationality.

Passive audience reception of first new media works was replaced by an active participation, but their actions (click on a screen to navigate through a web of linked pages) did not alter the work itself. We can bring as examples Deep Contact by Lynn Hershman, 1990, an interactive installation in which viewers can navigate through a series of video segments via a touch-sensitive screen. Sometimes, the author proposes a collaborative interaction. Mark Napier's later works Landfill (1998), Feed (2001), Shredder 1.0 requires consumers to provide or select the address of a web site to shred and running then an algorithmic process that produces the work anew each time. This way the users become collaborators in the digital art work.

Unfortunately, in Romania there is no a common understanding of this concept. For the audience it is difficult to discern between art and design, conceptual and decoration, modern art and contemporary art. In the Romanian digital landscape, we can mention Kinema Ikon group founded in 1970, in Arad; they were interested in experimental movie, mixed media, hypermedia and interactive installations. Later, in the 90s, another group of artists was formed around International Centre for Contemporary Art (Centrului Internaţional pentru Artă Contemporană), and they were synchronized with similar international orientation. Also in 25-27 of May 2007 Romanian artists Anca Benera and Ciprian Dicu have exhibited their works at The Galleries' White Night (Noaptea albă a galeriilor); young curators Ciprian Dicu, Ştefan Tiron, Cosmin Moldovan organized Kollector, another gallery which brings a fresh air in the area of domestic illustration, trying to find the way to make art design. There are few foundations that are supporting young visual artists (Portfolios, Trilld); they organize online contests and festivals where the main online communities are invited to participate. In Romania, the industry using digital art is growing; there are few digital game studios; the artists participate in exhibitions or workshops and post their creations online, on Forum Visualart.ro and in contemporary art galleries. There are various ways to post digital art creations as a demonstration that digital art must be valuable from content and aesthetical point of view and it is necessary to be presented to an audience.

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DIGITAL CULTURE'S INFLUENCE ON THE INDIVIDUALS[*]

ANDREEA MOGOŞ[**]

ABSTRACT. Public sphere in the Internet age is shaped by the change of traditional *practices* of information consumption. An online user is forced to act in order to participate. This is the active, information seeking media user model. World Wide Web is a gigantic external memory, able to store huge amounts of data that are allegedly available to anyone. Even if the use of books during five centuries made linear thinking the main reasoning manner, now it is gradually replaced by a multitask, nonlinear thinking, which is more rapid, more fluid and more superficial in the same time. Internet users who are relying on this external memory have a better data analysis capacity, but lack more and more the synthesis capacity. The gigantesque external memory favor citizens' "source amnesia": they know the information, but they forget its source (and consequently they don't question the source's credibility). These relations configure citizens' both information consuming and producing practices in the virtual public space. This paper's aim is to investigate how young educated adult cybercitizens consume and produce information in the virtual space.

Key words: cybercitizen, digital information consumption/production, linear and nonlinear thinking, public sphere

> *"As soon as the internet started to materialize as a set of relays and links between different computer networks, it produced a widespread and hopeful expectation of a resurgence of the public sphere in a 'cyberdemocratic' mode."*
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> (Terranova, 2004:135)

The internet is considered to be populated by, and possibly producing, informed and active citizens that are the backbone of a lively virtual public

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sphere. According to Sparks (1998:112) at its most basic, a public sphere, in order to be considered as such, must meet two criteria: "*access* guaranteed to all" and "citizens' right to confer in an unrestricted fashion" that is, *free space.*

Before discussing the dynamics of the public sphere in the Internet age, it is crucial to clarify how the traditional *practices* of consumption changed in the digital era. Within the online environment the user has to act in order to participate. Constant feedback and information production are behaviors that characterize the active, information seeking media user.

New media, new consumption patterns

Debord (1994) in *The Society of Spectacle* emphasizes that the key characteristic of the spectacle is not the content of the scene, but the *relations* that the traditional media form between members of the audience. This approach postulates a one-to-many communicational relation, meaning that the audience is atomized and isolated in the face of the *spectacle*, which demands only observation. On the other hand, the internet, as an *interactive medium*, is offering the audience's members the possibility to communicate, and requiring their participation above and beyond passive presence.

Internet content could not be considered to be autonomous of mass-media content, its frames and concerns. Holmes (2005:104) points out that "online content is often highly parasitic upon its offline 'rivals'". The author emphasizes that the characteristic of much web content is that it becomes interesting only in so far as it elaborates upon content produced in other areas of the media sphere and thus the *internet acts as a medium of second-order elaboration of mass-media content*. In fact, researches show that mass-media materials and content colonize the web and the demand for news/internet services at the time of intensively reported world events rises rapidly.

He and Zhu (2002) constructed a typology of online news delivery from commercial sources. Thus, the *transmission model* is focused on information delivery. It just moves the print version online without employing the interactive, nonlinear, multimedia, space and storage features of cyberspace. The *interactive model* is considered to be an intermediate stage. The most complex is the model focused on interactivity, feedback and exchange. It fully utilizes and demonstrates the features of cyberspace, and sets up a virtual community by allowing the online newspaper to interact with its readers, and readers with other readers.

The compulsion to perform physical actions in order to move through the internet is, at the most basic level, the core distinction between broadcast and online behaviour. There is a unitary way of consuming internet content and a particular way of being an audience online - the technological form or the content induces a specific relationship which then acts to produce behaviour

and modes of consumption. Poster (1995) argues that Internet and Virtual Reality may so alter people's habits of communication and so deeply reposition personal identities that the designation "a second media age" is justified. *The second media age theory* posits a radical rupture in forms of media between the ages of mass media and the new media logic of individualization and interactivity. *"The audience is not bifurcated into consumers and producers, instead individuals are both simultaneously. Communication is no more one-to-many, but inherently many-to-many."* In the new era people are argued to develop themselves online through interaction with each other, not in relation to a monolithic media. Second media age is characterized by identity formation through social interaction, as Poster (1995) emphasizes: *"on the one hand, the internet's uniqueness as an experience for the audience comes from the individualizing nature of the online environment and, on the other, this individuation leads to the formation of horizontal webs of sense-making."*

The cybercitizen

In 1997, Katz anticipated the configuration of a new social class, the Digital Nation: "*Its citizens are young, educated, affluent. They inhabit wired institutions and industries - universities, computer and telecom companies, Wall Street and financial outfits, the media. [...]The members of the Digital Nation are not representative of the population as a whole: they are richer, better educated...*". This new category of citizens is formed of people who are politically active, civically aware and involved, believing in participation and interactivity.

Technological developments over the last few years allowed other socio-demographic categories to access internet and to use it for informational or other purposes. The unrestricted use of www in order to gather or spread information made individuals to become more active in the digital public sphere.

Digitally shaped brain

Neuroscience imagery studies identified for the *Google* research engine heavy users an increased activity of the prefrontal cortex (Houdé, 2012), a sign that brain is able to adapt itself to this new medium.

De Kerckhove (1997) considers that the cybernetic brainframe enables individuals to externalise mental awareness; television has transformed people into *image consumers*, whereas the computer, by projecting individuals outside their own nervous systems and giving them access to, and power over, all aspects of the environment (cyberspace) has transformed them into *information producers*. The ability for participants to act both as audiences for and producers of discourse, to fully participate as speaking and listening subjects within the debates, is critical to understanding a space as a public sphere.

Popova (2012) discusses the impact of the huge amount of digital information on the way individuals retrieve data and how this influence the perception and the understanding of the world around them: "*The Web by and large is really well designed to help people find more of what they already know they're looking for, and really poorly designed to help us discover that which we don't yet know will interest us and hopefully even change the way we understand the world.*"

The use of books during five centuries made *linear thinking* the main reasoning manner BUT it is gradually replaced by a multitask, *nonlinear thinking*, which is more rapid, more fluid and more superficial in the same time. The use of books during five centuries made linear thinking the main reasoning manner but it is gradually replaced by a multitask, nonlinear thinking, which is more rapid, more fluid and more superficial in the same time. Internet users who are relying on this external memory have a better data analysis capacity, but lack more and more the synthesis capacity. Internet users who are relying on World Wide Web – a gigantic external memory - have a better data analysis capacity, but lack more and more the synthesis capacity.

Thus, even if the internet still provides information that relies on traditional media content, this new medium challenges individuals to find new ways for information consumption and information production. Therefore we consider that there are good reasons to investigate how young educated adult cybercitizens consume and produce information in the virtual space.

Our research was conducted in October 2012 at *Babeş-Bolyai* University and the subjects were male and (predominantly) female graduate students aged between 22 and 23 years.

Goals of the research:

- To compare how young educated adults make use of different media (print vs. digital)
- To assess the internet consumption patterns of communication students.
- To explore the degree of awareness of students in their information seeking process on the internet

Methodologies used:

- Experiment
- Survey
- Focus group

Firstly, we have conducted the experiment and the survey (on October 23, 2012) as described in the *experimental design* and *survey design* sections. After the analysis of the results obtained, we developed an interview guide for the focus group (performed on October 30, 2012).

EXPERIMENTAL design

The master students group was split in two subgroups and each was asked to perform an **informational task** (to gather information on the Parties candidates for the general elections to be held in Romania on December 9, 2012)[1]. The first subgroup had *to gather information from four given **websites*** (www.adevarul.ro; www.evz.ro; www.jurnalul.ro; www.rl.ro) containing the online version of the four most important newspapers in Romania. The second subgroup had *to gather information from the **print version*** of the same newspapers (*Adevărul, Evenimentul Zilei, Jurnalul naţional, România liberă*). After 20 minutes of research through the available ressources, the students were asked to make a resume of the information they ran through (on a word document, respectively on a sheet of paper).

Experimental findings

The medium affected the information seeking patterns on the information processing patterns. Each subgroup developed a different information gathering strategy, adapted to the medium.

The "internet subgroup" used *informational shortcuts*, typing the name of the newspapers into the Google research engine instead of typing the URL that was provided by the researcher. They skimmed and scanned more websites before they started to actually gather information and they wrote resumes that tried to offer bits of the entire available information (some of them constructing a list of ideas).

The "newspaper subgroup" followed a *linear reasoning model*: they searched for an article and started to read it from the beginning to the end; they did not pass to the next newspaper until they exhausted the information on the campaign issue and they wrote narrative resumes for each newspapers they read.

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[1] The electoral campaign was to start in few days and first rumours and information on the potential candidates appeared in the media. The topic was relatively new and the subjects (students) had little previous information, therefore thay had to retrieve information from the media assigned.

SURVEY design

The paper-and-pencil questionnaire contained items that assessed each individual's:
- computer use and internet consumption habits
- Internet surfing purposes
- Online presence
- News sources preferences
- Involvement in the online public sphere
- Online identity

Survey findings

For 70% of the respondents there is a **matching** between the time spent in front of the computer and the time spent on the internet. The more time the individual spends on the internet (over 8h), the more his/her consumption preferences lean towards **social networking** and **entertainment**. All the subjects that admitted they have a **Facebook** account use it on a **daily** basis.

Q3: On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 means very little and 10 means very much) please indicate for what purposes you are using the internet.
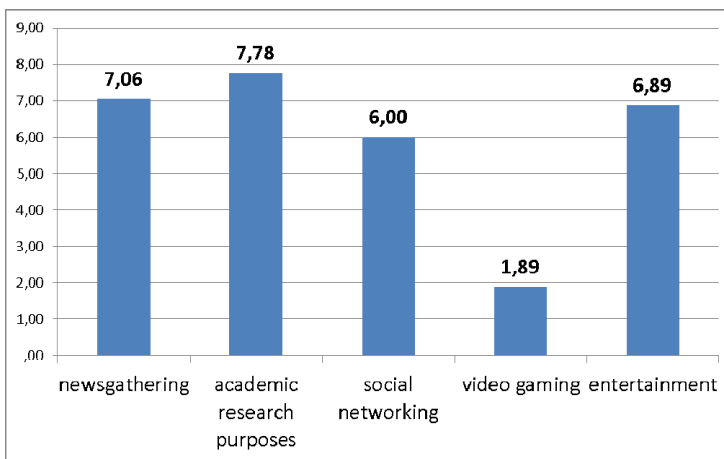
The graph above illustrates which are the mean values (*m*) computed for the entire group. The students declared that they intensively use internet for academic research purposes (*m*=7.78) and for newsgathering (*m*=7.06). Entertainment purposes come on a third place (*m*=6.89). It is still questionable how sincere were the subjects when evaluating their internet use in social

networking purposes[2] (*m*=6.00).

When asked about their activity on the internet, half of the students said that they write comments on forums and one third admitted that they have a blog/photoblog/videoblog page, which enables us to say that engaging in debates and opinion display is more attractive for these students, as it may be seen in the following graph:

Q6: In which of the following ways you are present on the internet?
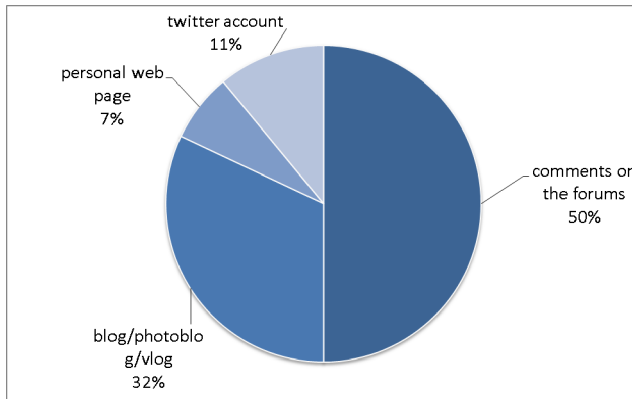
We consider that the question reffering to the issue of fake versus real identity on the internet did not reveal entirely relevant information. Though it is interesting to see that one quarter of the sample said that they use nicknames when playing videogames, a percentage which is quite similar to comments on forums and blog/photoblog/videoblog categories.

Q7: Do you use a nickname in the following situations?

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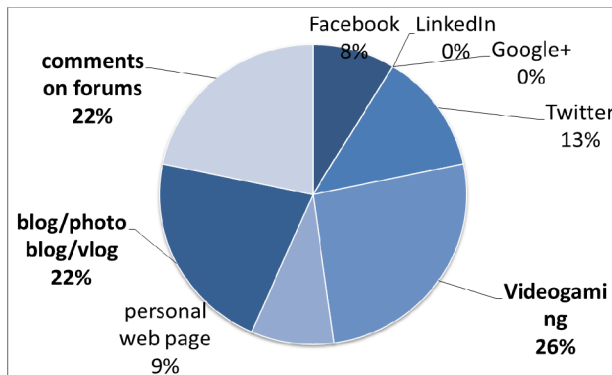
[2] According to Alexa traffic rank, *Facebook* is situated on a second place a global rank and it is situated on the first place in the Romanian national traffic rank. The audience for *facebook.com* among 18-24 year olds is similar to the general internet population, but relative to the general internet population, people browsing from school are **over-represented** at *facebook.com*. (for more information see http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com, accessed on December 1, 2012)

FOCUS GROUP design

Ten participants (master students in media communication) participated to a group interview focused on:
- Internet perceptions
- Information seeking strategies
- Sites' informational content evaluation
- Entertainment seeking strategies
- Social networks as information vectors
- The citizen in the digital age
- World without internet

Focus group findings

Internet is perceived as an opportunity to fulfill various informational needs, to communicate in real time, to spend time and attain educational purposes. Subjects only mentioned positive effects and started to talk about the negative traits only when specifically asked to do so (the issue of privacy, time consuming activity, unfiltered/unchecked information, potential harm for children). Subjects (aged of 22-23 years) perceive themselves as being an active and reasonable consumer, who is selective and therefore protected from the negative influence of the internet BUT they perceive the digital natives (children and teenagers) as being strongly affected by the use of internet (weak or no real social life, sedentary life, lack of creativity).

For national and international news, students seek information on specific news portals, online newspapers, which are considered to be credible. For information on a specific topic, *Google* research engine is preferred.

The credibility of a site relies on a **good content** (correct spelling and grammar, logical construction of the text, clear structure, efficient layout, presence of the multimedia files). Some students believe that the existence of the traditional media contributes to the credibility of the online media equivalent.

Specialized satire and humor sites are valued for their original content, novelty, layout and accessibility. In this case recommendations found on the site are followed. Facebook friends' recommendations are taken into account because those friends are considered to have similar tastes. Members of the same social network are like-minded individuals (see *cyberbalcanization*).

Facebook is not used to seek information, it appears accidentally and develops depending on the subsequent strategy adopted by the user. Information provided friends acts rather like a trigger, which urges the individual to verify it. Information posted on media institution Facebook accounts are considered reliable and more user-friendly.

The citizen in the digital age: Internet provides free access to a huge amount of free information; Internet allows flash-mobs, but not always the participant clearly understands what is the meaning of the event he is participating to.

Subjects had difficulties in imagining a world without internet. References are made to a "golden age" – their childhood, when mass internet access was in its early years.

CONCLUSIONS

Young educated adults make use of traditional media and new media in a different manner and thus linear and nonlinear reasoning coexist in different intellectual activities. Students spend a significant amount of time in front of computers, dividing their activities in information seeking, academic research, social networking and entertainment. Students are able to develop effective information seeking and evaluation strategies and they are capable to decide what is worthy of their interest and what is not.

Students use internet in an extensive manner for diverse purposes, but they do not perceive this as a menace as long as they believe that they control their own digital behavior and thus it remains within safe borders. This is mainly motivated by the assumption that they did not have access to digital technology during the early years of their lives and this gives them an advantage over the younger generations immersed in the digital world from the very beginning of their lives, the "digital natives".

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CENSORSHIP OF THE HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA (1944–1953)

GYŐRFFY GÁBOR[*]

ABSTRACT. After the Second World War, as a consequence of implementing the more than two decade long Soviet practice in the field of censorship, essentially uniform control methods were established in Eastern Europe, which gradually changed from the fifties according to the political attributes of the particular countries. In order to impose the ideological basis of the political system, the Romanian communist power created a total monopoly of the sphere of public communication, which included, besides censorship, the elimination of all alternative information sources contradicting official propaganda. The paper outlines the institutional structure of communist censorship in Romania in the period 1944-1953, together with the specific measures that affected the Hungarian community, the transformation on the press system and censorship of Hungarian-language newspapers.

Key words: communism, press system, Romania, Hungarian minority, censorship

Historical background

The coup of 23rd August 1944 against the dictatorship of Ion Antonescu had changed the course of the Romanian history. In fact, the consequence of the coup was an unconditional surrender to the Soviet Union, which succeeded to include the country in its sphere of influence, in fact a to hold the control over a European region that was later known as the Socialist Block. As for Transylvania, which was in that time divided between Hungary and Romania, the Armistice Agreement signed with the Allies on 12th September 1944 annulled the borders shaped up according to the Second Vienna Award in August 1940, and stipulated that whole Transylvania – or at least the bulk of it – will be annexed to Romania, passing the competence of delimitating the frontiers to the peace treaty talks to be hold in the after years. In this way, the provisory situation of

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Transylvania was a good opportunity for the Soviet Union to interfere in the internal fight for power in Romania. However, the raise of communist party was facilitated by several other factors, like the presence of Soviet armies in the country and violent propaganda against the interwar historical parties. (Tismăneanu 2003, 85–106)

In Romania – like in the most countries of the Socialist Block –, the communist forces seized the absolute power through a gradual process that lasted up to 1948. The first cabinet dominated by communists was installed on 6th March 1945, with Petru Groza as prime minister. The historical parties were for a short period represented in the government, but their presence was a major obstacle on Romanian Communist Party's (RCP) road to absolute power. The first victims were the influential National Peasant and National Liberal parties, which were dissolved by decree in the summer of 1947. A couple of months later, the Romanian Socialist Democratic Party was forcefully unified with the RCP, forming the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). The final action was the enforced abdication of King Michael, under the threat of civil war, on 30th December 1947. (Deletant 1998, 41–82)

After seizing the political power, the RCP moved towards obtaining the control over the economy, putting into plan the action of nationalizing the industrial, banking, insurance, mining and transport enterprises. The long-term aim of the communists was to preserve the power by transforming Romania by use of the Soviet model and employing Stalinist norms and practices.

The Hungarian minority of Transylvania numbered about 1.5 million people, which represented 7,5% of the whole population of Romania.[1] (Manuilă 1940, 97) As for its main political organization, the Hungarian People's Union (HPU), established in October 1944 as the successor of the interwar organization named Union of Hungarian Workers of Romania, it was controlled by Hungarian intellectuals that were loyal to the RCP. In this way, the Union failed to fulfill its task of being the protector of the interests of Hungarians from Romania. It is worthwhile mentioning that the press department of the organization acted as a first filter in censoring the Hungarian-language newspapers. This internal censorship was facilitated by the fact that the journalistic and editorial activities of Hungarian public figures were intertwined with their political assumption into the framework of the HPU.[2]

As regards the confusion concerning the function and political line of the HPU, there is the remarkable the statement of Nagy István, well-known socialist realist writer, and member of the first editorial committee of the *Világosság*

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[1] Estimation for the date of 31st December 1939.

[2] For example, Kurkó Gyárfás, the president of the Hungarian People's Union in the period 1944–1947, was at the same time leading editor of the *Népi Egység* newspaper published in Brassó (Brasov).

/Brightness/ newspaper: "the paper was published under the direct control of the party, and we were not aware of the difference between the Hungarian People's Union and the Romanian Communist Party […] if the forces needed for the fully democratic reconstruction of the country will be embraced under the leadership of the RCP."[3] (Bodor 1972, 282)

The policy towards the Hungarian minority has gradually changed in the period of 1944–1953. After signing the Paris Peace Treaties in 1947, which decreed the annexation of the whole Transylvania to Romania, the communist leaders had not longer the interest to keep the promises regarding the rights of Hungarians, and started to make more and more aggressive steps towards the assimilations of the minority. Purges began in order to purify the traditional cultural institutions of Hungarian minority from the so-called ideological deviancy, but it was only the first step towards the dissolution of the institutions, carried out in the period lasting up to 1953.

After 1948, the HPU became totally subordinated to RWP's policy, both form political and cultural point if view, in fact a political jumping-jack that transmitted the party ideology to the mass of workers. The enforcement of Stalinist minority policy culminated with the creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Region in 1952, which incorporated approximately one third of the minority population, in the *Székelyföld* (Szeklerland) region preponderantly inhabited by Hungarians. The measure intended mainly to divide the Hungarian elites and was an instrument of political and social integration of the minority by concentrating the cultural and educational institutions inside the region. (Bottoni 2008, 29–141) In the next year the communist leaders decided to dissolve the HPU, which became useless in accomplishing its integrative role of Hungarian community.

The year of 1953 can be considered a corner-mark in the history of Romanian communism. Firstly, with regard to the Hungarian community in Transylvania, it was the end of the period of active minority policy, reflected also in the statement of RWP prime-secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, enouncing that the problem of nationalities was definitely solved in Romania (as Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej noted in an article of Igazság on January 29, 1953). The so-called solution was in fact the beginning of the aggressive assimilation policy that lasted up to the end of communist era. Secondly, the period lasting up to 1953 can be considered that era of implementation of Stalinist methods of political and social control.[4] (Tismăneanu 1993, 35) At the end of the period, in 1953, the Romanian public sphere was already transformed to a system that lasted

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[3] In the years following since, Nagy István became one of the emblematic exponents of the literature of socialist realism through his novels.

[4] Vladimir Tismăneanu calls the period 1948–1953 the "mature incarnation of the political content of ideological dictatorship".

with some modifications until 1989. Thirdly, it is the year of Stalin's death, that can be considered a landmark from the point of view of coordination strategies used in the Socialist Block, though the destalinization was hardly perceived in the Romanian policy. (Tismăneanu 2005, 174–175)

The transformation of the Hungarian language press system in Romania

Despite of the several restrictions inflicted on the Hungarian press after the annexation of Transylvania effected by the Trianon Treaty in 1920, the Hungarian minority of Transylvania had developed in the interwar period a press system that was characterized by a certain plurality, including from political point of view publications of liberals and conservatives, social-democrats and socialists, as well as several confessional publications appertaining to Catholics, Reformed or Unitarians.

As a consequence of the communist takeover, the independent democratic papers were liquidated or transferred under the control of the RCP, while the newborn publications were from the beginning subordinated to the Hungarian People's Union or directly to the RCP. For example, *Szabad Szó /Free Word/* appeared at Târgu-Mureş /Marosvásárhely/ in November 1944 as the worker's independent newspaper, two years later was taken over by the Hungarian People's Union, and in 1951 became the organ of the RWP.

The forced unification of Social Democratic and Communist parties resulted in the liquidation of several social-democratic publications. This was the case of daily papers *Erdély /Transylvania/* from Cluj /Kolozsvár/ and *Népakarat /The Will of the People/* from Oradea /Nagyvárad/. The dissolution of the Hungarian People's Union in 1952 caused another cutback in the Hungarian language press system. The publications of the Union were abolished and subsequently in the bulk of major Transylvanian cities only one daily paper – the mouthpiece of the RWP – was allowed.

The communist power also strived to minimize as possible the influence of the traditional Hungarian churches. Besides the continuous propaganda against the activity of priests opposing the communist regime, all the publications of the Catholic Church were abolished in 1947, while those of the Reformed and Unitarian Church were subjected to a strict control. (Vincze 1999, 313–314)

In the first two years after the overturn of August 1944, the communist Left was able to influence the cultural life only through its political papers, since Romania had no literary journals controlled by editors that were loyal to the communist party. The separation of political and cultural spheres took place in 1946–47, period when certain cultural forums that could directly convey communist ideology in the field of culture and literature were also created. This process led to the launch in June 1946 of *Utunk (Our Way)*, the weekly

review of the Hungarian Writers' Union from Romania. The Romanian-language literary reviews propagating the socialist creative standards appeared during the same period: *Contemporanul (The Contemporary)* at the end of 1946, and *România Literară (Literary Romania)* in 1947. The *Igaz Szó /True Word/* literary review appeared in 1953 at Târgu-Mureș, as the paper of the Hungarian Autonomous Region Branch of Writers' Union, causing a certain controversy and even enmity between the writers' groups of Cluj and Târgu-Mureș.

On the other hand, the RCP needed a Hungarian-language central political newspaper to accomplish the task of spreading the communist propaganda. The essential role of the *Romániai Magyar Szó (Hungarian Word of Romania)* daily paper, appearing in Bucharest from the fall of 1947, was to publish in detail the party documents, report from the party conferences and congresses, inform the population about the results of building the socialist society, to mobilize for the fulfillment of current economic and political objectives. The new paper was edited according to the principles of the *Scânteia (The Sparkle)* daily paper, the central mouthpiece of the communist party, being a model for the local newspapers in treating the most important political issues. Its basic ideological articles were frequently translated from the central Romanian-language newspaper, and its political approach closely followed that of the *Scânteia* daily paper.

The institutional structure of Communist Censorship in Romania

The legal bases for the implementation of communist censorship in Romania were stipulated in the Armistice Agreement concluded with the Allied Powers on 12th September 1944, stating that "printing, importation and distribution in Romania of periodical and non-periodical literature, the presentation of theatrical performances and films, and the work of wireless stations, post, telegraph and telephone services shall be carried out in agreement with the Allied (Soviet) High Command."[5]

This section ensured unlimited rights for the Soviet army of occupation to extend its control over printed material. The first press control institution established after the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement was the Central Military Censorship Office, directed by Colonel Gheorghe Marinescu, including the Press Censorship Department.[6] Among the first directives issued by the institution was that forwarded to the Rador Romanian News Agency regarding the rules of publishing news about the Soviet Union and its army." (Vrânceanu 2000, 105)

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[5] România Liberă, 17th September 1944.
[6] Dreptatea, 2nd December 1944.

As for censorship controlled by the Soviet military Command, it operated in Romania until January 1946. Two months later, the Ministry of Information was established, which took over the duties of the Ministry of Propaganda and structured its own press control institutions. In the framework of the Ministry the first organizational unit of the Directorate of Press and Printing was created, a state and party organ that would establish the rules and apply censorship in Romania for several decades.

The control applied by the institution of censorship was complemented with the restrictions enforced by the competent departments – Propaganda and Agitation, as well as Press Departments – of the party committees. The role of the double filter established in this way was to eliminate from the public sphere all the elements that were contrary to the image spread by official propaganda.

The measures related to censorship included also restrictions regarding journalistic practice. One of the first measures taken by the communist authorities was to purge the press organs of bourgeois elements and install cadres that were loyal to the party. The journalists were subjected to continuous control and the party used social and ideological criteria for the selection of journalists.

It was a frequent practice to create the so-called cadre's files containing detailed data about the origin, education and political activity of the journalist. The employees that had formerly worked in the Soviet press or attended one of the levels of party activist training were preferred. The social criteria (origin from industrial or agricultural worker family) characterized mainly the Stalinist period, while the ideological criteria was maintained over the whole period of communist rule.

Together with the nationalization of paper factories and printing houses in 1948, the communist power also seized full control over the methods of economic censorship. Due to the monopoly over raw materials, printing capacities and distribution networks, the party had all the means to indirectly impede the publication of texts that were contrary to its interests.

In 1949, the efficiency of the censorship structures created in 1946 became unsuitable for the implementation of party-drafted requirements, and therefore the decree of the State Council formed a new structure, the General Directorate of Press and Printing, directly subordinated to the Executive Council. This new censorship institution in a short time established the network of its regional offices and elaborated the basic principles of its activities, which over the decades were continuously adapted to the ideological line of the party.

The office was in charge of controlling all printed materials (newspapers, periodicals, leaflets, advertisements etc.) and authorizing their spread. The internal directives of the institution laid down the subjects which were banned from being printed. Behind the rather ambiguous phraseology, we can discover the whole range of communist propaganda: actions of the class enemy against

the system and constitutional order; news, articles or photos inciting against the party, government, army and state apparatus; news denigrating the Soviet state, party leadership and people's democratic states; articles intending to disrupt the unity between the laboring class and working peasantry; group activities which were in the service of imperialism, articles denying proletarian internationalism and Marxist-Leninist principles; materials that could furnish military information or data regarding development works of national importance; statistical data regarding economic, administrative and health care institutions which could be used by imperialist agents for their purposes; and news about epidemics, natural disasters, accidents, assassinations or robberies that could produce panic. (Ficeac 1999, 48)

But the selection of information to be published began at the official news agency (Agerpres) operating from 1949 under the direct supervision of the Executive Council and Central Committee of the Communist Party. In the early fifties foreign news was disseminated exclusively as translations of the TASS Soviet news agency or Soviet press. However, Agerpres had a bureau called the Department of Informational Bulletins which transmitted the uncensored news to the leadership of the party, up to the level of county first secretaries. In this way, the agency functioned effectively with two external editorial boards, one of whom spreading the carefully selected positive news and the other the critical articles. (Vrânceanu 2000, 145–155) For example, in 1950 the news agency conveyed as a secret communication the conclusions of a BBC report on the agricultural situation, stating that bread continued to be strictly rationed in Romania five years after the end of the war, and moreover, that there were very frequent abuses concerning distribution. (Negreanu 2002, 38)

At the same time, the news agency played a very important role in the dissemination of propaganda. This fact is clearly reflected in a 1950 speech delivered at the assembly of the Propaganda and Agitation Department by the head of the institution, Ion Popescu Puţuri: "The news agency transmits internal national news, as well as news from the Soviet Union and people's democratic states, to inform the party, government, radio stations and newspapers. In addition, Agerpres informs foreign countries about the results of socialist construction." (Negreanu 2002, 28) But the public communication strategy of the regime imposed not only the censorship of news, but also the publication of commentaries directly serving the propaganda. For example, the news about economic results had to underline the factors that had contributed to achieving the results, namely the role of communist economic policy and the directives of the party. (Vrânceanu 2000, 140)

Besides the activity of the Directorate dealing with general aspects of censorship, institutions to oversee certain special fields were also established. Taking into account the evolution of the Cold War, a special control was enacted

over military publications (books, periodicals, leaflets, maps etc.), through the Military Censorship Office established in 1950. The office functioning at The Army General Staff Office performed the preliminary censorship of military publications, radio programs, exhibitions, documentary films, conferences and public lectures, having also a separate bureau in the editorial office of the *Glasul Armatei (The Voice of the Army)* military review. (Negreanu 2002, 288–289)

At the same time, the practice of the publicly enforced censorship of the late forties was gradually replaced by the method of secret instructions. For the purpose of their enforcement, the personnel and professional training department of the censorship office was constantly striving to increase the political and ideological level of censors. In the same time, the Executive Council has the tasks of the General Directorate of Press and Printing seven times within only three years. The extended competence of the Directorate required the training of further cadres, and the personnel and training department created in 1951 fulfilled this objective. (Ficeac 1999, 69) In 1952, the institution of censorship had 232 employees, out of which 152 were central censors and 80 regional censors. (Macrea-Toma 2006, 223)

As a result of the close relationship between the organs of the Communist Party and the Directorate up to the middle of the fifties, the institution of censorship reached the level at which its activity was completely governed by ideological requirements. Its territorial (county) branches operated on the basis of strict principles and instructions that were periodically updated.

The Censorship of Hungarian Language Newspapers

The Hungarian-language press was subjected to the control of the same institutions, but there are some particularities that are differentiating the coercion inflicted on the minority press. These particularities were arising on the one hand from the fact that Hungarians were spread in a well-determined geographical area, and the control needed certain special structures within the institution of censorship guided from Bucharest. On the second hand, the requirements for controlling these papers were rather different, because there were some special subjects to be avoided from publication. For example, the history of Transylvania within the borders of Hungary was a very delicate question, allowed to be discusses only according to the official stance. Other sensitive subjects were those related to the relationship with motherland Hungary or traditional Hungarian institutions.

For example, no reports can be found in the Hungarian press about the rally of 20th May 1945, which took place in Cluj to support the continuation of Hungarian-language Bolyai University, reinstated in the town in 1940 after the Second Vienna Award. In some cases the interference of censorship was displayed as bare white rectangles on the pages of newspapers, recalling the

press control methods applied between the two world wars. The editorial was deleted from the 7th October 1945 issue of the social-democratic paper *Erdély (Transylvania)*, and some weeks later the same periodical appeared with some blank rows. The authorities applied for the provisional suspension of publications several times, like in case of the *Világosság* daily paper of Cluj, which was suspended in August 1945 for seven days because of the "violation of the law," at the request of the local leader of the Agency for Handling & Overseeing Enemy Assets & Finances (CASBI). (Vincze 1999, 327)

As for the policy of the regime toward the Hungarian minority, after the period of concessions granted by the government of Prime Minister Petru Groza in the period 1945-1947, the communist regime started to demolish the collective identity of Hungarians from Transylvania. The press campaign against the traditional interwar Hungarian institutions started in the spring of 1947, when Luka László (called Vasile Luca in Romania press), an ethnic Hungarian party official published in the daily paper *Igazság* the editorial containing severe accusations against the so-called "unprincipled Hungarian unity". (As László Luka noted in an article of Igazság on May 22, 1947) The article blamed the minority institutions (for example the Transylvanian Cultural Society of Hungarians, Transylvanian Economic Society of Hungarians, Bolyai University, etc.) because they are carrying out "soul poisoning secret activities", in order to pit the Hungarian community against the communist party. In fact, the only "guilt" of the mentioned institutions was that they tried to preserve the identity, culture and traditions of Hungarians, opposing the uniformization policy of the regime.

As a consequence of the campaign, the bulk of traditional Hungarian institutions were eliminated in the following years. The action was in accordance with official party policy against minorities The Central leadership of the party stated for the first time in December 1948 that, "the problem of minorities must be subordinated to the general purpose of working class," and through this statement outlined the policy towards minorities applied in the following years, governed by the internationalist spirit denying all ethnical particularities. (Vincze 1999, 79)

The revolutionary character of this transitional period was based on a radical break with past tradition, while the new discourse was propagated through aggressive campaigns. Ideological pressure, which was present in the period between 1944–1947 in a mostly veiled form, amid uncertainty and hesitation, was uncovered in full force from 1948. The divided world - the antagonism between the communist and capitalist blocks - is reflected also in the definite separation of the notions related to "Good" and "Evil". The fight for peace, the praise of the victorious Soviet people, the cult of Stalin, and the campaigns against imperialism, the denunciation of class enemies and condemnation of Titoist policy became the dominant subjects of the communist press.

Besides these internal restrictions, the press was subjected to directives coming from Moscow. This fact can be explained by the total and unconditional obedience to the center, which involved conformity in foreign policy and domestic matters, as well. KGB instructions sent to the leadership of socialist countries in 1947 stipulated that the press must avoid presenting details regarding trade with the Soviet Union: it was forbidden to speak about the quality and type of products; furthermore, the relationship established with the Soviet Union had to be called "exchange of goods" instead of "trading". (Ficeac 2001, 104–125) The evident aim of the instructions was to deny the existence of business relations with socialist countries from which the Soviet Union could obtain any kind of financial advantage.

The essential role of the means of mass communication was to present the accomplishment of the elements formulated in communist ideology. In this way, the principles of censorship were strongly interconnected with the ideological content, prohibiting all the elements that were contrary to the then current political doctrine. As regards its premise, up to 1947 the fundamental fight was against the internal opponents of the communist regime. After the defeat of alternative power centers (political parties, civil and religious organizations, etc.), since the Cold War that drew the iron curtain between capitalist and socialist Europe, the forces of imperialism threatening the system of popular democracy became the main targets of communist propaganda. According to the official point of view propagated in newspapers, the world was divided into the anti-democratic, imperialist block led by the United States of America and the socialist block, the cradle of peace and democracy, led by the Soviet Union. As from the fall of 1947, the whole Romanian press was characterized by the intensification of hostile tone in articles denouncing the imperialist aspirations of capitalist countries and proving the superiority of socialism.

One of the main targets of the campaign was the Catholic Church having strong ties with Vatican, considered as "serving the interests of the imperialism". The press campaigns were extended also against the church officials resisting the spread of atheist communism. Their authority was undermined by publishing a series of slanders and finally they were removed from office. In Romania this was the case of catholic bishop Áron Márton, who was also condemned to jail after a trial presenting invented accusations.

Communist propaganda had specific methods for manipulating the masses of people: the press condemned facts whose meaning was not accurately presented to the readers, who had no other sources to gather information related to the issues. In this way opinion framing and negative propaganda preceded and even substituted objective information. For example, the press did not present any concrete information about the Marshall-plan, which was presented subjectively as a means of subduing the economies of European countries, in this way being a manifestation of American imperialism.

The press exclusively presented voices serving the interests of the regime. The opinion of *Pravda* newspaper of Moscow Radio was presented as general truth.[7] There were also carefully selected individual voices: for example that of economist Jenő Varga living in the Soviet Union, presented as a world-famous financial expert speaking about the economic crisis threatening the United States.[8] At the same time, the declarations of socialist politicians and analysts from capitalist countries were frequently quoted in the Romanian press. In the late 40s, the news from the United States was generally accompanied by the opinions of Henry Wallace, who was critical about the Truman doctrine and American foreign policy. The opinions of a certain political analyst named Steel were also frequently published, stating that the Truman doctrine was the American variant of Hitler's 'living space' theory,[9] and that the foreign policy of the United States was doomed to failure.[10] In other cases, the press, not even mentioning its sources, refers to the voice of "democratic public opinion".[11]

The control exercised by the party on printed matter covered practically all publications. The press departments of county party committees monthly developed the draft of subjects to be presented and popularized in the press, and subsequently analyzed the published issues. Therefore, preventive control was usually followed by strict subsequent censorship.

Taking in to account the forced abdication of King Michael, the major subject of the draft in January 1948 was the denunciation of the monarchy. The journals were instructed to publish concrete data proving that monarchy was the means of feudal-capitalist exploitation, impeding in this way the development of the country. Analysis of the published issues revealed the extent to which each periodical fulfilled its duties. For example, *Igazság (The Truth)* published eight denunciatory articles, six propaganda articles and seven editorials on the subject. The figures of *Világosság* daily paper broken down in the same way are 4, 8 and 6, respectively.[12]

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[7] *A Pravda szerint feladták függetlenségük nagyrészét a Marshall-tervhez hozzájáruló kisállamok* (*According to Pravda the states accepting Marshall-plan have given up their independence).* Világosság, 23rd July 1947; *A moszkvai rádió szerint Románia népe önerejéből építi újjá az ország gazdasági életét (According to Moscow Radio, the Romanian people are rebuilding the economy of the country by their own strength.* Erdély, 11th July 1947.

[8] *A Marshall-terv és az Egyesült Államokat közvetlenül fenyegető gazdasági válság (The Marshall-plan and the economic crisis directly threatening the United States of America.) Világosság*, 13th October 1947.

[9] Világosság, 8th June 1947.

[10] Világosság, 13th June 1947.

[11] *A demokratikus közvélemény élesen bírálja Truman elnök kongresszusi beszédét.* (D*emocratic pubic opinion sharply denounces the speech of president Truman delivered in the Congress).* Erdély, 15th March 1947.

[12] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 3 Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj, file no. 205/33. 13-16.

The report of the party analyzed in March 1948 the way in which the press mobilized the people to take part in the elections of the National Assembly. The literary weekly *Utunk* was severely criticized as the only journal under the influence of the party which did not prepare a special issue for the event. The report also condemned the fact that in an issue commemorating the centenary of the 1848 revolution, the Hungarian references were exaggerated.[13] This last judgment proves that the prohibition of articles dealing with the national identity of minorities was already part of the policy towards the press that would become programmatic in the sixties.

The reports prepared in 1948 at the Kolozs (Cluj) county party committee reveal the fact that most of the criticism among Hungarian-language daily papers was incurred by *Világosság*, which did not take part actively enough in the ideological campaigns. However, the report of September identified the improvement of the newspaper's activities, which was due to the purging of "dubious elements" from the editorial staff.[14]

The literary review *Utunk* became the instrument of political propaganda, fulfilling its task of transmitting ideological requirements to the writers. However, the party ideologists frequently criticized the literary review: an article published in the theoretical journal *Lupta de clasă (The Class Struggle)* accused the editorial staff of neglecting both the Marxist-Leninist education of young writers and the artistic and cultural activity of working people, as well as having a wrong attitude with regard to subjects like patriotism and proletarian internationalism (as Gonda Gheorghe noted in an article of *Lupta de clasă*, January-March 1949). The editor-in-chief Gábor Gaál reacted by publishing a self-critical article, admitting the errors and undertaking to reorganize the sector of literary criticism according to the directives. (As Gábor Gaál noted in an article of Utunk on August 20, 1949)

The control over the local newspapers fell on the local departments of the General Directorate of Press and Printing. The activity of the office in Cluj was divided according to four main fields: 1. Daily papers. 2. Weekly papers. 3. Announcements. 4. Invitation cards. The censors of Hungarian papers were also assigned.[15] Besides the censorship carried out by the Directorate, newspapers were also constantly controlled by the Press Departments of party committees. The reports of the Cluj county department reveal that this control included both preventive and subsequent censorship. However, the number of competent cadres was insufficient to examine all the publications. The report of November 1949 proves that only main articles were read.[16]

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[13] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 3 Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj, file no. 205/33. 17–22.

[14] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 3, file no. 205/33. 55–56.

[15] Hungarian newspapers were censored by comrades Albert, Tímár, Munkácsy and Erős.

[16] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13 Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj, file no. 220/49. 39–47.

The report of the Directorate concerning the period November-December 1951 reveals the ideological errors found in the periodicals during the enforcement of preventive censorship. An article in *Világosság* contravened the official considerations viewpoint regarding the class struggle: it reported that saboteur kulaks were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment for the concealment of food. The censor opined that the inflicted penalty was not severe enough and deleted the number of months. In issue no. 8. of the reformed confessional journal *Református Szemle (Reformed Review),* the presentation of class struggle was faulty as well, because the author used a quotation from the Bible. A caricature in issue no. 47 of the literary weekly *Utunk* should have portrayed American imperialism, but the censor considered it to be improper and the page was reprinted.[17] One of the main responsibilities of the censors working at the Directorate was to ensure the accurate publication of articles about party leadership in accordance with the rules of propaganda. Therefore the censorship department objected to the 18th December issue of the daily paper *Igazság*, because the telegram sent to comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was not visible enough and the format of heading letters was too small.[18]

The editorials, ideological articles, and writings treating the party life and other sensitive subjects had to be produced 48 hours before printing at the Propaganda and Agitation Department, being supervised by the secretary responsible for the particular subject.[19] A close cooperation was established between the local office of the Directorate and the Press Department of the communist party in order to avoid the publication of improper materials. During the meetings organized each ten days, censors advised the party organ of the errors and sub-edited articles and the most important ideological aspects.[20] This fact shows that the competent party committee department was the first filter inside the communist press system, followed by the control enforced at the General Directorate of Press and Printing.

The parallel control effected by the party organs was considerably influenced from January 1951 by the Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party with regard to the activity of the daily paper *Scânteia,* a document that could be considered a basic instrument for press control. (Denize and Mata 2005, 369–379) The resolution presented a thorough analysis of the Romanian press system and determined its long-term objectives. It pointed out that *Scânteia* newspaper, as a faithful mouthpiece of the party, gained the reliance and sympathy of the working people: in 1950, the paper presented extensive materials about the fight for peace, considering

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[17] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 184. 111–115.
[18] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 184. 124–152.
[19] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 181. 3–7.
[20] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 180. 114.

especially the internationalist, patriotic and anti-imperialist education of the masses. Its main purpose was to enhance affection for the glorious comrade Stalin and to strengthen trust in the Soviet Union. The newspaper therefore continuously propagated the successes of Soviet communism and the peace endeavors of the Soviet Union, underlining the importance of the assistance granted to Romania by its huge eastern neighbor.

The second part of the resolution dealt with the deficiencies and set out the concrete tasks. The paper was criticized because it had not presented the class struggle profoundly enough, had not propagated the methods of socialist economic planning, and had not covered the actual issues of the party activities, as well as the problems arising in the field of culture, especially in literature and art.

The directive character of the resolution is indicated by the fact that Hungarian papers also reflected on the stipulated tasks.[21] An article published in the *Romániai Magyar Szó* laid down the main duties of the following period. The list includes subjects like, "cultivation of the spirit of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism in the masses and especially in the younger generation" and "mobilization to outdo the five-year plan and electrification plan".

Proceeding from the text of the resolution, regional committee of the communist party adopted various methods in order to accomplish political control over the newspapers. The papers were directed to develop editorial plans according to specific questions like the fight for peace and denunciation of imperialist forces. The plans were submitted to the Propaganda and Agitation Department, and after critical observations were made and the plan was reshaped, the secretary of the regional committee authorized them. Plans related to important events such as the 22nd January commemoration of the death of V. I. Lenin were presented previously to the regional committee.[22]

The editors must take part in the party committee meetings, as well as in the consultations organized by the Propaganda and Agitation Department. Moreover, the editors-in-chief were obliged to present short reports about their activity and were provided with instructions on the current issues. In order to enable the journalist to directly follow the standpoint of the Soviet Communist Party, the editorial offices organized Russian language courses, which were compulsory for all staff members. The report of the party committee of Cluj noticed with satisfaction in 1951 that five "comrades" working at the *Igazság* newspaper has already enough Russian literacy to read – by means of a dictionary – the official Soviet organ, the *Pravda*.[23]

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[21] *Sajtónk feladatai a békéért és a szocializmus építéséért vívott harcban* (*The role of the press in the fight for the construction of socialism*). Romániai Magyar Szó, 29th March 1951.

[22] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 180. 67–82.

[23] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 180. 67-82.

The report of *Igazság* daily paper revealed in 1951 that due to the direction of the party, the political combativeness of the gazette has increased, especially in the field of arts and literature. It is worthwhile mentioning that the beginning of the 50s was the period of the aggressive spreading of socialist realism in arts, as the unique creation method accepted in the communist society. The report also mentioned that the paper published a series of articles denouncing the landowner rich peasants, called kulaks, as class enemies of the people. The campaign was in fact part of the propaganda for the collectivization of agriculture.[24]

In the meanwhile, the regulations concerning state secrets had directly modified the general principles of press censorship in the early 50s. The provisions for Romania were adapted according to the Soviet Penal Code issued in 1950, and practical considerations regarding the press were drawn up taking into account the Soviet experience in journalism. These provisions contributed to the more active spreading of economic propaganda, taking into account that production efficiency was practically unverifiable in the absence of accurate data on the national economy.

Accordingly, the Cluj office of the Directorate banned from newspaper articles all the data and information concerning Romanian industrial capacities and production technologies. Reports of the period December 1951 – January 1952 reveal several cases when the institution of pre-censorship had to intervene to prevent the publication of forbidden data. For example, the daily paper *Világosság* related in detail the innovation implemented at the Triumf plant and mentioned the exact location and capacity of the water reservoir near Turda; from the 13th January issue of *Igazság* the number of readers registered in the library of Herbák János Leather and Shoe Works from Cluj was deleted because the data infers the number of employees working in the industrial unit.[25]

The end of the studied period can be considered the point when the activity of censorship department was maximally intertwined with the ideological requirements of the party. (Marino 2000, 68) It was a period when the ideology, censorship and propaganda became organic parts of the communist regime creating a centralized system that was efficient enough to subject the whole society to the process of indoctrination. In this way the objective truth and reality ceased to exist: the fact existed only in the way in which the party intended them to be perceived.

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[24] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 181. 146.
[25] Nationals Archives of Cluj county, fond no. 13, file no. 184. 124–152.

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THE EFFICIENCY OF THE NORMS PROTECTING THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS ON THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF JOURNALISTS

SÎNZIANA-MARIA JURĂU[*]

ABSTRACT. Romania was characterized the last years by an evolution of the legal protection of public image and reputation of public officials. The current paper assesses the efficiency of previous legal norms regulating the issues, from the standpoint of their dynamic evolution (Penal Code, New Civil Code). The merit of the paper resides in the fact that it introduces a form of measuring the efficiency of the legal norms by creating a test similar to the DIT (Defining Issues Test), adapted to the Romanian reality, and it presents the results of this evaluation concluding on the moral development of journalists as a response to the regulations that were enforced or just introduced these past years.

Key words: public image, public officials, moral development, legal protection

Moral development and DIT. An introduction

Piaget defines morality as "an individual's respect for the rules of social order and justice" and its ability to formulate judgements on what is "right" and what is "wrong" accordingly. Justice is characterized, in the interpretation of this researcher, by the interest in ensuring equality and reciprocity between individuals.

Moral consciousness is represented by a system of rules and norms that recommend an adaptation of the human behaviour according to the values of society. Given this definition, moral norms appear to be a set of prescribed conduct requirements that shape inter-human relations. Moral conduct comprises thus all actions taken by the individuals, that reflect their evaluation in terms of moral norms, as they consider that they are regarded by society.

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Moral development can be defined in broad terms as the process by which the individual is positioned differently over time while facing ethical dilemmas similar or identical, in part because of the mental development that occurs over time and in part as a response to the social-cultural environment the individual has been exposed to[1].

Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg are regarded as the most influential scholars of the theory that postulates the development of moral consciousness in stages. Both researchers have argued that moral behaviour depends on how the individual perceives himself in relation to society. As a rational actor, the individual will decide on moral dilemmas in a logical and reasonable manner in relation to his previous life experience and based upon how it relates to society at the time of decision, which makes the development of moral thought dependent on the development of how the individual relates to ethics and society in general.

According to James Rest, one of Kohlberg's main contributions to the study of moral development is represented by the new attention given to the role of socialization in moral development. Thus, while his precursor, Piaget, regarded moral development as directly correlated with the process of socialization, and the learning process dependent on the acceptance of social and cultural norms and their internalization, with the individual adapting then his behaviour to comply with these rules, Kohlberg proposed as the starting point of his research the assumption that it is the individual and not the society the one that determines what is considered "right" and "wrong" because the individual is the one that gives an interpretation of the situations, the one that creates moral interpretations relating to social events and the one that will take action based on his moral judgments. Kohlberg's plea for greater attention paid to the study of how individuals come to form moral judgments led to further development in this direction.

The initial study under which Kohlberg has developed his theory involved subjects solving a set of ethical and moral dilemmas by choosing to recommend an ethical action, and subsequently studying the explanations given by the subjects while relating to their motivations. Based on the answers obtained Kohlberg postulated three levels of moral development, each comprising two stages and transitional periods.

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[1] Wilkinis, Lee, Coleman Renita, *The moral media. How jurnalists reason about ethics*, 10 Industrial Avenue, New Jersey, USA, 2005, p. 3.

Table 1. Moral development stages[2] according to Kohlberg

		7.	Moral principles based upon a cosmic perspective
III.	Post-conventional,	6.	Morality of individual principles of conscience
	Autonomous	5.	Morality of contract, of individual rights, and of democratically accepted law
	Principled morality		
II.	Conventional,	4.	Authority maintaining morality
	Conforming morality	3.	Good boy morality of maintaining good relations, approval of others
I	Pre-conventional.	2.	Naïve instrumental hedonism
		1.	Punishment and obedience orientation

Kohlberg's theory and experiment have been and still are very influential, as many researchers tried to follow his method in order to obtain similar results. The Defining Issues Test (DIT) is the result of such an effort. Like Piaget and Erikson, Kohlberg assumes that moral thinking develops in stages, hypothesis which is reflected by the DIT. One element that distinguishes and individualizes Kohlberg's work is the connection that it attempts to draw between moral development, intellectual development and education. In addition to this, the DIT includes the opportunity to study perception and orientation on rights and obligations and their impact on the moral decisions from classic philosophical perspectives such as utilitarianism (social good for the greatest number of people) and ethical perspective, whilst having regard to the theory that postulates that the ethical actions of the individual are the result of his perception of the idea of duty rather than the individuals' character.

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[2] Stig Ingebrigtsen, Ove Jakobsen, *Moral development of the economic actor* in Ecological Economics, volume 68/2009, p. 2777–2784, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800909001360.

DIT was created in the 70s and was used to test over 20,000 people from various professions, including doctors, nurses and inmates, gaining the reputation of being the most commonly used tool for quantitative measurement of moral development.

Research Design

The purpose of the current research was to identify the moral development stage of journalists by assessing how they relate to the professional ethical dilemmas they have faced in the last five years and the recent legal developments that took place.

The analysis of the deontological provisions and current regulatory framework on one hand, and the analysis of the law proposals and self-regulatory proposals that occurred in the past three years on the other hand, indicate that the profession is perceived very differently by activists and by the national legislator. Whilst NGOs that have traditionally supported independent media and freedom of expression have proposed a form of self-regulation as a viable solution (which means that most journalists would observe the reasoning and motivations that characterize post-conventional level of moral thinking development), the legislator indicated, through the legal proposals based on sanctions and restriction, that it supposes that journalists would respond best at stimuli that are characteristic to the pre-conventional level of moral development.

The research aims to serve for a better understanding of the professional environment and provide a potential future database for the assessment of legislative or ethical solutions that attempt to regulate the profession.

The research hypotheses tested were:

1: There is a significant correlation between the type of media in which the journalist is active and his current moral development stage.

2: There is a significant correlation between his work experience and his moral development stage.

3: There is a correlation between the journalists' education and his moral development stage.

The research method was chosen based on the analysis of the current legal and ethical framework, as well as on the analysis of the regulatory proposals of self-regulation, while observing the major sanctions applied by control organisms such as the National Audiovisual Council, court practices and professional self-regulatory forums. After identifying a number of legal and ethical dilemmas of the Romanian journalist nowadays, we created a test similar to the DIT (Defining issues test), which sought to reveal how journalists relate to each set of dilemmas.

Sample characteristics

An estimated number of 1000 journalists were invited to participate to the research anonymous by filling online a questionnaire about "current journalistic ethics". Journalists were informed that the research aims to establish how they relate to current ethics rules. Newsrooms from the North-West area of the country were contacted by telephone and asked for a valid email address and a consent to participate in the survey, while for other regions the database provided by the Centre for Independent Journalism was used.

The research was performed online on approximately 10% of the initial sample, on Romanian journalists representing the written, online and audiovisual media out of which 52% of the respondents were men and 48% were women. The top three counties in terms of respondents in the current sample were Cluj with 31.6% of the respondents, Bihor with 15.8% and 9.5% in Hunedoara. Out of the total number of respondents, 52.6% of them had graduated from a specialized higher degree (that includes having a bachelor in Journalism, Media or TV production or Cinematography), followed by 46.3% that have graduated from other social sciences studies. Some of the journalists that responded to the questionnaire followed specialised legal or ethical education (23.2% and 22.1% respectively).

The criteria used in order to assess their work experience were the type of media, the number of years of work experience, and the position occupied within the team. We observed that the majority of the respondents were working for written media (66.3%), followed by television (20%) and radio (15.8%). Out of the total of respondents, 51.6% worked also for the online environment. An outstanding majority of the sample (49.5%) had over 5 years previously working experience in the media, followed by 33.7% with 2-5 years of working experience and 16.8% of the sample with less than 2 years of working experience. The majority of the respondents were journalists that did not occupy a management position (52.6%), followed by 27.6% of the journalists that were occupying a top management position (editors in chief and deputy editor in chiefs) and 20% of the journalists that occupied middle-management position (coordinating editors, editors, other "intermediate" positions).

We found the sample to be relevant in the current context, as the economical crisis caused a lot of human resources restructuring, with the more experienced journalists continuing working and the less experienced being either fired or witnessing serious wage cuts. But what was even more important for this questionnaire was the fact that a significant number of the respondents had more than 5 years of work experience, which means that they had been exposed to all the major debates that the Romanian media had in the past years.

The Research Case. Its Alignment with the Research's Scope

The current research case has been construed to illustrate two serious allegations that were brought against media as an industry and media professionals in recent years.

In 2008, during a reply speech held in his personal capacity of *pater familias*, president Traian Basescu accused the media of actively promoting "jukebox analysts" that repeat what they are required by the mogul, just as jukeboxes that are fed money repeat the same pre-selected tunes. The media trusts attacked were Intact, Reality TV, Pro TV and TVR. Two years later private recordings of Sorin Ovidiu Vantu (local media trust owner) were presented as evidence in a trial and turned into headlines as they reflected his shocking vision on freedom of press and of the journalist, as an employee. His orders aimed at creating a company with "a very efficient design", to meet the economic challenges faced nowadays, where the owner has an absolute power over the decisions made regarding the editorial content, without "jokes like editorial independence". The necessity to test for the perception and common practice related to the media ownership control over the editorial content arose from these prominent media-scandals.

The proposed research-case illustrates a possible libel offense, as it used to be regulated by the Penal Code provisions, a possible violation of the right to human dignity that could cause moral damages claims under the New Civil Code, as well as potential violations of Journalists' Ethics Code, taking into account the principle of accuracy in providing information to the public and the necessity to take all possible steps to verify subjective information, doubled by the respect for sources of information who wish to remain confidential. The situation presented in this case intended to reflect an extreme hypothesis that is disadvantageous both ethically and legally, and that challenges the journalist to determine and prioritize his moral and legal standing for the matter, as well as his loyalties.

The Research Case

A source purporting to be a „concerned citizen" calls the newsroom and asks to speak with journalist X, telling him that he has compromising information about a politician that he can provide only in a face to face meeting. Although initially reluctant, journalist X is encouraged by colleagues as well as the editor-in-chief who has received a call from media owner. During the meeting the source refuses to reveal its identity and o indicate how he came into possession of information. The source reveals a potential offence of influence-trafficking of which the politician might be accused during a criminal investigation, and reminds the journalist that the same politician avoided prosecution in an embezzlement investigation.

After taking all possible steps to verify the information provided by the source, the reporter finds on file the embezzlement accusations, but no evidence relating to the influence-trafficking offence.

Should the journalist publish or not the information received?

The analysis

In order to determine how journalists relate to the issues presented by this case without being influenced by potential answers prepared, they were asked to write a short essay explaining the motivation behind their disclosure recommendation. These essays were then analyzed based on the content analysis method in an attempt to determine if there are recurrent values that prevail for journalists and how they relate to each other in the decision making context.

After writing the motivational essay the journalists were the required to grade on a Likert scale how motivating they would find for their recommendation to publish or not the information received a set of statements that were designed to reflect the six stages of moral development. The following answers that were correlated with the six stages have been proposed for evaluation:

Table 2. The correlation between the levels and the stages of moral development and the incentives and suggested motivational sentences

Level	Stage	Incentive	Motivational sentence
Pre-conventional	Punishment and obedience	Punishment (avoidance of)	The publication of information that cannot be verified and that are liable to harm the public image or dignity of a person, shall be punished.
Pre-conventional	Naive instrumental hedonism	Reward	The publication for which the journalist is working for will reward him with a bonus.
Conventional	Morality based on interpersonal relationships	Position within the group (pursuit of recognition based upon observing the norms)	The other journalists of the newsroom would do the same without hesitation, and we all have to have the same standing on this.
Conventional	Morality of order and social relationships	Duty to observe the norms and preserve the social institutons	Ethical norms support/ suggest this decision.
Post-conventional	Observation of the individual rights and social contract	Social contract, civil duties	Journalist' decision is based on the relationship between the public's right to be accurately informed, respect to the public image of the person and the

Level	Stage	Incentive	Motivational sentence
			principle of factual based- information (information whose authenticity is proven).
Post-conventional	Self-chosen ethical principles	Own beliefs	The journalist decides as reason and conscience dictates him.

For each Likert scale was also made a chart to allow analysis of the extent to which journalists considered motivating statements.

Content analysis of the motivational essays

Table 3. Subjects' motivations correlated with the years of work experience in the media

Work experience	No.	Yes, because the crime the politician is accused of is a serious one	Yes, but only with extra evidence for the current accusation	Yes, but only if the politicians' standing on the accusation is included	No, because there aren't any evidence for the accusations	No, because it would damage the politicians' reputation and public image	No, because the source of the information cannot be verified	No, because this would mean committing a libel offense	No, because the journalists' should wait for the situation to evolve
Less than 2 years	1	1	5		7	1	3		
2-5 years		2	7	2	10	5	13	6	1
More than 5 years	4	5	14	6	24		26	1	1

Regarding the segment under two years of experience, the most common concern expressed is the lack of evidence, most of the respondents tilting to not publish material that is not properly maintained.

We find the same concern and among respondents with up to five years of experience, but those who identified as uncertain or potential source unreliable, and therefore having a potential problem are the majority.

A similar proportional distribution occurs when respondents have over five years experience, most saying the material should not be released because the source is uncertain, followed by those who did not publish material due to lack of evidence.

Identification of potential offenses committed libel occurs mainly in the segment 2-5 years, which would lead us to suppose that this segment would be characterized by a significantly higher percentage of respondents who are in the first stage of development thinking based on compliance with moral rules to avoid punishment.

Results reported based on Likert scale

1. *The publication of information that cannot be verified and that are liable to harm the public image or dignity of a person, shall be punished.*

Table 4

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	5	5.3%
2	12	12.6%
3	9	9.5%
4	13	13.7%
5	56	58.9%

A rate of about 73% of respondents considered extremely motivating the statement certifying the existence of a "punishment" if the journalist would choose to publish information that could damage the public image of a person. The existence of a "punishment" attached to the unethical behaviour appears to be very clearly understood by respondents and the certainty of the punishment seems to be represented as sufficiently high as to cause a strong desire to avoid it.

2. *The publication for which the journalist is working for will reward him with a bonus.*

Table 5

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	48	50.5%
2	20	21.1%
3	19	20%
4	7	7.4%
5	1	1.1%

Receiving a potential reward from publishing the information is not considered motivational enough for 70% of respondents. According to O.H. Mowrer's research behavior closest in time to the reward is learned best, as "small" rewards may encourage a certain short-term behaviour, even if it

will produce a "great punishment" in the distant future. Noting the journalists' answers and knowing these factors we may suppose either that the rewards are not sufficiently frequent and proximate to encourage behaviour that would deviate from the rules of conduct, or the rewards are not perceived as being sufficiently reliable and certain as to achieve a real cost – benefit analysis.

3. *The other journalists of the newsroom would do the same without hesitation, and we should all have the same standing on this.*

Table 6

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	35	36.8%
2	21	22.1%
3	19	20%
4	8	8.4%
5	12	12.6%

58% of respondents considered to be less motivating to adopt a conduct based on a similar ethical decision of a colleague. A possible explanation of this can be the "certainty" of punishment, as it is applied individually. Also, given that "editorial practice" is not a mitigating circumstance but a potential aggravating factor for a potential lawsuit, the consensus of the profession has little impact on the final decision, considering the certainty of the existence of a penalty for a conduct that would deviate the rules.

4. *It is a difficult decision, but the ethical norms support/ suggest this decision.*

Table 7

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	10	10.5%
2	12	12.6%
3	13	13.7%
4	20	21.1%
5	40	42.1%

63% of respondents support the decision they deem "correct" from the ethical standpoint, regardless of the opinions and encouragements of the colleagues, of bonuses or other potential benefits, and regardless of the penalty provided by law. Out of the total respondents, 42.1% considered this statement as "extremely motivating" on the Likert scale, while the 21.1% considered this information as "motivating".

5. *Journalist's decision is based on the relationship between the public's right to be accurately informed, respect to the public image of the person and the principle of factual-based information (information whose authenticity is proven).*

Table 8

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	4	4.2%
2	2	2.1%
3	9	9.5%
4	16	16.8%
5	64	67.4%

84% of respondents evaluated as "highly motivating" or "motivating" the statement that indicated as motivating adopting a behaviour prescribed by the code of ethics. Out of the total number of respondents, 67.4% considered the statement as "extremely motivating", while 16.8% of the respondents considered the statement "motivating". It is possible that this preference for the decision prescribed by the codes of conduct is caused by the certainty that such a decision is the only one that seems to guarantee to keep the journalist safely away of any negative consequences that could arise from publishing an "unverified" material. We note a correlation between the importance that respondents attach to the first motivating statement that reflects the moral development stage characterized by fear of punishment and the fifth stage of moral development characterized by reference to social contract as it is understood by the respondent.

6. *The journalist should decide as reason and conscience dictate him.*

Table 9

Degree of motivation	Number of respondents	Percent
1	10	10.5%
2	9	9.5%
3	19	20%
4	28	29.5%
5	29	30.5%

59% of respondents would "advise" the journalist to base his decision on what their "reasoning and conscience" indicates, on the one hand, the respondents' willingness to evaluate independently potential action paths and, on the other hand, their willingness to implement the decision they deem appropriate and timely reported to the situation evaluated. 30.5% of respondents described the statement as "extremely motivating", while 29.5% of respondents

described the statement as "motivating". Their percentage remains significant, though smaller than the percentage of respondents who considered motivating the statement characterizing the fifth stage of moral development.

In conclusion of this stage of the research, the respondents were asked to rate on a top 3 scale the motivations that they considered to be "the most motivating" for themselves.

Table 10

Motivations	Top choices
Journalist's decision is based on the relationship between the public's right to be accurately informed, respect to the public image of the person and the principle of factual-based information (information whose authenticity is proven).	1
The publication of information that cannot be verified and that are liable to harm the public image or dignity of a person, shall be punished.	2
It is a difficult decision, but the ethical norms support/ suggest this decision.	3
The journalist should decide as reason and conscience dictate him.	4
The other journalists of the newsroom would do the same without hesitation, and we should all have the same standing on this.	5
The publication for which the journalist is working for will reward him with a bonus.	6

As the previous observations, made by analysing the respondents' evaluations of the statements on the Likerts' scale, were predicting, most journalists declare themselves motivated by the desire to follow a fair balance between the public's right to be properly informed and the right to reputation and public image of a person. Thus, the motivational statement that reflects the post-conventional stage of moral development (based on the respect for the social contract and the stakeholders) was top rated as a first choice.

On second place the respondents rated the motivational statement that illustrated the first pre-conventional moral development stage, namely compliance with rules in order to avoid punishment for their violation. The result is, once again, not surprising, given the recent legal history according to which the current case would be assigned to slander and proof of truth could not be made, thus leading to the conviction of journalist if he who would decide to make public the information "the source" provided with.

The respondents placed on third place the motivational statement that illustrated the second stage of moral development, thus advising the journalist to adopt an attitude independently from the punishment or the reward consequently attached to the action.

Considering the legal provisions that regulate the right to reputation and public image in the New Romanian Civil Code, that establish claimant's obligation to prove the moral damages suffered it is likely that the future might bring, depending on the practice courts, a significant change in the motivations of the journalists to publish or not certain information.

### *The moral development stage of the respondents – first level – pre-conventional stage (punishment and obedience orientation)*

The percentage of journalists that placed themselves (through their answers) at the first stage of moral development (pre-conventional) of is almost equal to that of journalists who placed themselves in the first stage of the post-conventional level.

Diagram 1. Structure diagram illustrating journalists' moral development stage (main stage)
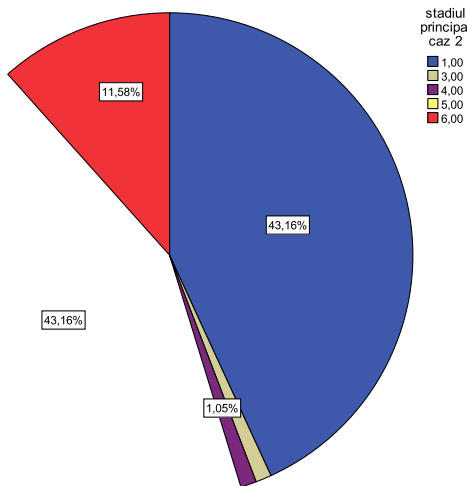
A small percentage is formed by journalists who found motivational the statements illustrating the conventional stage of moral thinking (1.08%). We can thus observe the polarization of journalists, from the motivational point of view, between those who base their decisions on legal and ethical provisions, animated by the desire to avoid a potential punishment, on the one hand, and those who base their decisions on their own beliefs, formed by a weighing process between the rights of all interested parties and the consequences of their decisions on stakeholders.

Diagram 2. Structure diagram illustrating journalists' moral
development stage (secondary stage)
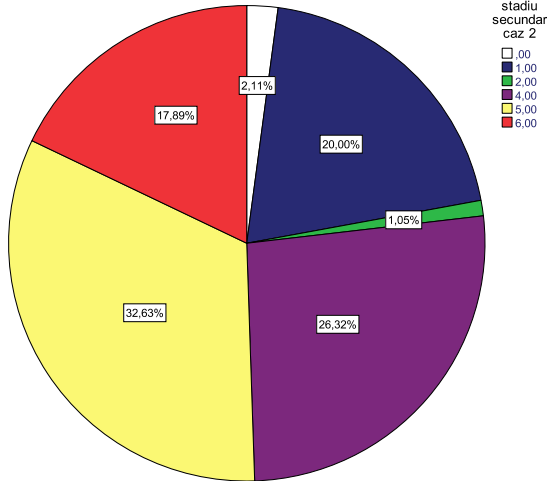
*The analysis of journalists' moral development stage correlated
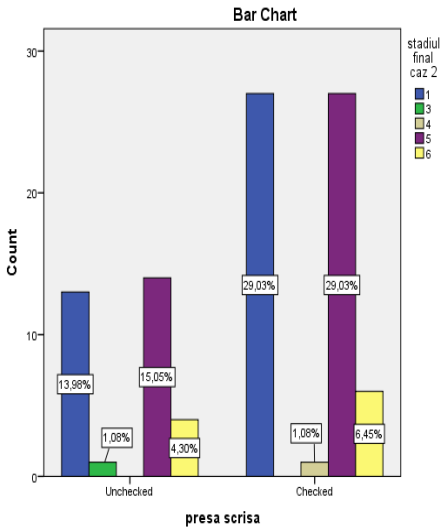with the type of media that employs them*

Fig. 1. Moral development stages histogram
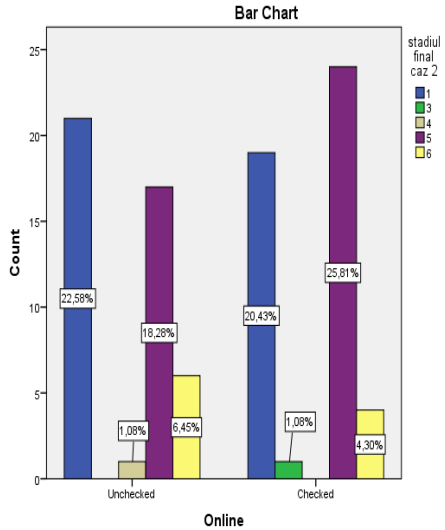for journalists employed by written media

Fig. 2. Moral development stages histogram
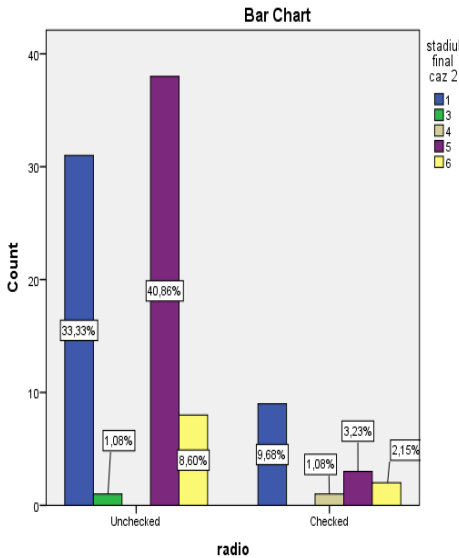for journalists employed by online media

Fig. 3. Moral development stages histogram for journalists employed by radio
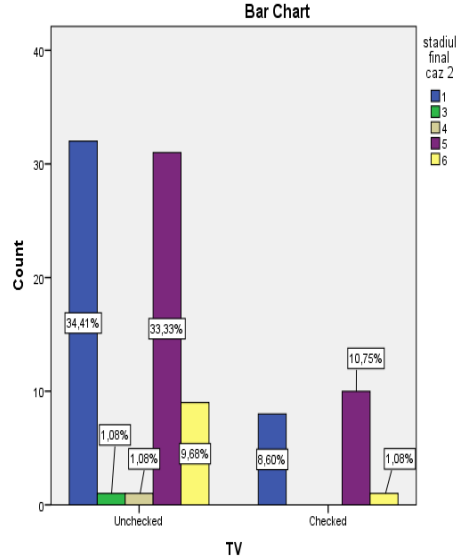
Fig. 4. Moral development stages histogram for journalists employed by televisions

On the bar-charts we observe significant differences between the moral development stage of journalists depending on the type of media employed them. There is a clear and significant difference between print and online journalists, with the "print journalists" that are more willing to follow what they assume to be the behavior expectations of the members of the profession, while the online journalists declare themselves more motivated by the possibility of obtaining a bonus. We assume that the reasoning behind this is the fact that journalists working for printed media are part of a professional group with more frequent interactions (editorial meetings, press conferences) where they are more exposed than the online journalists both to the ethical rules and legal standards and to the approval or disapproval of the group.

Significant differences were noted between journalists working for radio and television as well, with journalists working for television stations being significantly more interested to adopt a decision that complied with legal and ethical standards, paying attention in the same time to stakeholders' interest and to the consequences of publishing the information. Therefore the majority of the journalists working for televisions placed themselves (through their answers) in the fifth stage of moral development.

The analysis of journalists' moral development stage correlated with their education
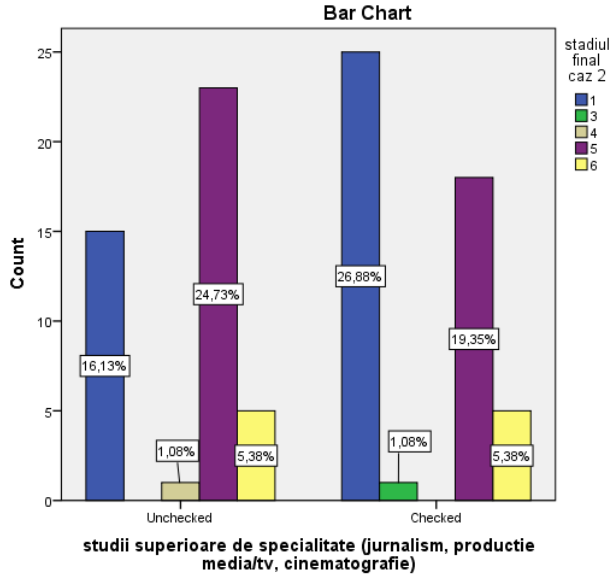

Fig. 5. Moral development stages histogram for journalists that have a specialized higher education training
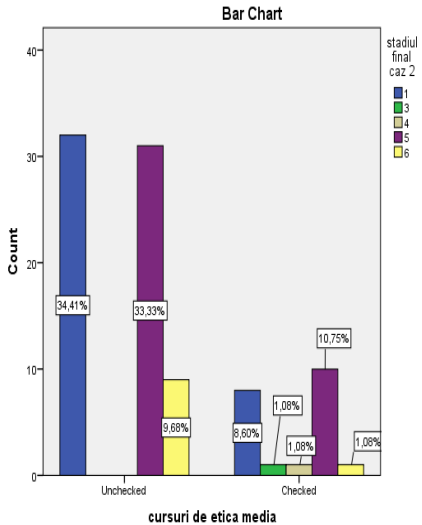

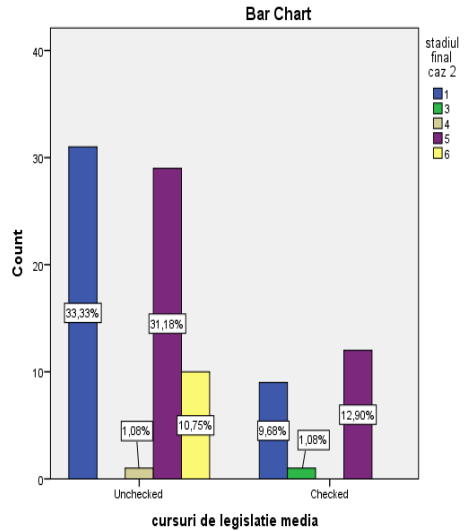**Fig. 6.** Moral development stages histogram for journalists that followed media ethics training

Fig. 7. Moral development stages histogram for journalists that followed media legislation training

The respondents are distributed differently depending on the type of education followed. Journalists who had previous long-term specialized training are, in a significantly higher proportion, belonging to the first stage of development of moral reasoning. Unlike journalists who attended the media legislation classes, those who attended media ethics classes are predisposed to conform to what they identify as being the professional group to which they belong. In a preliminary analysis of the motivational essays we observed that journalists who attended media legislation classes regularly recommend that the article or the investigation shouldn't be made public as they seem to apply as an assessment criteria the answer to the question "is there a story?/is this news?". Since they conclude that the answer to this question is negative, they avoid committing an act that would not meet the ethical or legal standards. The degree of certainty that they obtain through this test seems to be the main reason for which they exhibit such a low interest in having the group approval for their decision.

The analysis of journalists' moral development stage correlated with their work experience
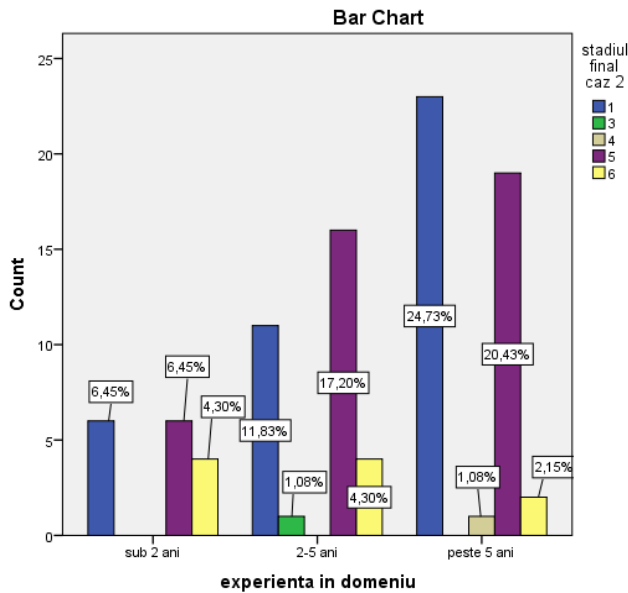

Fig. 8. Moral development stages histogram for journalists correlated with their previous work experience

Significant percentage differences can be noted by comparing responses recorded from journalists correlated with their previous work experience. These indicate that there may be a correlation between the legislative changes

in recent years and the "group" experiences accumulated. We have thus observed that most journalists that have over five years work experience are grouped in a significantly greater extent in the first stage of moral development as they were the ones most exposed to the effects of the laws regulating libel and slander and we can assume that they had the opportunity to learn, directly, the "risk" to expose themselves if they would publish poorly documented materials as the ones used to create our experimental moral dilemma. The relationship between the first stage and the fifth stage of moral development drops for journalists who have between two and five years experience and is equal for respondents with less than two years experience.

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RECENZII – BOOK REVIEWS

Arthur Asa Berger, *What objects mean. An Introduction to material culture*, Walnut Creek, California, Left Coast Press, 2009

I have chosen to write about this book because of the importance of understanding the world we live in. Researches on material culture represent a step in the effort to introduce us into a world populated with objects and ideas that influence our behavior and the relationship with other members of the society or of the groups we belong to. Following the results of different researches in the field, we remembered a definition able to clarify the term we will explain further. According to sociologists, "Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. These include homes, neighborhoods, cities, schools, churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products, stores, and so forth. All of these physical aspects of a culture help to define its members' behaviors and perceptions. For example, technology is a vital aspect of material culture in today's United States. American students must learn to use computers to survive in college and business…
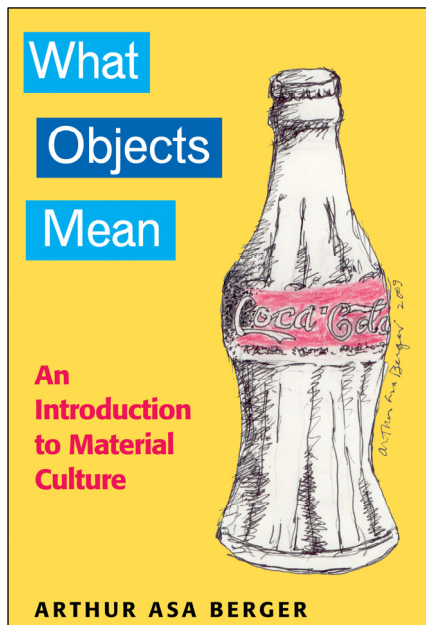
Non-material culture refers to the non-physical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions. For instance, the non-material cultural concept of religion consists of a set of ideas and beliefs about God, worship, morals, and ethics. These beliefs, then, determine how the culture responds to its religious topics, issues, and events.

When considering non-material culture, sociologists refer to several processes that a culture uses to shape its members' thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Four of the most important of these are symbols, language, values, and norms". (CliffsNotes.com. Material and Non-Material Culture. 9 Feb 2013.)

Arthur Asa Berger is professor emeritus of Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts at San Francisco State University. He is the author of numerous articles, reviews and books on mass-media, popular culture, humor, tourism and everyday life. His interest in material culture has the roots in his opinion that objects we consume have a central role that influence the

way people socialize into culture. This situation leaded to a deep research on how people make, exchange, and consumes the artifacts surrounding them.

The present book represents a continuation of the author's earlier work on material culture, *Bloom's Morning: Coffee, Comforters and the secret meaning of Everyday Life (1997)*. In this book, various artifacts where analyzed in order to study the relationship between them, morning rituals and social relations. In the semiotic manner of Roland Barthes, Berger teased social, cultural, mythic and attitudinal meanings of everyday objects and rituals of the American everyman. Named Leopold Bloom, after the hero of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, this ordinary man is the hero of the micro minimalist narratives that testify the impersonal, fragmented in small paces, centered on the objects and rituals we use to celebrate every morning. The anthropological and postmodern approach helps us decipher the meanings of the smallest gesture composing middle-class Americans' lives.

The new book on the same topic intends to introduce the students to material culture studies, being an introductory book that allows students to understand the basic ways in which common objects and artifacts can be studied. It is also a guide for students learning what objects can mean.

At the beginning of his book, the author felt the need to make a few clarifications referring to the terms used in his book, such as the definition of the terms *object* and *artifact* referring to the first part of the expression *material culture*, and his option to use them interchangeable. Also, he insists on the term *culture* and observes that Henry Pratt Fairchild noticed that culture is based on communication and its artifacts embody cultural values and achievements. Fairchild's definition suggests that „we can use artifacts to help us gain insights into the cultures that produced them, if we know how to interpret or "read" them. Material culture gives us a mean for a better understanding of the societies and cultures that produced the objects and used them." (Berger, 2009, p. 17).

Berger provides as an example the Sherlock Holmes hero (*The Blue Carbuncle,* 1892) who was able to discern interesting information about individuals surrounding him. Berger emphasized that Holmes' ability to examine and interpret material culture and his deductions about the individuals who own and use objects are based on clues offered by the objects, activities or identities that are reflections of the culture they live in. "The process of analyzing artifacts to find out about the cultures in which they were made works two ways: the objects tell you about the culture, and the culture tells you about the objects" (Berger, 2009, p. 20).

The discussion on the nature of Theory represents a pleading in the author's choice to use methodologies from various disciplines as a means of understanding the infinite avatars of material culture and to make sense of the world. Berger noticed that Meenaskshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (*Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks, 2001*) "definition of theory is useful because it points out the limitations that specific theories have but also calls attention to the value of theories in helping us to interpret the significance of specific objects and to find relationship among phenomena, that we might not have recognize without these theories. [...] Theories are like goggles that help determine the way we see the world, that point out our attention to certain things and that distract us from others." (Berger, 2009, p. 21-23). In addition to that, the author mentioned Nietzsche's perspective related approach "that involves recognizing the importance of different theories and methodologies to understand phenomena". Equally important is the lack of limitations when we try to interpret the world. Berger emphasized

Friedrich Nietzsche's clarification that interpretation is not an explanation but the introduction of meaning (*The Will to Power*, 1968). When talking about material culture, this approach means to look at life from multiple perspectives and the author considers that this is the only true perspective on things which can be recognized as a "psychological need to triumph over or dominate others, or what Nietzsche described as a will to power" (Berger, 2009, p. 24).

Semiotic approach to material culture resumes the author's suggestion that interpreting objects and rituals can teach us a great deal about the societies in which they are found. F. Saussure, Ch. Peirce, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Jonathan Culler's theory are used to clarify that from a semiotic perspective objects are signs or signifiers which we can interpret only if we have an amount of product knowledge and general knowledge (which we usually gain through media and advertising). Another important specification refers to searching for the way the objects function as signs and generate meaning to others. "From a semiotic perspective, nothing has meaning itself; an object's meaning always derives from the network of relations in which it is embedded. [...] When we come to connotations of Barbie Dolls then, we enter into the area of what these dolls symbolize about American culture, and society, their cultural, symbolic and mythic significance...Barbie Dolls have changed the way girls develop and profoundly affect relationships, and men and women". (Berger, 2009, p. 45)

Sociological analysis of material culture adopts the functionalist perspective pointing out the main aspects of it: functional/dysfunctional, non-functional, functional/alternative, manifest function/latent function. Maintaining or destabilizing the entity, as substitute of the original function, obvious or unconscious factors were applied in order to analyze the cell phones and infer that these devices have become ubiquitous and now play a major role in the social lives of young people all over the world. The sociological approach of material culture adopts Gans' opinion that in America there are a number of different popular cultures and elite cultures that can be explained as being cultural forms which express various values such as: art, design, literature, music, drama, criticism, television programs, films, furnishings, clothes, appliances, automobiles. Berger reminds us the five American taste cultures described by Herbert J. Gans, (*Popular Culture and High Culture*, 1974) selecting examples of material culture: High culture (socio-economic-cultural elites, creative types) – Primitive Art and abstract Expressionist Art, *New York Review of books*; Upper Middle Culture (executives, professionals, managers and spouses) – *Time*, *Harper's* Newsweek, *The New Yorker*, *Playboy*, *Vogue*; Lower Middle Vulture (older lower middle class people) - Hollywood modern furniture, confession magazines; Quasi-Folk Low Culture (service workers) – tabloids, comic books; Youth, Black and ethnic Cultures - Psychedelic and multimedia art, tie-dyed and unisex clothing, paraphernalia of drug culture (Berger, 2009, p. 57). Pleading in popular culture represents the acceptance of the aesthetic pluralism and of people's choices related to their interests, level of education and aesthetic sensibilities. People usually choose to buy and wear things that carry logos and other markers that give them a status of symbols and are indicators of the level of success we gain during our life. Also, these artifacts, being clothes, furniture, work of arts, automobiles, TV shows, films etc. may function as gratifications of the consumers. The gratifications can involve the individual's experience related to what is beautiful, entertaining, differentiating from others versus imitating others, but also affirming our aesthetic values by the objects we choose.

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The numerous objects we get during a lifetime develop strong emotional attachments to our possessions. From the Marxist Theory point of view, the needs to possess various objects are artificially imposed upon us by advertising agencies and have no guarantee to make us happier. On the contrary, the artifacts we possess are signifiers of the alienation we feel. Berger introduces in his demonstration Henri Lefebvre and Jean Baudrillard's opinions that advertising convinces us to buy the objects we do not really need (Baudrillard, *Le Systeme des objets*, 1968) and gives them value and status in people's eyes (Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, 1971). Berger also presents the protestant ethic that supported the development of capitalism (Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1958) which leaded to a passion to possess objects that dominate western life and has reached its highest level. Related to various facets of advertising, another useful opinion mentioned in the book reminded us that fashion can be understood to deal not only with new clothing styles (Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Fashion*). Considering fashion more broadly it means to deal with the development of new models and new versions of the artifacts we use. The problem is the loose of distinctiveness from other new versions that replace the old one. The differences between models and their copies refer to the impact of mass production on objects and were described as the loss of *Aura* in mass produced objects (Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1968). The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being embedded in the fabric of tradition; he argues not the emancipation of the work of art from ritualistic reproduction, but the absence of the *aura* in reproductions. This concept was applied by Berger to all manner of artifacts, especially name brand, which

is attached to objects and is the real purpose of purchasing products, even if the object is one of the versions of the original model of cell phones, handbags, sunglasses or other goods that have attached a logo or the creator's name of the original model. The author concludes that this situation is an indicator of a cultural swing from modernist thought which values authenticity to postmodern thought which mixes styles and adopts the pastiche as a cultural dominant (Berger, 2009, p. 78).

Applying Cultural Theory in order to study material culture, the author takes into account Stuart Hall's explanation related to phenomena called "cultural turn", which emphasized the importance of meaning to the definition of culture. According to this clarification, culture is not so much a set of things as it is a process, a set of practices, and it means the production and the exchange of meanings between the members of a society or group (Hall, *Representation: Cultural representation and signifying Practices*, 1997). Consequently, Berger proposes to focus on the meanings that people give to objects, their changing meanings and their research from varied points of view. The role culture plays in the creation and use of different cultural artifacts is shaped by cultural codes that work in different cultures and subcultures (Clotaire Rapaille, *The Cultural Code: An Ingenious Way to Understand Why People Around the World Live and Buy As They Do*, 2006). From the anthropological point of view, cultural codes determined our attitudes towards things and the way we use them (we can mention the way we use food, automobiles, or reactions is related to a pleasant or unpleasant thing or emotion). A different perspective on the same problem (Mary Douglas, "In Defense of Shopping" in Pasi Falk, Colin Campbell, *The Shopping Experience,* 1997) shows that our membership of different groups or lifestyles (elitist, individu-

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alist, egalitarian or fatalist one) dictates our choice to purchase things. Our behavior and our consumption pattern are shaped not by personal taste, but more often is a decision based on the cultural lifestyle we belong to.

The unconscious choices to possess things and the way to use them are camouflaged in artifacts of material culture that can be recognized in modern versions of ancient myths and in our behavior that can be linked to the old pattern to live according to the god's journey on the earth. Berger's explanation is based on Mircea Eliade's theory of the "Sacred camouflaged in Profane", which testified that myth can be found behind the various artifacts we use, even if we may not recognized them (Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 1961). Berger concluded that "We must also keep in mind that an object has different meanings and valuations in different cultures, that the *figure* takes its meaning from the *ground* in which is it is found" (Berger, 2009, p. 91).

From the archaeological point of view, the meaning of things depends on the context they exist. For archaeologists, objects do not exist in a void, but in a context that helps understanding how they were used by the people who possessed them. Also, they take into account the social and cultural roots and the chain of action that generated artifacts. The modifications of these objects by the natural or cultural processes help researchers understand past and contemporary objects from their creation through various modifications and the way the people use them (Vincent M. Lamota, Michael B. Schiffer, *Archaeology: The Key Concepts*, 2005). Berger noticed that all theories derived from a careful examination of the objects, their context, production, distribution, use and transformation in time. More than that and very important for the author, cognitive archaeology (Colin Renfrew, Ezra B. W. Zubrow, *The ancient Mind: elements of Cognitive archaeology*, 1994) represents an inferential method to a better understanding of how to analyze contemporary objects and it can be used by students of modern material culture.

In conclusion, we can say that in the book we bring to the reader's attention, Berger presents the methods and the concepts that can be used to interpret material culture. The author uses concepts from various disciplines, a combination of Freudian psychoanalytic, semiotic and sociological, economic, cultural and archaeological approach that can provide a broader perspective on material culture. The first two parts explained the relevant ideas and concepts of the theories that facilitate a multidisciplinary approach to material culture and also offered a detailed analysis of a large number of objects and artifacts in their environment. He showed how they demonstrate ideas like authenticity, gender, globalization, religion, technology, transformation, reality, representation and identity. In the third part the author offers learning games that require applying the methods of analysis already learned, games which can be played in groups or can be assigned as homework. The practical value of this book consists of analyses of very well chosen aspects of our everyday lives, but is also completed with advices about the participation at playing the games he proposed in his book. The book presents a very attractive perspective on numerous things surrounding us, the way we use them, the hidden attitudes and believes that determine our behavior and lifestyle and our deeper understanding of the human being.

ELENA ABRUDAN

Elena Abrudan, *Visual Culture. Concepts & Contexts*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu Lăpuș, 2012

We live in a world that is saturated by visual artifacts. Regardless of our personal intents we are either consumers or creators or, quite probably, both. From the minute we wake up in the morning we are assaulted by paintings, sculptures, photographs, films, printed ads, television news, video games, designer sheets, designer underwear, designer kitchen furniture and apparel, product packaging, architecture and the list could go on indefinitely. Some of these visual products try to try to play down, or downright hide their authorship. Others use it to suggest the existence of a deeper meaning, even if there isn't any, or none was intended. One can embrace this visual culture or detest it, or one can even attempt to ignore it, but it is hard to deny that it has a continuous major impact on our lives, whether we want to or not.

Visual Culture. Concepts & Contexts is a series of interconnected texts that take the reader through the many facets of the visual as it is perceived and produced in today's media. The book is structured on several chapters that discuss standalone issues, giving them a theoretical grounding, but always offering a pragmatic contextualization with concrete examples and studies. After an introductory argument for the study of visual experience in a postmodern era, the volume, quite appropriately, suggests a look at the current state of media literacy, and in particular visual literacy. As the author underlines, the role of media literacy is "[to help] citizens to recognize the role of the media in society, the ways in which the media influences their lives, choices and decisions. The role of media literacy is to shape the critical thinking of the public, to make people able to judge and evaluate media products correctly. Media literacy is dedicated to both consumers and producers.
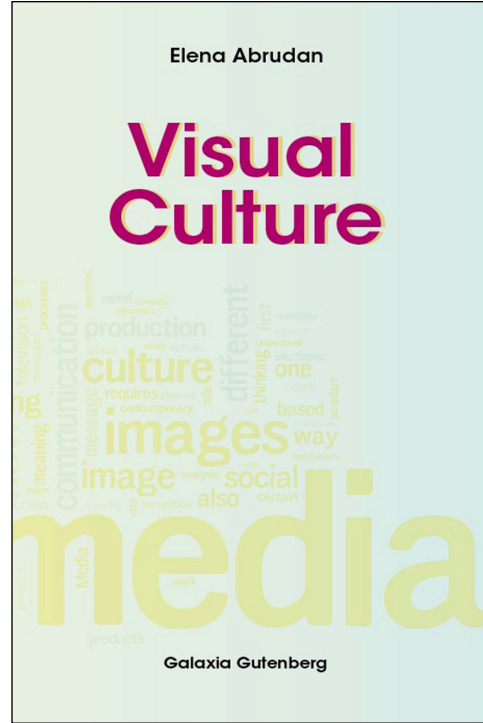
Media education is part of the entitlement of citizens to freedom of expression and the right to information" (p. 33), but most importantly, as the author further states, media literacy is connected to all the other processes in society. So why, then, has it been so disregarded by educators all around the world? The chapter presents the state of awareness at the level of the European Union, but, more importantly, has a focus on Romanian media literacy. European reports have a tendency to sometimes publicize information that is levelled out, averaging and simplifying the status of all its member states into unifying narratives. This is, on the one hand, in tune with its democratic, equalizing philosophy, but this "union in diversity" oftentimes

ends up erroneously ignoring or maybe even intentionally sweeping the big rifts that exist among opposing poles under the proverbial rug. Media literacy is one area where the gap between the west and the east has not yet been closed. The communist regimes that had controlled the Eastern Bloc had held the media institutions under tight control. Basically, the state was the media. Print, radio and television were used as tools for propaganda. So it is obvious that media literacy, as an agent to increase resistance to propaganda was not a desired goal in communist education. As the author states, media education was a privilege of the creators, that were encouraged to promote the communication of state-approved content in the most convincing and enjoyable forms. In Romania this gave rise to a slew of historical films that ignored the facts of recent events, and rewrote history using a mythical discourse to imbue the values of "the new man" in the audience.

After the fall of the communist regimes, however, the wild capitalism that followed saw the commercial opportunity in media as it was released from state control and there was a boom almost overnight. This led to people being bombarded with often contradictory content from all directions. In the western European states, a natural development of the media led to a natural, even if slightly off-phase, development of media literacy. In the newly created democracies, the educational system could not keep up with this flood of content. Thus, media literacy has been set aside as an issue of secondary interest. However, the academic community is finally starting to turn a more serious eye on the subject. This book, and others by the same author [Elena Abrudan (ed.), *Trends in Romanian Media Literacy*, Editura Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 2008 and Elena Abrudan, *Comunicare vizuală,* Editura Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 2007] are proof of this.

Towards the end of the second chapter, after grounding a solid base, Elena Abrudan gives some concrete examples, illustrating practically the exploitation of spatial intelligence and the issue of cultural diversity in modern visual media. This is the chapter that, in my opinion, sets the tone for the entire volume. All the theories and examples provided work from and towards the idea of media literacy. The third chapter, for example, *Visual Aesthetic Thinking*, discusses aesthetic thinking and perception as it change (or rather did not change) from the fine arts to the popular media culture and now to the new media and digital interfaces. This shows the continuous thread links visual experience regardless of the social, political or technological context. The chapter talks about "light and color, two-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces, time and movement, sound", but, more importantly, it connects modernity to our mythical past. Through Jean Baudrillard, Lucian Blaga, Arthur C. Clarke and Lev Manovich, the author makes the case that visual technologies and innovation does not change the way visual culture is understood and interpreted by people, but, on the contrary, it is made to bend to people's collective consciousness and instead of the pinnacle of science that it is supposed to represent it is bent over full circle and transforms the gap between consumers' knowledge and scientific esoteric into magical esoteric, it solves the dissonance with the unknown like human nature has learned to do it throughout the ages – through myth.

The next chapter introduces readers to the way we perceive the world around us visually, starting from the physiological level of the eye, to mental perception. The principles of Gestalt psychology, as famously applied to visual perception by Rudolf Arnheim (in *Art and Visual Perception*) are discussed in the context of the newspaper design. This is a great example of how meaning can be created visually, and unconsciously taken in

by the audience that is not literate in the production of the visual artifacts they are subjected to every day. The poor alignment of an image on the page in relationship to the article it belongs to, intentional or not, can create meanings that go beyond the explicit, superficial content on the page. Both producers and consumers need to be made aware of these possibilities so as to make the communication of the intended messages more efficient, and less ambiguous, but also to limit potential misuse and the possibilities for manipulation that are inherent in ambiguity. This naturally transitions into a discussion on meaning making, providing a basis on the essential semiotic concepts required to properly analyze the artifacts of visual culture. It all starts with Saussure and Peirce and the basics of the sign, but moves rapidly towards the structuralism of Roland Bathes, going into the sign as myth and the concepts of denotation and connotation. This theoretical discussion is supported by examples of rebuilding and reinterpreting meanings in architectural reconversion projects and analyses on several popular ads and other media products.

Chapter 6, *Media audience as a community based of visual meanings*, brings the debate into the social arena. This is where the relationship between the producer and the consumer as social actors (mediated by the visual artifact) comes into play. Different theories of reception present this relationship in different, if not opposing, ways. Each stress a different term of this equation. Some authors place the emphasis on the creator of the visual text as the one controlling the message, some give the entire responsibility of the meaning to the readers, while others make the text independent of both creator and target and let it float in constantly changing context of society, politics, history and aesthetics, or, in one word, culture. This leads to a critical discussion of how this context itself is represented, and how the media can influence the social

construction of reality, seeing as reality can only be experienced subjectively and most of our contact with the world takes place through intermediaries (i.e., the media).

The following chapter continues in the same vein, but gets closer to the theories of the visual representation of reality. Here are brought together and detailed theories of causal relation, theories of resemblance, of convention and of mental construction. This is all applied in an analysis of how modern art is perceive and can represent at different levels, creating and communicating values to potential "readers". The way into art is opened by Erwin Panofsky's, from the description of the image's contents, through the deciphering of symbolic signification, to iconological interpretation. The focus shifts from "traditional" art to digital art as it brings new elements that can influence, or rather liquefy meaning. This chapter ends in the realm of popular media with analyses on popular TV shows and the popular media represents marginal groups. To complete this, chapter 8 presents the rhetorical devices that are used in visual communication, also drawing from the previous chapters. This is the final knot to tie in this analysis of contemporary visual culture.

The volume ends, appropriately, with a discussion on ethics and an application to digital image manipulation that close the loop on a discussion that has revolved around media literacy with specific focus points on the author's Eastern European experience. All in all, this book could prove to be a good companion to both students and academics, for those wishing to go deeper into the procedures and meanings of the visual culture that dominates our world today, and is especially appropriate in countries where education is still a long way from getting in touch with the realities of everyday life.
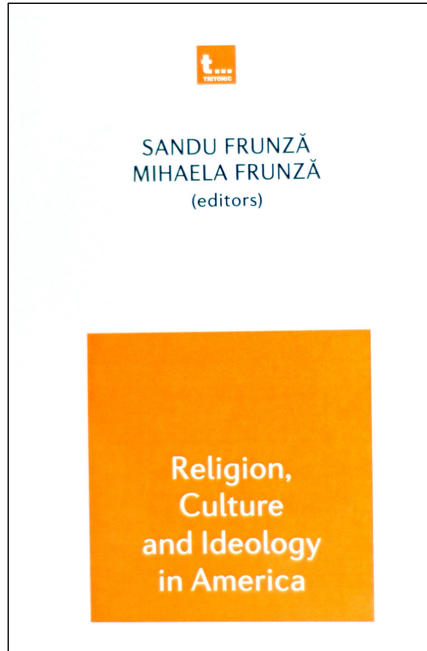
GEORGE PRUNDARU

Sandu Frunză and Mihaela Frunză (Eds.), *Religion, Culture and Ideology in America*, Tritonic Publishing, Bucureşti, 2012

George Santayana once said that "America is a young country with an old mentality". Although the existence of the American people as such covers a relatively short period of time, it binds organic legacy to Europe: the fundamental institutions of the state, the church, the family and all the core values that Americans cherish come to talk about it. What does it mean, however, to be American? It's a question that Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur asked two centuries and a half ago, but remains as current today. Bliss Perry, to give just one example in this respect, starts his book, *The American Spirit in Literature*, with the following lines: "The United States of America has been from the beginning in a perpetual change. The physical and mental restlessness of the American and the temporary nature of many of his arrangements are largely due to the experimental character of the exploration and development of this continent. The new energies released by the settlement of the colonies were indeed guided by stern determination, wise forethought, and inventive skill; but no one has ever really known the outcome of the experiment" (Perry, 2003, 1).

One of the most common views on the American society as it is nowadays is that of a *melting pot*, referring specifically to cultural assimilation. Many have tried over the years, with more or less success, to essentialize this idea, to summarize all these people in a small number of words, to find a number of common features applicable to each (or an overwhelming percentage of the) naturalized American(s). Does a minimal and compact group of traits capable of defining a nation of such complexity really exist? Of course, if we accept that, we would talk about a few things like an almost sacred appreciation for the United States itself and its symbols, about family, about faith in God, regardless of the religion or the specific cult, about faith in freedom and the strong believe that anyone can achieve everything he wants through work (the American dream): the set lines of an American spirit and of a specific American philosophy. But the fact is it's difficult to describe a complex construction as this in a few words or to put it under the reassuring umbrella of a small set of simple features. Many theorists argue that the contemporary American society looks more like a *salad bowl* (each culture keeps its distinct identity) than a *melting pot* or, at least, like a product obtained by the combination of the two. LeAna B. Gloor explains the difference between the concepts: "The melting pot theory, also

referred to as cultural assimilation, revolves around the analogy that 'the ingredients in the pot (people of different cultures and religions) are combined so as to lose their discrete identities and yield a final product of uniform consistency and flavor, which is quite different from the original inputs' ('Melting Pot'). This idea differs from other analogies, particularly the salad bowl analogy where the ingredients are encouraged to retain their cultural identities, thus retaining their 'integrity and flavor' while contributing to a tasty and nutritious salad. Yet another food analogy is that of the ethnic stew, where there is a level of compromise between integration and cultural distinctiveness" (Gloor, 2006).

Above all, however much we would like culinary metaphors, people are people, and the only really clear fact that emerges from this equation is that the American people, against the rifts within it, is a powerful body inextricably bound in itself. The only worthwhile method of analyzing it is that of a fragmentary, piece by piece look, in the view of finding, at the end of a long communication and research effort, something about the real essence of the subject.

This is the direction in which *Religion, Culture and Ideology in America* (Tritonic Publishing, 2012), coordinated by Sandu and Mihaela Frunză attempts to survey. The volume is nothing but a collection of scientific articles published in the *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* (volume 11, issue 33, Winter 2012), interstitially linked by discussing different aspects and phenomena related to politics, religion or ideologies of the United States. In what follows I will try to reach some of the main points that the works collected between the covers of the volume examine, without claiming to be exhaustive, but merely attempting to

create a minimal image of the content implied by the book and its specific.

In "*We the People" and God. Religion and the Political Discourse in the United States of America*, Mihaela Paraschivescu starts to probe on the subject of the relation between nowadays America's political speeches and religion (focusing primarily on the permeation of the political speech – specifically Obama's, Bush's and Clinton's speeches – by religious terminology and ideas) by taking into consideration Mircea Eliade's reflections on myth and of religiousness. Another essay, Liliana Mihuț's *Two Faces of American Pluralism: Political and Religious* argues that "pluralism is not perceived now only as a particular American school of thought, but mostly as a generic concept with meanings and connotations that vary from one epoch to another" (Paraschivescu, 2012, 45). The paper continues by examining the relationship between constitutional, party and interest groups' pluralism, as well as the pluralism of the religious groups and their intimate dynamics. *Fusionism, Religion and the Tea Party*, by Emanuel-Mihail Socaciu & Radu-Bogdan Uszkai explores a very interesting subject, "the plausibility of fusionism as a theoretical project of bridging the philosophical gap between libertarianism and free market conservatism" (Socaciu and Uskai, 2012, 97). The second part of the article gives a more practical approach to the issue, by showing how the authors' theory perfectly applies to the case of the American Tea Party. In *Ancient Traditions, Modern Constructions: Innovation, Continuity, and Spirituality on the Powwow Trail*, Dennis F. Kelley discusses concepts such as *indian-ness* or *urban Indians*, regarding the fact that in contemporary America the majority of the natives fall into the urban category. The paper explores a possible theoretical

model of "the religious nature of urban Indians, using aspects of the contemporary powwow as exemplary" (Kelley, 2012, 117). Another important article in the book, Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu & Corneliu Pintilescu's *Religious "Avatars" and Implicit Religion: Recycling Myths and Religious Patterns within Contemporary U.S. Popular Culture* argues that the "consumerism expanded at the cultural level (visual arts, music, media etc.) has not lead to the extinction of the presence of religious aspects within culture". On the contrary, the authors asset that "religious patterns, symbols, characters or behaviours have persisted in the new cultural paradigm, although they were recycled, reinterpreted or even hidden under the mask of secular and even industrialised art" (Fătu-Tutoveanu and Pintilescu, 2012, 200). In the second part of the article, the authors give a more empirical approach to the problem by analyzing James Cameron's cliché masterpiece *Avatar* through the lens of religious constructs' specifics. In his *Political Ethics between Biblical Ethics and the Mythology of the Death of God*, Sandu Frunză discusses the religion as a fundamental human need, revealing that the modern myth of the death of God influences the political ethics relevant for the contemporary man. The author also highlights the significance of the death of God in contemporary Jewish theology, creating links between biblical morals and the Holocaust (Frunză, 2012). Last, but not least, Elena Abrudan's review of Ramona Hosu's book *Poetry, Identity and Ideology – Early Twentieth-Century America* (Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2010) emphasizes the fact that the antisemitism which characterizes some works of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot is an "explicit illustration of a world populated by parallel discourses", also

making point that the "recognition of valuable cultural products depends on educational level, personal experience and taste, which is a postmodern feature" (Abrudan, 2012, 261). In this respect, the "first signs of the postmodernist aestethics started to manifest itselves in the frames of modernist aestethics" (Abrudan, 2012, 261).

Even if *Religion, Culture and Ideology in America* covers, as you can see in the minimal description of the topics in its pages I tried above, a fairly wide range of topics that are not necessarily thematically grouped, the book can be read, overall, as an access guide toward the deep implications that religion or religious representations have in American society today. The intimate connections that form between different texts, even so, as ultra-specialized as they are, have the power to give the reader a broad perspective on contemporary American culture and society, as well as on the deep connections between it and its European legacy. *Religion, Culture and Ideology in America* is certainly a positive step towards defining the specificity of the American spirit, which is, as history confirmed, really hard to frame within the limits of a text of any size. However, the book remains an important exercise in communication between Europe and the U.S., and one with profound implications in trying to understand the special relationship between religion (explicit or not), politics, ideologies and cultural representations in current western societies.

PAUL BOCA

The XI-th National Symposium in Journalism with International Participation
"Objectivity in Romanian Journalism"
## Cluj-Napoca, 19-20 October 2012

The Journalism Department of the Babeş-Bolyai University, from Cluj-Napoca, organised, between 19-20 October 2012 (Friday and Saturday), the eleventh National Symposium in Journalism, with international participation, having as thematic **"Objectivity in Romanian Journalism".**

The main key speaker of the symposium, Mr. Andrei Pleşu, had a dialogue with the participants on the proposed topic, launching with this occasion some of his recent books. During the previous editions of the National Symposium in Journalism, we had the honor to have other guests such as: George Pruteanu, D. Irimia, Rodica Zafiu, Lucia Hossu Longin, Nicolae Melinescu, Petru Popescu, Alex Ştefănescu, Ana Blandiana and others.

Looking at the definition of objectivity, considered as the "ability of reviving the true face of reality, detached from the subjective impressions; neutral, impartial", the symposium participants mentioned facts and stories in which the objectivity of the journalistic act was violated, from different reasons (we are referring in the same time both to the periods previous and after 1989).

It was taking into consideration the journalistic act, from written press, audio, TV, photo, on-line, referring to all the journalistic species (news, reports, interviews, editorials).

We are underlying the fact that other symposiums in journalism organized in Cluj-Napoca (some prestigious printing
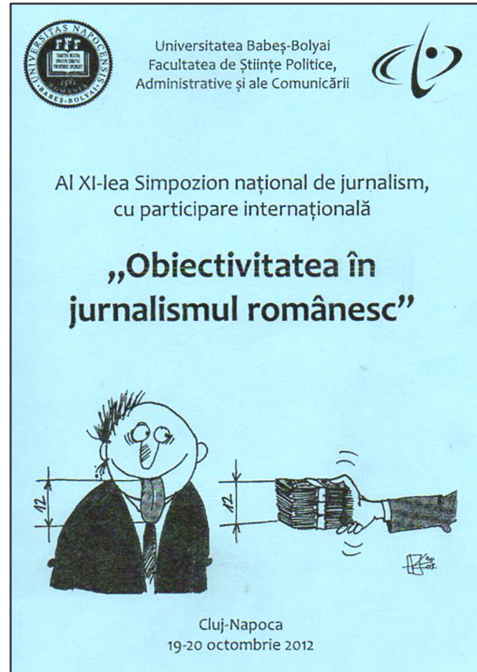
houses, as Polirom, Tribuna, Tritonic, Limes, published volumes with the same titles) were *Directions and trends in contemporary journalism (2002)*, *Changes in Europe, changes in mass-media (2003), Cultural Journalism in current times (2004), Romanian written press (2005), Style, and language in Romanian mass-media (2006), Forms of public opinion manipulation (2007), Wooden language in mass media – yesterday and today (2008), Romanian Journalism in Exile and Diaspora (2009), Research in Journalism (2010), Censor in Romania (2011).*

The eleventh edition's participants (direct or with papers) were academics, journalists, well known writers from abroad: **Tudor Vlad** (USA), **Iulia Badea** (France), **Vasile Malaneţchi** and **Mihail Guzun** (Republic of Moldavia), **Gheorghe Săsărman** (Germany), as well from Romania: **Rareş Beuran**, **Ştefan Borbély, Constantina Raveca Buleu, Mariana Cernicova, Andrei Costina, I. Maxim Danciu, Tiberiu Farcaş, Monica Ghiurco (TVR Bucharest), Dumitru Graur, Alexandru Gruian, Lucian Ionică, Xenia Negrea, Nicolae Melinescu, Radu Meza, Andreea Mogoş, Viorel Nistor, Mircea Popa, Sorin Preda, Adrian Dinu Rachieru, Gabriela Rusu-Păsărin, Ilie Rad, Adriana Săftoiu, Michael Shafir, Lucian-Vasile Szabo, Cristian Tabără, Claudia Talaş-man-Chiorean, Dona Tudor, Robert Turcescu, Radu Vida, Monica Zvirjinschi.**

In the second day of the symposium there were launched 20 volumes, with different profiles, having as authors the participants. Some of the books reviews presented are published in this number of *Studia UBB Ephemerides*.

An important new element was that all the books were presented and had their reviews published in the publication of the Journalism Department of Babeş-Bolyai University, *Studia UBB Ephemerides,* by the PhD candidates of the Doctoral School in Political Sciences and Communication, in the faculty frame.

There were also presented publications managed by the participants to the symposium such as: *Studia UBB Ephemerides*, *Romanian Magazine of mass media history*, etc.

ILIE RAD

Alexandru Gruian, *Silence! Breaking news!*, Editura Emia, Hunedoara, 2009

Silence! Braking news! is a non-fiction book by journalist Alexandru Gruian, published in 2009, which delivers personal memoir, historical perspective and journalistic reporting of the events taken place between 1991 and 2004, whereupon the author participated as a journalist: the miners' march towards Bucharest, the clash with the Gendarmerie at Costeşti or the clashes in Skopje and Tetovo between ethnic Albanians and the Slavic population.

The book is not meant to be a rigorous presentation of the historical facts, being "a volume including personal perception, subjective, of the events" the author had attended as a journalist. "Is not a story that follows the strict approach of presenting historical facts, but it will probably be a documentary tool for a future Romanian History", as Gruian explains in Author's Note.

But the volume is not just another journalist's memoir with the author looking back in tranquility upon their brilliant careers and admiring what they saw. It crackles with wit and good humour. At times with piercing insight, illuminated by a self-deprecating scepticism – which I believe is the mark of a good journalist.

Alexandru Gruian never pretends to have all the answers, even telling stories against himself. "It is told, Frank Vasile Timiş, was a Romanian from Maramureş, left to find his fortune in Australia. During a vacation met a girl who fell in love with him. Unfortunately, the girl was taking drugs and her health was deteriorating every day. But, her boyfriend from Maramureş took care of her with love until the girl has died. Then, surprise...! The girl was an Indonesian or Malaysian princess. The girl's father sought the young who took care of her until the last moment and rewarded him generously. [...] What was truth and what was lie, if it was something real or just lies, no one has bothered to find out".

Although the author suggests in the chapter "Will they still be Braking News...?" that the stories are character-centered – "almost all the characters in this book are alive and in high positions. As they say, life is still going on, so you never know what surprises may appear and when they could end up Breaking News story" – I would say the stories are plot-centered, after reading the book, the events being those remembered, not the characters.

I will conclude with Cornel Nistorescu's remarks, written in the preface: "«Silence! Braking News» is more a journalist's diary than a memoir. Is epic, exciting, full of essential information for a historian. It also has charm. Sometimes Gruian writes with a prose man's talent. He always has the right word for the right idea, go, an eye for detail and delicacy. What would have become Alexandru Gruian in a great editorial office in Bucharest? This book gives a answer. And the lecturer, absorbed in reading, to the last page is constrained to admit: a great reporter!"

ANGELICA TEOCAN

Vlad Mixich, *Fanaticii. Portretele a zece oameni cu vocaţie*, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2011

Until I read *Fanaticii. Portretele a zece oameni cu vocaţie* [Fanatics-Portraits of Ten People with a Calling] I must confess that I had not heard of Vlad Mixich. The first question that came to my mind was related not to the name of the book, as many might have expected, but the author's journalistic record. Who is Vlad Mixich? I found out that he is a graduate of the Faculty of Medicine of Timişoara, specializing in psychotherapy, a young reporter from Hotnews.ro, Romanian correspondent

for Deutsche Welle and contributor to several publications in Romania (Dilema Veche, Esquire, Adevărul Literar şi Artistic and Gazeta de Sud). I also learned that "I became journalist by passion. And I like to brag about that", as the journalist himself confesses on his blog. His talent and professionalism have been recognized with awards and distinctions, standing evidence that he was honored: Prize "Milan Kundera" for the book "Fanaticii" (2011), "Best Young Journalist of the Year" (2009), "Special Award for Interview" (2009) and the Prize "Deutsche Welle for Young Journalists" (2007). He won several scholarships: Marshall Memorial Fellowship/German Marshall Fund of the United States and Carter Fellow for Mental Health Journalism.

The volume *Fanaticii. Portretele a zece oameni cu vocaţie* [Fanatics. Portraits of Ten People with a Calling] was released during the Gaudeamus Fair, at the stand of the Humanitas Publishing House, 2011 edition. Released under special graphics and spelling conditions (I noticed with joy the correctness of the spelling), the book is published in the series "Milan Kundera Award". The volume brings together several interviews published between 2008-2011 in magazines such as Esquire and Decât o revista, and also on the HotNews.ro website. For some readers, the fact that the interviews have already been published could be a demotivating factor in buying and reading the book. This however does not alter or diminish in any way the quality of the reports, their flavor. It is a book that can be read easily, enabling you to read it completely or partly. The journalistic style and complexity of information provided makes you want to read on.

Who are the ten fanatics and why the author calls them so? Anticipating the public reaction, Vlad Mixich offers us the answer

in his preface: "The people you will meet on the following pages are united by their passionate devotion to an idea, a dream or a project. When their project is beneficial to the society they admire and respect them. But when you can put a minus sign in front of them, they are immediately labeled pejoratively as fanatics. However, whether good or bad, they burn deep down the same fire that produces only enough energy to change the world around them." These "fanatics", our contemporaries are: Marcel Iureş, Cătălin Dorian Florescu, Theodor Paleologu, Michael Ghyka, Mircea Dinescu, Cristina Neagu, Raed Arafat and Monica Macovei. Surprisingly, we find the story of Cantacuzino Institute, a story that brings together the destinies and lives of many "fanatics" led by the same ideas and passion. Although they may leave here to live abroad, they prefer to remain here

and fight: "I've always wanted to do research and I end it up to do immunology. I love it and I want to do it here" says Cătălin Țucureanu, one of the young researchers of the Cantacuzino Institute. Hearing the story of the Cantacuzino Institute maybe more of us will mobilize to support his salvation. As Macovei says, "As much as I can and how much I'm given. I have at least to say things even if they cannot bring changes by themselves. But others must do the same. I am not alone. But we are not enough." Vlad Mixich joined her in this idea by writing this article.

We note that Vlad Mixich selected and interviewed people from different fields - art, politics, business, sports - people who agreed to be accompanied in their daily life, to be "watched", they allowed him to invade their private lives. He interviewed not only the "fanatics", but also their loved ones, gave up perhaps his personal comfort in order to travel in places where they were born or lived (such as the case of Mircea Dinescu). All of these have contributed to an extremely well documented material. Vlad Mixich presented them as they are, with good or less good things, sometimes chipping away at the image we have of them. We find out about Paleologu "when he is tired began to bleed from the nose" (p. 46) or about Cristina Neagu "She walks on the sidewalk between the buildings where she is not a brilliant handball player, but nothing more than a common girl among many ordinary people. This is the secret of Cristina Neagu: it's so simple." (p. 114). Here's the characterization that General Crăciun gives us of Raed Arafat: "Arafat is suffering from his profession ... And no matter what position he is holding is not as important for him as his profession. Arafat wants to do his job. The activity he most enjoys is one of the emergency room, in

the hospital, and not at the ministry." (p. 169). About Macovei we discover that she is a determined person, heartfelt, who always prefers to tell the truth – "If you have something to say, say it. Don't keep it only to yourself. Argue, but don't vibe." (p. 196) Laura Stefan characterizes her in a simple way: "She is something else. Either you love her or hate her. It cannot be otherwise." (p. 195).

If everyone has heard or knows something about Iureş, Macovei, Paleologu, Dinescu and Arafat, few people know who is Florescu, Neagu and Ghyka. Their life stories are just as interesting and the interviews are well made, but perhaps the public would want to know why it was them who were included in the book and no other remarkable people.

Vlad Mixich has a tremendous advantage over other journalists. The advantage is given by his profession - psychotherapy. He is used to track people's nonverbal reactions, to perceive their feelings beyond words. Keen observer and journalist, endowed with the gift of choosing the right words, he is offering us not only aspects connected with the "fanatics" but also the socio-political context in which they struggled to support and implement their ideas, opinions. We often saw or heard news about these "fanatics" and we had formed an opinion about them. This opinion corresponds sometime with the image painted by Vald Mixich. For example, the opinion of Andrei Pleşu about Dan Puric is: "I admire him as an actor. Mr. Dan Puric left the area where he is truly competent, highly competent. He made a guru syndrome." (p. 124). Liviu Ornea says: "I met Dan and I can say he is a very intelligent man. Unfortunately, gradually he began to take himself too seriously. It's dangerous when you start thinking that you're doing more than you do and you are more

than you are." (p. 120). At the same time, the opinion of the fans, unknown characters in the public eyes is as follows: "I like him because it talks about people and Romanians. He tells things as they are and that impresses me. He is the Romanian spirit we need today." (p. 127-128); "In my faith was a big turning point when I met him in the sense that I was not afraid to express myself." The conclusions of the author about Dan Puric is that "no talent fascinated by knowledge or genius. But by faith." (p. 131). I enjoyed discovering the people behind the myths, people who have feelings, doubts, worries and joys. The author also crafted words that made me fly on the wings of imagination in a Romania that I did not know: the village Cetate, the nature's beauty or the tranquility of rural families. He makes us feel joy again, giving Dinescu and relatives the privilege of living just as they imagined.

For the meeting with Marcel Iureş the author "… looked for a state of mind and spirit. A state of authentic communication, one of which I can do good job: to write true stories." (p. 23). All the stories of these people, animated by an ideal are true: "The relationship between celebrities and journalists who write about it has always been difficult. This is because the industry is seeking to profit from the fact that we are all crazy about a good story. And the best stories are -dam' it! - the true ones." (p. 13)

Living in a world dominated by interest and subjectivity we can only admire and praise the objectivity of the author in making those presentations.
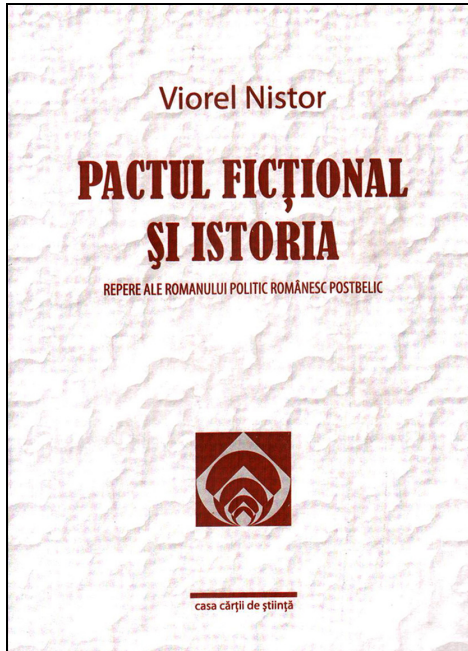
CARMEN ŢÂGŞOREAN

Viorel Nistor, *Pactul ficţional şi Istoria. Repere ale romanului politic românesc postbelic [The Fictional Pact and History. Landmarks of the Post-war Romanian Political Novel]*, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca, 2012

The name of Viorel Nistor has become known to the public due to his activity as a journalist – he worked for 13 years in several local and central media institutions, although a part of his investigative journalism work was published under a penname. He currently teaches at Babes Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences.

The Fictional Pact and History. Landmarks of the Post-war Romanian Political Novel was published in Cluj-Napoca, in 2012, by Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă Publishing

House and it continues the main topic of a series of volumes which Viorel Nistor co-authored: *Perspectives on Media Production*, coordinated by Elena Abrudan, *Wandering in the Land of Words*, edition coordinated by Iulian Boldea, or *Censorship in Romania*, coordinated by Ilie Rad.

One can honestly say that the field's literature was enriched by this complex work, approaching a topic which is delicate for several reasons; however, the journalist's pen shone through the work, as he managed to illustrate all facets of the matter, correctly and objectively.

hăescu, Ion Pillat, Petre Pandrea, Cezar Petrescu, Sextil Puşcariu, Liviu Rebreanu, C. Noica, Aron Cotruş, Mihail Sorbul, Carmen Sylva, Radu Tudoran, Paul Zarifopol, Ov. Papadima, C. Rădulescu-Motru...". In the subchapter entitled *Resistance Through Culture*, Viorel Nistor notes an issue which is specific to Romanian literature, namely "the lack of solidarity within the Romanian cultural resistance. One might say, however, even more than that, that rival camps were formed, camps which either wasted their strength in collateral fights or drained the energy of the resistance through schisms." The occurrence of socialist realism brings along a division of terms. "In the words of Manolescu, on the one hand there are the fundamentally positive and advisable terms, such as progressive, popular, realist, forward, healthy, optimistic, full of party principles, peaceful, working class, peasant etc and on the other hand there are the fundamentally negative and condemnable terms, such as reactionary, decadent, elitist, individualistic, diseased, pessimistic, apolitical, warrior-like, intellectualist, bourgeois etc".

One of the purposes of the work, as fully demonstrated by the author through the attention with which he studied both post-war novels and post-war political documents, was that of showing that in Romania, throughout the stages of communism, a whole new literature was born due to the pressures of politics. "It would seem too much to name it a literature of abnormality, as that suggests a certain (aesthetic and moral) pathology. However one might call it – proletkult, socialist realism, zhdanovism, the art of compromise, literature of complicity, vassal or tolerated literature – each term expresses certainly, for a distinct period, various facets of abnormality... the system did not only train writers, but also readers who, gradually and due to a lack of alternatives, had to accept this type of literature. There-

Literature written "on commission" came from the Soviet ever since 1905, in accordance with Lenin's recommendation, given in the article *Party Organisation and Party Literature.* This is the point from which the author initiates his vast journey into the history of the Romanian postwar novel. He finds the best definition of proletkultism – one of the phenomena of commissioned literature – in Ana Selejan's words, "a replacement of bourgeois culture". "But not being able to raise the working people to the height of art, they lowered art to the height of the working class", the author muses. This only leads to an accessible literature, that is to say one that lacks value.

In the first chapter, *History, Morals, Literature*, Viorel Nistor identifies some of the authors whose works were banned in 1948: "Ion Agârbiceanu, Lucian Blaga, Şerban Cioculescu, Emil Cioran, Al Ciorănescu, Ovid Densuşianu, Mircea Eliade, Vintilă Horia, Panail Istrati, Adrian Maniu, Gib Mi-

fore, the crisis did not only affect certain parts, but the system as a whole. A continual crisis. Everyone's crisis."

Viorel Nistor approached three categories of political novel: the ideological novel, the political condition novel and the novel of political escapism. The first example, sadly a negative one for the history of Romanian literature, an episode better off erased, is Mihail Sadoveanu's book, *Mitrea Cocor*, a Romanian "anti-Nobel" as Viorel Nistor calls it. "Unfortunately, *Mitrea Cocor* is not a book which should be remembered and revived, but one best forgotten, both in the bibliography of Sadoveanu and in Romanian literature. However, it best illustrates the aberration which can be generated by political intrusion in literature."
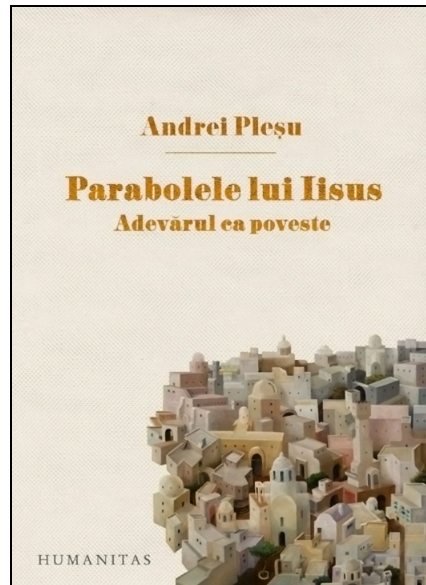
In distinct chapters, the author proposes case studies of all three types of political novel, treating the following books: Titus Popovici – *Setea (Thirst)*, Marin Preda – *Moromeţii* (*The Moromete Family)*, Alexandru Ivasiuc – *Păsările (The Birds)* and Augustin Buzura – *Feţele tăcerii (Faces of Silence)*.

If the writers of the communist era had to fight their time or subject to it, you can find out by reading this book, a virtual compendium of information useful to all those interested in the topic of the Romanian post-war novel before the Revolution of 1989.

LACRIMA BALINT

Andrei Pleşu, *The Parables of Jesus. The truth as a story*, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2012

The book "The Parables of Jesus. The truth as a story", written by Andrei Pleşu, released at the insistence of Humanitas publishing house, in Bucharest, was ranked as the most awaited writing of that year, a sign of success being the fact that the volume was designated as Book of the Year 2012, during a ceremony that took place at the Romanian Writers' Union, in Bucharest. We consider this event relevant, as, during this event, Andrei Pleşu himself said[1]: "I find it a bit miraculous - if the miracle has degrees - that a book on "Parables of Jesus"

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[1] http://www.mediafax.ro/cultura-media/parabolele-lui-iisus-adevarul-ca-poveste-de-andrei-plesu-desemnata-cartea-anului-2012-10346845 (06.01.2012);

is rewarded today, when mystics are moving mostly towards poetics". We can see that the author is placed and places himself again, consciously, in an old-fashioned pressure group that seems disconnected from trends, but is willing to maintain this state in search of a *suitable reader*, which is invited to try, with *boldness*, *intelligence*, *presence of mind*, *patience* and *perseverance*, putting *the right questions* before our Saviour's parables.

With rich academic discourse and knowledge of philosophy, Greek, Aramaic, Latin and Hebrew languages, Andrei Pleşu manages to make the book – as the parables – accessible to all and again as the parables, urges you *to live* the Word, to ask questions, to reflect on *how to make them*, *how to respond*, he shows even *how to receive messages*, without adopting a discourse that leaves no room for interpretation regarding timeless interrogations. Although having a rich experience that is reflected in the above mentioned skills, the author does not claim to possess the best bibliographic choices, given the huge number of texts which comment the parables, sometimes word by word, that have been written over time. The writer prefers to keep out of a singular dogma on his way towards the discovery of the parables' core and, nonetheless, he does not provide restrictive indications regarding the bibliography.

However, the lack of *verticality* discovered in the field of exegetics, which is often an obstacle in *the way of the heart's joy* is mentioned and criticized in a constructive way by the author throughout the book, and with additional pathos in the final chapter of his work, out of respect for the biblical text analyzed and with the role of giving the readers the opportunity

to release the tension, in front of some interpretations that reduce the consistency of the biblical texts, and that lead to the *paralysis* of the whole being, always inventing new ways of "attack". Andrei Pleşu, still, follows the message of the stories studied and avoids recommending a "unique" solution, obvious at a personal level, which for others may become ordinary. Even the historical interpretation of the parables is accepted, along with others, but as long as it does not detract the attention from *the cornerstone*, focusing the attention to the "keys" without contemplation, without an advice towards an inconsistent, inefficient, offensive, even criminal watchfulness: "The horizontal of the mystical transmission (spread over the heads of all) has no other source than vertical Incarnation".

The importance of Jesus Christ becomes evident as long as the Son is the cornerstone and the rock that crowns the creation, elements without which any edifice collapses, but despite this, the Lamb avoids its self-imposed authority against the children of the age, wearing the authority that it is offered. In the second part of the book, which Andrei Pleşu dedicates to the parable as an undermining of the ideologic, Jesus appears to show that everything is done with other intention than planning the foundations of an ideological presence and for this reason the parables are not given an easy understanding for any listener, in order to avoid any obstructing critique, exemplified by the story of the *children* in markets, *frozen* in their occupation of judging their peers.

While His interpretation remains clearly exposed to the ones close to Him, Jesus speaks in hard to solve riddles with the "outside", for whom the night can turn into a festive atmosphere, light can mean

darkness, sleep can mean waking compliance and waste turns into gain, with the risk of receiving Jesus' as strictly discriminatory. But these accusations areblown away by the fact that He Himself, by birth, came to the outside world, preaching a new way, through death to resurrection. He did what he did for the sake of the "outside", for whom He gave even His own life. The role of the parable is to make people put those questions which brings humans "inside" from the "outside" – where solitude and Hell lie- for then, gaining profound insight, becoming *hyios*, sons of the resurrection, they have the power to go "outside" again, preaching the Word with great power. The discrimination assumption fades even stronger in the parable of the thief, where, between *chronological* time, *apocalyptic* and *messianic* time (of waiting, without specific term) Jesus is placed in a position of a thief and a man in the position of a master, just to show that regarding the material condition we must watch, and if we want Jesus to come, we must accept Him as He is.

People are not included unconditionally "inside" because otherwise they would become arrogant. In addition, not everyone can enter into the presence of God's glory and survive, something must empower them to do that (only Moses ascends the sacred mountain to receive the Sacred Law, his relatives are warned; Joseph, *proven innocent*, before the birth of the Savior, is visited by an angel who tells him: "*Fear not!*", the shepherds are told when angels are sent to encourage the spreading of the news of the birth of Jesus Christ, but in this case we witness fertile souls, ready to receive and spread further the joy). Synoptic Gospels are used by the author to explain in a clear way the hard part of Jesus's teachings, which appear to be against the traditional use of the parable - which usually clarifies speech -, against Christ Himself, in contrast even with obvious miracles distributed without discrimination.

Even evil people reaching crossroads are invited to the Son's wedding, even those who have forgotten to pray when everything has gone well, even those who don't receive the justice they deserve, even those who pray in church, but still don't live spiritually apart, they can all be forgiven and rewarded with just what they lack, through perseverance, courage and bravery. But as Andrei Pleşu establishes, this kind of forgiveness is not easily given to everyone, only our Father loves us unconditionally. In contrast with the perseverance, the boldness and the courage there is the shame to communicate with God. The presence of the exaggerated obedience is translated as a message that lacking interior richness, is no longer an act of faith.

At the end of his book, Andrei Pleşu chooses to pay attention to the parable of the unjust administrator, one of the most difficult to interpret stories of Jesus, uttered in a tone that talks about the saving intelligence.
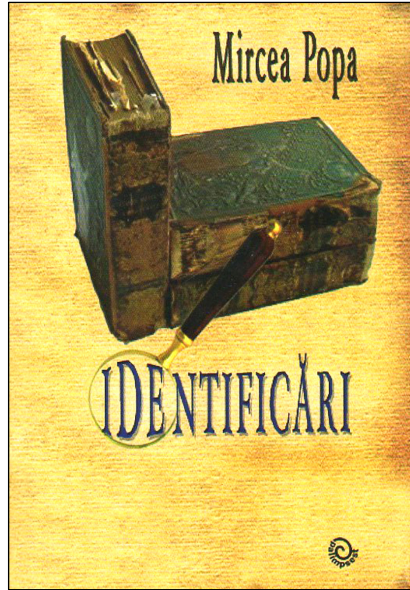
MARIUS MUREŞAN

Mircea Popa, *Identificări [Identifications]*, Palimpsest Publishing, Bucharest, 2012

The book of Phd. Mircea Popa, published in a period when the present study concerns lack of interest for the history literature, is auspicious, designed to rekindle the researchers' concerns who cannot diminish some life aspects on one hand and the activity of some writers who had great impact upon the evolution of the Romanian Culture, especially the literature one, on the other hand.

The book gathers several texts, some previously published in specialty journals, some recently worked, and it posts a tireless researcher profile, governed by the reason that a genuine and relevant literary criticism starts with a history of the literary act.

One can not reach a coherent interpretation of the facts, if these facts have no detailed presentation, laboured in a librarian effort, which for the author represents an indispensable space in order to reach the planned scientific results.

This work has some merits to be underlined. First of all it represents an enormous documenting based on consulting numerous newspapers, magazines, correspondences and documents, reminding to the young scholars that a data based document relies not on assumptions, but on direct researching of sources. Therefore, the author offers working tools, publishing different elements that are not to be found in the great writers' bibliographies, correcting some errors in their monograph, creating this way the possibility for elaborated studies.

Another merit is that of presenting, fragmentary, succession of texts. If Emil Cioran contests the whole as a system, saying that philosophy is not a current issue anymore except for a fragment, like human life that consists of a series of experiences and recoveries, the same principle is valid in this book, which addresses sequentially details of known and less known writers of Romanian literature.

Putting together previous documenting, as a thirty years' work result, and present research, the author divides the book in two chapters: identities and identifications. In the first chapter great names are brought to the attention of the reader, such as Titu Maiorescu, Timotei Cipariu, Macedonski, George Coşbuc, Victor Eftimiu, Liviu Rebreanu, Lucian Blaga, Ion Agârbiceanu, Octavian Goga, Mihai Eminescu, Emil Isac, Ion Pilat and others. Parts of works, undiscovered by great bibliographers, bearing famous identity are confided, completing therefor the existing lyric universe.

Professor Mircea Popa renders the unique Eminescu's poetry found in 2255 manuscript, page 168, enriching, therefor, the notes of Perpessicius edition, a poem in which the imagination of the poet gives birth to some ludic verses, Macedonski's early poetry, omitted by the macedonskiene

editions, attempts that allow the young poet to show his revolt against the leadership of Carol and the poems of Lucian Blaga found in Elena Daniello's manuscript.

A first step is the recovery of the poetry from the poets'manuscrips and from the periodicals of the time, untouched by the monographic editions, followed by the presentation of unknown writers journalistically collaboration, such as the collaboration of Macedonski to the Arad magazine, *Lumina,* the collaboration of Octavian Goga to the humorous and satirical illustrated magazine *Nelușa* and the collaboration of Emil Isac to *Gazeta Bistriței.*

It is to be found in the book the debate of the divergent relations, of scientific nature, between Titu Maiorescu and Timotei Cipariu, irreconcilable with their directions proposed in Romanian language development, Lucian Blaga's relation with the Transylvanian theologically staff intransigent to the his divine concept perceived as a distilled materialism, without the perspective that the expressionist philosopher had initially proposed.

The relative lack of controversy is to be found in the appreciation manifested by critic Bogdan Duică for the young poet, George Coșbuc, appreciated for his writings and original works, detached sentimentality from the common search and anchored in the source of his inspirations, the Transylvanian village, the people that he had studied with great skill.

In the second chapter *Identifications*, the author brings to life interesting subjects regarding the influence of Eminescu in Sălaj, the political activity of Mihail Sadoveanu as deputy in Bihor, the friendship between Tudor Arghezi and Caragiale, the one of Noica and Lucian Blaga and, as well, the issues of controversy between Iorga and Arghezi.

Exciting information about famous writers such as Ion Creangă, Ion Barbu, Mircea Eliade, Hortensia Papadat Bengescu,

Mihail Sebastian, N. Steinhardt, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Eugen Barbu is to be depicted in the book, but also less studied names in the university curriculum such as Ștefan Baciu and Petru Dumitriu are to be underlined in the above mentioned chapter.

One aspect that has grabbed my interest in this part of the book concerns one of the meanings that the final identity contains as a way of common acting, thinking and feeling.

The meeting of two different egos intersects in a shared and fully assumed point.

The young Arghezi and the mature Caragiale are to be found in the artistic talent, in the painstaking work of text processing and of stylistic requirements that are to be approached with respect.

The journalists from Sălaj make from their writing the instrument of Eminescu national cultural thinking propulsion in Sălaj because of their accession to the same values.

The fascinating connection between the titans of the philosophical thinking Lucian Blaga and Constantin Noica is presented by the author by selecting quotations that reveal new philosophy of culture centered on the overall understanding of the Romanian soul, vein that animated the two guidelines developed by the two great thinkers.

Therefore, the version propused by profesor Mircea Popa throw this book, born as a consequence of a complex study of the literature history is a valuable issue for the reader that is to be conquered and enriched by the news findings regarding the unexplained until now aspects of the life and work of the great personalities of Romanian culture.

LUCIAN CIUPEI

Adrian Dinu Rachieru, *Despărțirea de Eminescu* *[The Separation from Eminescu]*, Tibiscus Publishing House, Timișoara, 2012

Troubled by Eminescu's work, about which he says that "in fact Eminescu's work does this: it causes, for over a century, *our concern*", the author succeeds in this paper, "*The Separation from Eminescu*" (Timişoara, Tibiscus Publishing House, 2012) to recover, to rebuild, or to restore the place of the person and of the work of Eminescu, which, in the author's opinion, should be perceived as a "living writer" (p 35).

The five chapters, "*A Myth "expired"?*", "*About Eminescu's Dualism*", "*Ioana's spyglass and the Eminescu Idea*", "*Anti-Eminescu kabbalah, a fiction*?", "*About an impossible "separation"*" sketch, with finesse and subtlety, a guide for contemporaries, in which a unification between the nation and Eminescu's work and person is proposed.

The Manifest – and this is not a hard term for this paper work – starts abruptly by drawing the attention to the causes that may cause a separation from Eminescu, as the author likes to say, "Still, we have to admit, a double danger may announce the *breakup* with Eminescu: either by refusing him (not reading him) or by falsifying him, both resulting in alienation: ours from the tutelary poet and Eminescu's from himself". (p. 13).

Adrian Dinu Rachieru understands the loss which, as a nation, we may have it if we break up with Eminescu, leaving room, why not, to a false education through the media and not through the reference to creation, to Eminescu's work, which "lured and seized passionately the interpreters' army, educating a whole nation." (p. 87) while, in the same time, drawing the attention that "we, therefore, have the obligation to Free from clichés, having come out of the
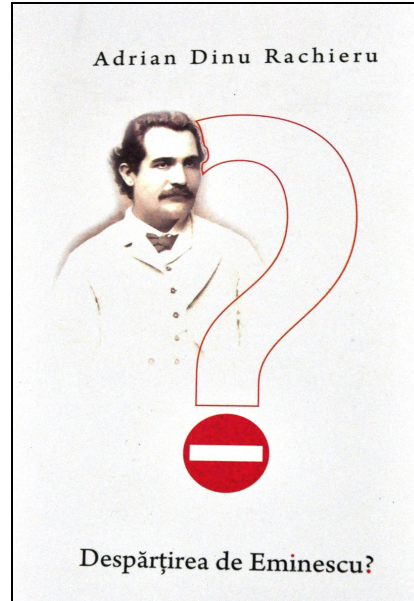
religious stasis, Eminescu should interest us as a "*living writer*", as a "*dilemmatic*" presence in the literary activity". (p. 35).

A "*giant poet*", as he is called by Adrian Dinu Rachieru himself, Eminescu did not suffer from meaningless attacks, disputed in the first pages of the volume, as the author tries to strengthen the belief that Eminescu is not an expired myth, reminding of B.P. Hasdeu, who ""*condemns*" the posthumous deification of the unfortunate poet" (p. 30) or of Macedonski, who thought that the writers of those times, as the "Eminescu issue" was concerned, transformed the pity into admiration, and then the latter into "*adoration*" (p. 30).

There is also reminded the unfortunate appreciation of Horia Roman Patapievici who described Eminescu as an abandoned writer, as a hardship or evil that the Romanian culture had and will have to put

up with. In fact, Patapievici said that "Eminescu plays the role of the "*body in the closet*"" and that he is "*exasperating old*", a statement that the author describes as "a sentence with apodictic flavor, superbly written" (p. 133), and about Eminescu's "denigrators" Adrian Dinu Rachieru notes that they are "artificial oversized personalities" (p. 144) and that although the physical presence of the poet can't be inconvenient to anyone, however "modern denigrators "*are moving*", continuing a rich tradition on the line against Eminescu line" (p. 30), concluding, at the end of the volume, with the assessment that "a collection of lies, hard to dislodge, yet guards Eminescu's life and writing" (p. 146).

There were also discussions related to the journalistic activity of the poet. That journalist-poet dualism, sparking controversy, even in the present, determines Adrian Dinu Rachieru to clarify, from his position as a writer and literary critic in this case, if one activity affected or not the other. Therefore, regarding what Eminescu published, work which was virulently attacked, Adrian Dinu Rachieru, with self-confidence, says that, in the time of the great poet "the publishing struggle was fed from Eminescu's verb" (p. 154).

Being a balanced paper work, this volume brings into discussion, using a rich bibliography, a harsh criticism against the journalist Eminescu, being mentioned Nicolae Manolescu's recommendation, "to only keep *poetry* for the posterity's use!" (p. 68), recommendation which, even if it comes from a symbol of the literary criticism, is classified by A. D. Rachieru as a "childish, insolent, eager mostly to shock negativism" (p. 68).

The idea of reducing to nothing Eminescu's publishing is treated very seriously in this volume, reviving the idea that Eminescu did not have any political or anti-Semitic impulses, he was just a journalist who published in order to unveil the truth.

Adrian Dinu Rachieru insists on this point, stating: "The kabbalah against Eminescu targeted the journalist's annihilation, who lived "among wolves", he who succeeded "to argue with everyone" and who imposed the truth as his standard of living" (p. 124) and he also notes that "with an emblematic and uncomfortable personality, Eminescu wanted to be "*a man telling the truth*"." (p. 141).

In the last chapter, Adrian Dinu Rachieru becomes virulent in his position, even blunt and uncompromising towards the necessity of knowing and understanding Eminescu. If until now he was in search of a balance in statements, bringing into question views that could or could not favor the poet, in the last chapter, he answers the question if "the separation from Eminescu should or should not happen".

In order to highlight the cultural disaster or spiritual poverty, which would happen if Eminescu was "closed in the closet", Rachieru appeals to Nietzsche, noting that: "a nation is defined not so much by its great people, but especially by the way in which it recognizes and honors them" (p. 142) and "to rediscover the freshness of the texts through reading, beyond the clichés, beyond the avalanche of synthesis and analysis" offers unexpected delights to the connoisseurs (p. 134).

At the end of his work, the author refers to some people's statements against Eminescu, stating that Eminescu was a victim "as Aurel Sasu said, of "*our historical mediocrity*"."

In a sad tone, Adrian Dinu Rachieru concludes that "A collection of untruths, hard to dislodge, still guard Eminescu's writing and life", therefore he "had all the rights to write beggingly \give myself back to me! \" (p. 146).

OTILIA MUREŞAN

Adrian Dinu Rachieru, *Ion Creangă, spectacolul disimulării* *[Ion Creangă, The Dissimulation Spectacle]*, Timişoara, Editura David Print, 2012
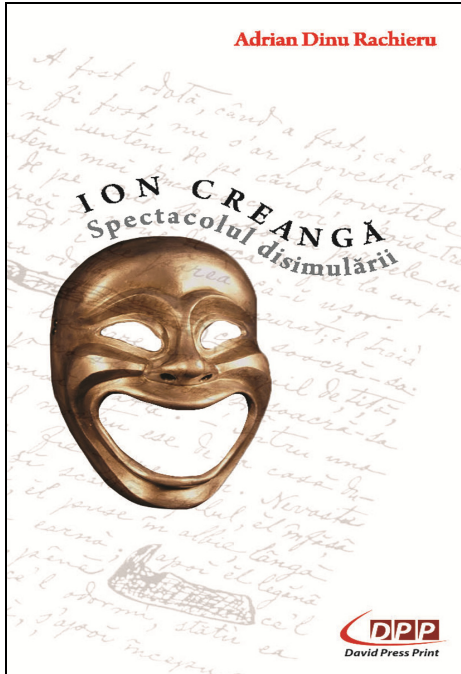
Intrigued by the frivolous manner of some past and present critics in analyzing Creangă's work and trying to establish a balance in the subject of the writer's life and work, Adrian Dinu Rachieru manages to faithfully mirror the reality of Creangă's writings and career in his book Ion Creangă, The Dissimulation Spectacle (Timişoara, Editura David Print, 2012).

The volume is structured in seven chapters which contain more angles in approaching Creangă's work and personality: "Creangă's luck", "The two Creangă", "Life as an auto-fiction", "A Litterary Trinity: the Ambitious, the Attemperers and the Illusionists", "Esoterism and sexism", "A New Creangă?", "Creangă's trunk". In addition, the author added a special view on the Romanian contemporary literature from the Moldavian Republic, "Creangă's spirit in Basarabia". We can mention that this piece was rewarded in the spring of 2012 with a prize from the Moldavian Republic's Writer's Union.

The author admits that the book is a critical synthesis which pleeds, by the case of Creangă, for the co-existence of values and the simultaneity of opinions. With the passing of generations, the book offers a rare dialogue, beyond polemics and other clashes.

This work, woven from the opinions of the well-known, as well as of the less-known critics, makes Adrian Dinu Rachieru a restaurateur of the truth about Creangă, but in the same time even the clarifications brought by this book couldn't stop the controversy, nor could they tell everything about Creangă's life and work. "An enlightened thinker, a rebel, owner of a changing mood, Creangă will always be assaulted with trouble and he will be associated with controversy even in posterity." (p. 20), meaning that Ion Creangă has not been entirely understood and exhausted, as Nicolae Manolescu suggested in 1966: "Everything is said about Creangă, there aren't any other new things".

With the help of a large and comprehensive biography, Adrian Dinu Rachieru builds in this volume a portrait of Creangă, including also the writer's bad traits: "young, good looking, beauish, always in search for something, he was hoping to get into the high society. But his deacon job made him anonymous", the author goes on, closely analysing the social context around the writer's figure. The sociological and psychological analysis help us understand the causes of so many arguments around Creangă's talent and creative power.

"A deacon without a calling, looking for trouble (looking *on purpose*, according to Călinescu), Creangă was about to discover himself [...] a priest with short hair, hunting crows, being punished for misbehavior (according to a file at the metropolitan church), Creangă was excluded from the cleric catalogue of the church."

His hectic life determined some divergent opinions on his work. Adrian Dinu Rachieru observes that "Some considered him a great stylist, others, on the contrary, a rude, primitive talent" (p. 46).

In spite of all the arguments and despite the fact that Ion Creangă has a well established status, Adrian Dinu Rachieru insists in pointing out that Ion Creangă is not a mediocre story-teller, but "a smart man, cultivating a biting anecdote, who displays the spectacle of dissimulation. In his love for orality he doesn't like small talk. His opera is concentrated, proving organicity" (p. 58). This fact was also remarked by Simona-Grazia Dima in her article *Ion Creangă – an ethernal paradox?*, from *Luceafărul de dimineață* revue, n. 9/ September 2012, where she states that: "Creangă's complex image swings between the visible and the invisible, defining the educated countryman, still exoteric, but also the cultural being longing for emancipation, which he achieved by his writing genius, with the help of his mother and Eminescu. He is a "tragic buffon", accepting his role with a "false humility", a skeptic making us witness "the being's cry", loving the "spectacle of dissimulation".

Without stating clearly that Ion Creangă is famous just because he deserves it, Adrian Dinu Rachieru does this with a fine subtlety, making his work an argument for Creangă, interpreting with originality all the critics, and re-establishing Creangă's position in the Romanian literature.

At the end of his book, the author invites us to re-read Creangă's work, in order to sustain his point of view, convinced that it must be re-read at an older age, even if "it's increasingly obvious that Creangă's world is fading into the past and it becomes more of a fiction" (p. 62).

"Creangă must be re-read at an older age, he is not just a writer of children's stories", the author states at page 47. At the same time, he regrets that Creangă no longer has the same meanings for today's world. "Kids today distance themselves from Creangă's time. Regrettably, only the duties at school put him into our memories. We ignore the charm of a great writer, which can become new by reading his work at an older age" (p. 160).

As Constantin M. POPA observes in *Mozaic* revue, Adrian Dinu Rachieru "boldly tries to reconcile the most divergent positions. He manages more than administrating the lectures inspired/provoked by Creangă's creation, he does a survey, configuring an ideal critical history of the literature."

Hereby the present volume deserves to be read and appreciated as an act of respect brought to Creangă, as well as a reference book concerning the truth about the writer from the small village of Humulești.
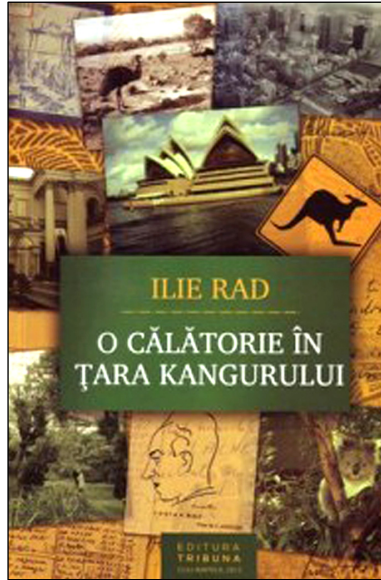
OTILIA MUREŞAN

Ilie Rad, *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country,*
Tribuna Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2012

The book of Prof. Ilie Rad takes us to the far-far away land of the kangaroo, in Australia following the footsteps of the author himself and his beloved wife Doina. This latest creation of the writer and journalist Ilie Rad comes to complete his series of travel journals, which he started in 1998 with the book, entitled *Traveler Through Europe,* and continued with other two very appreciated books *From Moscow to New York* in 2005 and *A Transilvanian in Bucharest* in 2012.

A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country can be regarded as by far Prof. Ilie Rad's most valuable masterpiece bringing together various journalistic genres that transform all together this book into a labyrinth of knowledge in which each of us would be happy to get lost.

The most amazing part of discovering Prof. Ilie Rad's book is that this particular creation proves the trueness of one of the oldest sayings in Romanian, an expression stating that the blood can never turn into water, saying which makes us think once more of the power that our roots have upon us and *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* can easily prove to anyone that no matter how far away from home you get, your origins will follow you closely. This is exactly what happens to these two Romanian travelers, Prof. Ilie Rad and his wife Doina in the book: they travel half the world, being 36 hours away from home, and they get to discover an unseen face of Romania right there in the kanga-roos land. Prof. Ilie Rad invites us, with his specific enthusiasm to meet great Romanian personalities that have been driven away from Romania and who got to build a new home for them in Australia. Among them we can find Anamaria Beligan, one of the most famous Romanian modern writers, who emigrated to Australia in 1992, her mother Dana Lovinescu and Eugen G. Ionescu, a well-known sports journalist, who left Romania in 1965. Prof. Ilie Rad's unrested and engaged effort also brought to light from the time's dust documents that have remained unknown until know. *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* gives us the opportunity to have an exclusive glimpse over two radio interviews with his Majesty of Romania King Mihai, which were recorded in 1993 and 1995, a period when visiting Romania was strictly forbidden for His Majesty King Mihai. The interviews were recorded by 3ZZZ Radio, a station which broadcasted radio programs for the emigrants. 1993 was the first time when the Romanian emigrants heard exquisite details about his Majesty's abdication. Thanks to Prof. Ilie Rad this two interviews were brought to Romania and the book *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* makes them more accessible than we could have ever imagined.

If you think that the magic hat, as I can fairly call this book, has gone out of surprises you couldn't be more wrong, since

this travel journal still has some fireworks prepared for everybody's expectations. Among the exclusive documents also lies what is probably the most surprising discovery of this whole journey: a red notebook with plastic covers, that was proven to belong to the communist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu, a notebook that was taken by Eugen Ionescu from the Central Committee Room of PCR (communist political party of Romania) and brought in the far away Australian island. This highly valuable piece ends up in Prof. Ilie Rad's hands, who describes the notes from this notebook under one the first chapter's subsections under the title: *One Day in Nicolae Ceauşescu's Life*. The connection to the communist dictator doesn't end up here since the author also discovers during his talks with Dana Lovinescu that she was the official translator for the Australian party during the last travel abroad of Nicolae and Elena Ceauşescu, in 1989, just before the revolution. This encounter with Dana Lovinescu gives Prof. Ilie Rad the chance to extend his research and to try to sums up the main events of this last journey abroad of the Romanian communist dictator. This sudden revival of Nicolae Ceausescu through the red notebook and an unexpected visit to Dali's Paintings Exhibition in Melbourne brings up long ago lost memories from the author's childhood, that give birth to another surprising connection: it seems that Salvador Dali wrote at least one letter to Nicolae Ceauşescu, subject with is also reveled in Prof. Ilie Rad's book. These new discoveries that are discussed in chapters one and four of *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* lead to what Anamaria Beligan says while describing this book: the fact that before this journey you could have never suspected that the city of Melbourne was hiding secrets of the nightmarish dictator, that was guilty for hers and many others emigration to Australia in the first place.

Another important parts of the book a *Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* are the history of literature researches and journalistic studies that Prof. Ilie Rad develops during his stay in Sydney by following the traces of another very important Romanian writer, Lucian Boz (1908-2003) and his correspondence with other writers such as the Ioan Miclău, and Horea Ion Groza. Some letters from Lucian Boz's period of exile can be also discovered while reading *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country.* Prof. Ilea Rad seems to be in this case the living proof that the further away you get from a place the closer you get to the center of it. All this unknown connections between Romania and Australia that Prof. Ilie Rad struggled so hard to bring into the spotlight after his journey should be enough to convince everybody.

Last but not least we shouldn't ignore the fact that besides all this unpredictable surprises *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country* also takes seriously the traveling experience by describing the visits to Parliament of Victoria's State, the amazing Sydney Opera building, the experiences while visiting the Dali and Pompei Exhibitions, the Romanian Ortodox Church from Melbourne and the quarters of the *Ancient Altar* and *Iosif Vulcan* magazines.

The structure of the book is also very appealing for the public, being divided in four main chapters: *The Australian Journey*, Interviews, *Romanian Writers from Australia* and *Studies and Articles, Literature History and Journalism.* Prof. Ilie Rad writes in a very naturalistic style and confers this book everything it needs in order to get the reader's attention. Prof. Ilie Rad invites us to retake this amazing journey having him, the writer, the journalist and the researcher as a guide during this whole fascinating experience: *A Journey to the Kangaroo's Country.*

ADELA TETEAN-VINȚELER

Gheorghe Săsărman, *Între oglinzi paralele. Publicistică (1998-2009)* *[Between Parallel Mirrors. Journalistic Work (1998-2009)]*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj, 2009

The articles, collected in the volume *Between Parallel Mirrors. Journalistic Work (1998-2009)*, give us the shape and the feel of the exile experience. Gheorghe Săsărman, who was politically constrained to abandon his activity as a media writer, to live Romania in 1983 and settled in Münich, Germany, inserted his internal feelings in his journalistic work, creating a spiritual autobiography, containing important reflections on exile and related conditions.

The articles, which were published in Romanian newspapers and magazines and in various publications of the Romanian diaspora, are centered on the feeling of being uprooted. In the introduction, the author explains that "the immigrant lives that between parallel mirrors. One is his native country, in whose reflection he doesn't find himself anymore and the other one is the adoptive country, in whose frame, his image, much too pale, cannot take shape".

The debate is continued in the article published in *Our Tribune*, issue 48, January-March 2005, in which he reinforces the idea that being uprooted has become a common occurrence in these times. "The Romanian is a big exiled [...] and then you outrage him treating him as an immigrant or he is an immigrant, all great and especially authentic (survivor with evidence, for instance, of the famous pioneers of the Wild West, on his car is then written in silver letters I' am a native American), but do not insult him somehow passing it among the diaspora, and so on", states Gheorghe Săsărman.

He also examines special problems of intellectuals in exile, one of them being the integration into host country's culture.

The degree of host culture adoption is measured as identification not only with the host country, but also to host country language. "The exiled writers of any nationality are undoubtedly a distinct subspecies, doomed to an existence par excellence problematic. Few are those who succeed, usually with a price ignored, the great performance to truly integrate into host country's culture. Being a wanderer, writer or not, you are first of all a human being, you face everyday needs…you write. You have your heart set on writing. And only aware of this necessity starts great, terrible disorder. First of all, what do you write? What do you communicate, the reality that you feel that you are able to describe, that you are the one called to carry it away from a mortal destiny. Is it

Homeland's reality? What do you know about it? Its image circulated in host country media is rather suspicious, doesn't inspire you much confidence […] To write about your new home? ... What do you know about this country, its people, its culture, and even about the present? Can you compare yourself with its citizens…?"

The exile creates different problems for intellectuals, but those are not monopolizing Gheoghe Săsărman's journalistic work collected in the volume. Bringing together an impressive array of distinguished interdisciplinary themes this book provides an incisive account of the state of the art – literature, architecture, painting and sculpture.

An important contribution of this book is its attention to current issues. For example, the author examines, in the article "The Romanian literature in the world of the third millennium. The virtual reality – a spirit escaped from the bottle", how changes in our culture and in the business world affect the kind of books available to us today, and what they could mean for the future of literature. "Honestly speaking, I, for one, don't think literature will disappear, which would be a shame; I rather think, that it would suffer structural changes, probably regarding it bolster and media broadcasting".

The book also comprises several reviews of art exhibition, such as "In daily sad poetry", in which the author expresses his opinion towards contemporary art and its evolution.

In conclusion, therefore, I think this is a book that contains much of value and even though collections like these are always going to be small sellers, next to the novels, they might just end up being the most treasured.

ANGELICA TEOCAN

Robert Turcescu, *Bucureștiul – chinurile și facerea*, Editura Mașina de scris, București, 2012

Born on May 3, 1975 in Pitești, Robert Turcescu is one of the most daring Romanian TV producers and journalists, who has never been afraid to ask uncomfortable questions to his guests. As he says: "For me, freedom is synonymous to the power of asking questions and getting answers, and journalism is the only profession which makes me feel really free. Give me a pen and a sheet of paper on which I can draw question marks and I am ready anytime to start all over!" He debuted in 1993 as a reporter at the *Curierul Național* newspaper, then he became editor, reporter at various magazines and newspapers, TV presenter. For his activity he was awarded several prizes: First Prize for Civic Journalism offered by the Bucharest City Hall
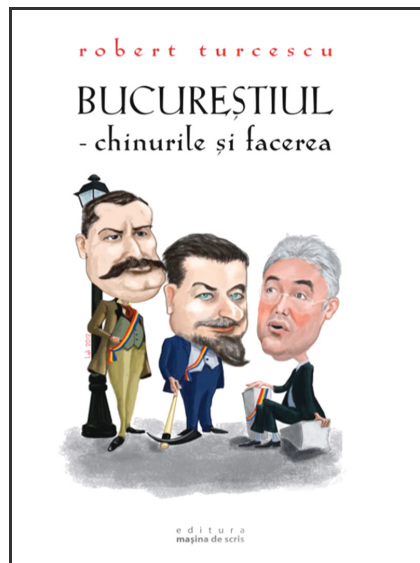
and the Henkel Inc. (1997), the Romanian Press Club Award for radio reporting (2001), CNA Award for best radio talk show – "Romania Live" (2002), Professional Television Association award for best television talk show – "100%" (2004), "Alexandra Indrieș" Award for "contribution to the democratization of Romania", awarded by the Timișoara Society (2005). The novel *Dincolo*, published in 2000, by the Seviris Publishing House, Brașov marks the debut of Robert Turcescu as novelist. Then followed: *Dans de Bragadiru*, *Cum se vede România în direct* (Polirom, Iași, 2004), *Fiare vechi* (Polirom, Iași, 2005) and *Istorie recentă 100%* (Humanitas, Bucharest, 2009). Three years later we have the pleasure to meet him again as the author of *Bucureștiul - chinurile și facerea* [Bucharest - Torment and Creation] recently published by Mașina de scris Publishing House (Bucharest). The author carefully chooses the launch site - Bastille bookshop. For those who do not know Bastille bookshop built in 1913, this is housed in one of the heritage buildings of the capital. The library still retains the elegance of old Bucharest houses. The volume is published under special graphics. We are pleasantly surprised by the quality of the paper and photos, by the quality of the reproductions of the fragments from the old newspapers and magazines. The same attention for detail can be found throughout the volume. The volume has five main chapters, each with suggestive titles (stories linking "Little Paris" of "Grand Paris" ... or where the idea of this book started, Three Mayors, Three Epochs, The Same Town, Vision on Bucharest: needs and perspectives in three different eras, Three mayors who paved Bucharest: Mayor "Smokescreen", Mayor "Pick hammer", Mayor "Cinder Block", Mayor, media and public opinion: what has changed and what has not changed in 120 years) through which the reader makes a fascinating journey in time throughout the press of the time. A merit of this volume is the selection of the relevant fragments from the newspapers articles. In this approach R. Turcescu was aided by his journalist experience, personal culture and, not least, by his remarkable sense of humor. The author gives us the opportunity to admire the fine humor of the articles published by Tudor Arghezi in his magazine Bilete de papagal, to taste the anecdotes, epigrams, songs from the magazine cartoons of Viespea (to the delight of readers, he is reproducing the "Song of Pake" published on October 7, 1890). We have also the opportunity to feel the aggressiveness of the articles of Stelian Popescu published in his newspaper Universul. As we go along reading the old articles, we notice the debates and feel the passions generated by the Mayors' initiatives. They had the misfortune to be innovators, to be visionaries, they decided to put their personal interests aside, and work for the city. At the same time, because of the way the volume is structured, the author gives us the opportunity to either read the entire book at once or just fragments, so we can enjoy stages of the history of Bucharest that interests us the most. It is a book easy to understand, easy to read, informative and relaxing at the same time, despite the large amount of information. We appreciate the objectivity of Mr. Turcescu who selected the most appropriate fragments from the articles published in the local newspapers: some were favorable to the three primaries and some were defamatory news. He also is expressing his opinions only at the end of the book, in a confined space, leaving to the reader the possibility to judge and give the final verdict.

It is a book that stirs the readers' curiosity, especially outsiders' because it reveals an unknown history of our capital. The story takes us on the wings of time starting with the XIX century (back when the mayor was Emilian Pake-Protopopescu)

till the XXI century (the time when Adriean Videanu was the capital's mayor) and demonstrates that even though the times have changed, human nature and people's complaints stayed the same. Moreover, in the first part of the volume the author reveals details about the process of systematization and modernization Paris went through in the second half of the XIX century. We all know the name Haussmann. Due to the larger stores, this is one of the well-known boulevards in Paris. But few people know about the contribution of the baron Haussmann to the development and modernization of Paris. We find out that he is the one who changed the face of Paris through his innovative ideas and the courage to face the complaints of the Parisians: "Paris, advertised by all travel agents for the last 150 years, is the result of the modern era, of this urban vision, airy, geometric and generous, sometimes regrettably made at the expense of the heritage", but "few know that Baron Haussmann has paid dearly in terms of public image, for what today is so appreciated as his achievements." (p. 7). In my opinion it is a very inspired idea to include this short presentation of the history of Paris because it allows us to make a comparison between the way they conducted the work in Paris compared to Bucharest, the reactions of the media and of the political parties (which first were supported, but when the public dissatisfaction and the media attacks intensified, they withdrew their support).

Returning to Bucharest – "... a city which was built in [shock], often chaotic." (p. 230), and where "... people were always disturbed by the sites." (p. 231) - because our capital and three of its mayors played the main role, those who had been the most active and contributed the most to the improvement of the lives of its inhabitants. We have the opportunity to discover the Bucharest of the XIX century, then an intermediate stage, in the '30s, during the

term of Demetru-Ion Dobrescu (who used to be an attorney), and then he brings us back to the modern times, when the city hall was run by Adriean Videanu. The author says: "There are three strong personalities who wanted to apply for Bucharest their own vision on long term, willing to accept the risk and pay the political price on the road already opened by their famous Parisian counterpart." (p. 13). Mr. Turcescu presented us three eras, with the same problems and reactions.

All three mayors considered the improvement of the infrastructure as a significant part of their activity, a common element found in all three eras being the street pavement. The restoration of the infrastructure gives us the opportunity to upgrade different networks - sewer, water, gas, electricity, various cable burial systems. All these works do nothing to hinder life. The three mayors launched several warnings, but nobody took them seriously. We all know the principle "from words to action it's a long way." All three drew criticism and even people's hatred. "The city has become an ordeal, and the time lost in traffic is used fully to curse the mayor." (p. 92). We find out that some of the drivers used to put stickers on their cars with the message: "I hate Videanu!" (p. 149)

All mayors were accused of racketeering. Although times have changed, Turcescu believes that many of the principles applicable in 1930 are still valid today: the mayor must fight abuse, bureaucracy and corruption, has to be prudent, to complete his projects/decisions regardless of how they are received. There is a rift between what the mayor is doing and what the media presents.

We appreciate Mr. Turcescu honesty towards some press articles which he calls "harsh, acidic, sometimes without limits." Often the press was the one who boosted fury of the capital's residents, tarnished

or diminished the merits and all the desire to sell newspapers to support the ideas of a political party or group of interest. Some of the nicknames bandied about in the media are unfair and undeserved "Great Elector", "Bucharest's chief electoral gangs of thugs", "opportunist and demagogue", "Priest Pake" and "heir of monks", "political chameleon par excellence", "doer", "political traitor", "man without honor" (Pake Protopopescu); "Dobrescu-Magnificentius", "urban Jilava", "king of mankind", "fiance of follies", "popular comedian", "the mayor pick hammer", "city clown", "melancholic clown", "candidate to town hall dementia" (Demetru I. Dobrescu); "construction worker", "cinder block mayor" (A. Videanu).

As for Paris, the effects of their reforms were appreciated only long after their mandates ended. Pake and Dobrescu had an advantage over Videanu - part of the media supported their projects and presented them to the public favorably. In addition, they were perfect communicators, perhaps due to their profession. Videanu's visionary effects will be seen much later and the next mayors will benefit from.

Only a small part of the Bucharest's inhabitants know who they should be grateful to for the present structure of the city. This is one of the reasons for which this book is important. He hopes that it will be read by many of the Bucharest's inhabitants.

It is also interesting that the volume captures various aspects of the human life, the political pulse of the times, the social and the sociological order to create a picture of the social context in which politics played a major role. The volume is full of life. The center stage of the book is occupied by the people - the politicians, the journalists or the ordinary citizens of the capital.

CARMEN ŢÂGŞOREAN

Monica Zvirjinschi, *Să spui te iubesc o singură dată* [Say I Love You Only Once], Albatros, Bucureşti, 1988

Monica Zvirjinschi is a Philology graduate, majoring in Romanian and French. Well known journalist, former director of TVR International, New York Top Business correspondent, organiser of the Salon for Romanian Artists Everywhere, each of these aspects reveal a complex cultural personality, devoted to the study of humanity in general, as well as to improving the artist's condition.

Say I Love You Only Once was published by Albatros, in 1988. The book was launched in a landscape rather lacking in writings of this type, and presents in an objective literary manner the life of a "field" reporter specialised in the "social", thus avoiding the political and being able to remain in a human reality of individuals following life paths which are specific to an entire society.
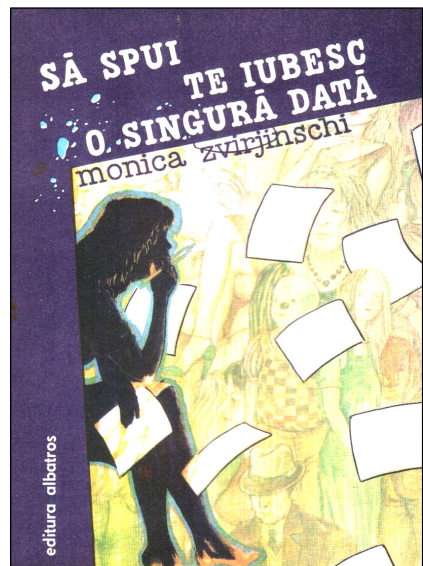
The author, as the true journalist she is, manages to present directly, without any needless romance, extremely different life environments, ranging from life in a circus (the case of Robert and the Rujan troupe), with all the challenges such a lifestyle entails, to the quiet country living of a happy and cohesive family (the family of Cristina, Cornelia's best friend, which she meets as a result of a rescue initiative); from the less usual life of a brilliant artist, in which sacrificial motivations change – this story being told from a much more subjective point of view, that of the daughter and lover, as love is the only bridge to understanding such a deindividualised destiny -, to the routine-laden life of a bourgeois family (that of Aura, Cornelia's step sister, and which also requires an understanding eye in order not to judge the moral choices of those involved). She presents all this without idealising – the children coming from each of these environments are either integrated or rebels, regardless of the environment they were raised in, but according to each one's nature and calling.

Following the destiny of her „cases" she manages to take us beyond appearances, side-taking or fake value judgements since, as the stories progress, she keeps her critical eye, losing the stencils entirely at the end.

The novel's characters are well outlined, visible, touched by the breath of reality specific to the journalistic style. They come from somewhere and behave according to their own nature. They do not follow a pattern, but they manage to become an individualised combination of environment, personality and free choice.

The striking thing about these characters is that they – just like the journalist – live in an environment of maximum honesty. This environment is ensured precisely by the fundamental honesty of the central character, who becomes a confessor who, in turn, reconstructs her own system of values which in the end leads to a better understanding of herself.

From this point of view, the novel is also one of initiation, as caught up in analysis, the character gradually discovers herself, questions her choices, convictions and morals, finally reassessing her destiny and direction.

The way in which the work camp is presented – especially the way in which the young people of the time relate to it – is interesting for today's reader. One would venture to assume that in this, reality replaces fiction for the most part.

The youth, the most vulnerable but also the most free of prejudice, adopt the ideology of the time in a constructive manner. Beyond obligations, they manage to cultivate values – companionship, loyalty, honesty and moral cleanliness – without having ideological motivation but rather stemming from the existing context.

In a world in which things are done "because one has to", those who sneakily find their way out of the influence of this "must do" are punished as such (the Rexona case). In the apparently simple world presented, perhaps the most important point of view – and another theme in the novel – is morality, the legitimacy of choices. If at the beginning (the most obvious side of the character's evolution) Cornelia operates according to a pattern – having a pattern even for the fact that things are not "black" or "white" – she finally gives everything up and reaches the conclusion that nothing functions by the book, that the geometric schemes she learned from her professor, Alf – formerly the alpha and omega of her journalistic vision – are dry and that reality lies beyond them.

This is where the character's journey – or better said her birth – ends. Out the door, in search of a few hours' sleep, comes a new person, jaded but following her own path, a journalist now devoted to the much simpler love for her fellow human beings.

LACRIMA BALINT

Ilie Rad (editor), *Cenzura în România [Censorship in Romania]*, Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2012

I was born in 1987. When the Revolution began, leading to the end of the communist regime, I was two years old. I grew up in times of freedom, without having the fear that something I might say could turn against me very badly if it did not please the regime. For this particular reason, *Censorship in Romania*, the volume edited by Professor Ilie Rad, raised a lot of questions. Was it really possible for something like that to happen? This is, I think, the thought that remained in the back of my mind while I was reading the book.

Censorship is a little approached subject, but Professor Rad had the courage to launch such a challenge during the 10th National Journalism Symposium, with international participation. The volume brings together the papers of the experts that attended the event, professors, journalists, and writers. The strong point of this book is that it assembles in its pages both studies and researches and the authors' personal experiences, which gives the phenomenon a more humane side. Censorship is not strictly approached from a theoretical point of view, but – and perhaps the most relevant – from the point of view of those who were in the first line during the war against censorship.
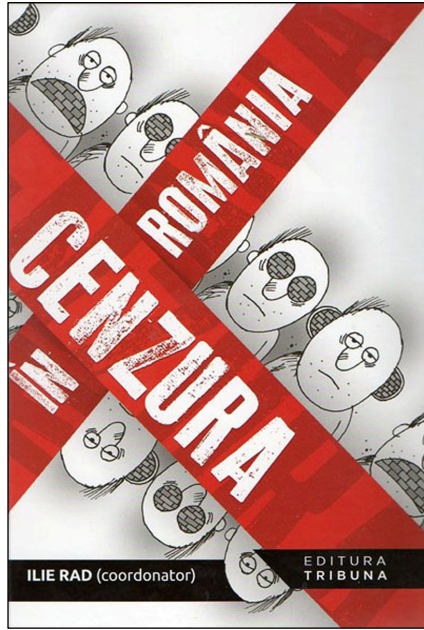
From the start, I have to point out that the volume does not solely deal with the issues of the communist censorship, although this is a consistent part of it, likewise it is a significant part of our national history. For instance, Mircea Popa sheds light on the mechanisms of censorship during the monarchy or during Antonescu's rule, showing that "times of crisis are always refractory to freedom. In order to keep under control the public discontent, the governors and the ones who have the power take the most arbitrary and drastic measures, restraining the freedom of speech, of communication, and the one regarding the publishing of newspapers and books" (p. 277). Sorin Preda talks about censorship taking place in nowadays France, proving that censorship has infiltrated, discretely, all over the world and it still works and it affects us in ways we cannot even begin to understand.

The communist censorship takes up a significant place in the volume, perhaps because it was the most brutal and it left behind memories that are still very much alive. For me, the world described in this volume is somewhat similar to that of Kafka's novels. It is a continuous uprising against a huge and ponderous mechanism, an exhausting path through a mist that is on

the point of engulfing you. Ana Blandiana demonstrates in the text that opens the volume, *From censorship to freedom, to freedom as a form of censorship*, how clenched was the fight for every publishable word, and her opinion is even more advised given her works have been, three times, forbidden by the communist regime.

The involvement of the totalitarian state in the life of every individual was aggressive, and in this context Marta Petreu confesses that what she wrote "had no way of ending the socialist regime of Romania, nor endanger it; but the totalitarian state is not satisfied with only existing – it wants to exist by annulling singularity and individuality in its smallest forms of expression" (p. 43). This constant aggression of the individual is triggered by the communist state's pathological need of information.

Knowledge is power, and in the fear climate instituted by the regime there is no place for such a thing: "Information gives its owner a certain force, of which the regime does not want to miss out (p. 39). On the other hand, Marta Petreu also observes, the political censorship is set out to control everything, "from the political decisions to the poets' imagination" (p. 41). The issue of censorship in poetry was a sensitive one. Ion Pop considers, in his paper, that the phenomenon targets "the poetic, figurative speech, the polysemantic, by excellence, characteristics of the metaphor and of the symbol, of mediated allegoric expression, which – by definition – implies an open reading, with multiple significance reverberations" (p. 62). The censors felt the need to permanently intervene, in order not to leave any room for interpretation.

Even comic books and cross word puzzles have been the object of censorship, as Gelu Teampău demonstrates, especially because they were perceived as „a defining product of capitalism". The sports press, at its turn, was also a victim of this process; proof of this are „the years when about the Soviet Union and the soviet sport one could only write in the superlative" (p. 75). Ilie Rad speaks about censorship understood "not only as the elimination of a part of the text, but also as an adding something extra, usually with a political and ideological content" (p. 321).

The limited space of this book review, unfortunately, does not allow me to discuss each paper published in the volume. Writers and journalists, like Dumitru Graur, Nicolae Melinescu, Marta Petreu, Ion Pop, Mircea Popa, Romulus Rusan, Adriana Săftoiu, Gheorghe Săsărman, alongside professors and researchers, such as Cseke Péter, Maria Danilov, Liviu Malița, Gelu Neamțu, Viorel Nistor, Marian Petcu, Doina Rad, Ilie Rad, together with some young authors (Constantina Raveca Buleu, Emilia Șercan, Gelu Teampău, Mihaela Teodor, Cristian Vasile) all shared the effort of completing all the pieces of the censorship puzzle.

The structure of the volume, however, reveals the great effort of encompassing the reality of the censorship. Starting from some *Fundamental Texts*, going through *Conceptual Diversities*, the volume reaches the point where authors share their *Experiences and Opinions*, in order for the discussion to enter into a more abstract area with the chapter *Studies and Researches* and with a short incursion in the press censorship from Soviet Moldavia. The theoretical contributions and the testimonies of the authors who experienced, first hand, the „terror", transforms the volume in a sort of encyclopedia of the communist censorship. If one is interested in finding out information about what this phenomenon meant, this book is the place to look for trustworthy information.

Finally, however, I would like to go back to the beginning of this review. Without the experience of the communist regime, for me, the information I found here helped me to draw a sketch, in my mind, of a past era. At this moment two thoughts spring in my mind. The first one is how the consumerist society altered our perception of value. Nowadays, marketing strategies seem to have replaced literary critics. A book is valuable as long as people talk about it and it sells. There is always the risk that true value may get lost in all this noise that surrounds us. My second and last thought – I have come across it in many forms in the volume – refers to the changes that came alongside the regime change, regarding the freedom of speech. Nowadays, we often talk about economic censorship, applied in areas that vary from literature to sports press. Ana Blandiana makes, in the texts that opens the volume, a shocking observation: „the freedom of speech diminished the importance of the word". We abuse words, and they lose their strength. We are confronted with a bigger threat than censorship. The new means of communication and online social platforms lead to anonymity and uniformity, "because they stimulate intellectual inaction, easy comfort, automatism, while, as strange as it may seem, institutional censorship stimulated the courage of those who dared to overcome it and, eventually, it lead to free thought and the defiance of the dictatorship" (p. 116).

All in all, let us not forget that words only have the power to build worlds. Communication is not an act of simply transmitting information; it is an act of constructing signification. After reading about the sometimes terrible and frightening experiences of those who fought censorship, I begin to see the true value of words. Words bring and give power – therefore, they should be used wisely and not be wasted.

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