

## BETWEEN SELF-REFLEXIVITY AND BARBARITY

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The doubts and questions around the dominant paradigm in Western society, which emerged in the late 1960's, may be perceived today, I agree, simply as a set of commonplaces, if not as something downright obsolete. The hypothesis they engendered, though, even if largely confirmed ever since, still requires continuous reframing. It assumes that the pattern of thought, evaluation and perception specific to the modern industrial civilisation yields – *à contre coeur* and not without resistance – to a completely new order or pattern. This kind of gradual, sometimes hidden process of yielding enables the birth and growth of some different values, often in radical opposition to the old ones, and a subtle metamorphosis is under way not only in social institutions or power relations but even in people's way of approximating and negotiating their identity. The continuous reframing and reshaping I have previously referred to has to do mostly with the urge to find the adequate concepts and ideas for understanding what is going on in a «risk society».

In this context, I find Ulrich Beck's ideas most salient. What he suggests is that we read the present world not in terms of postmodernity but in terms of **reflexive modernisation** [1], even if the idea itself dates back to earlier times.

In 1931, commenting on Nietzsche's syntagm, «the shattering of all values», Oswald Spengler remarked that this phenomenon «represents the very intimate character of *any* civilisation. The latter thus begins to assign a different quality, a different meaning, and a different function to all the forms of its past culture. It no longer produces anything; all it does is to **interpret**». (my emphasis) [2: 524]

The last sentence in the quotation, contextualized in a contemporary world in which the sociologist Manuel Castells envisages as essential the people's ability to process information [3], could be rephrased as follows: It [a civilisation]

only produces to the extent to which it can interpret. In other words, we find ourselves at a stage in which reflexivity, «interpretation», holds the main creative or «productive» potential. The extent, to which this potential is activated or, on the contrary, kept in a latent state, depends, of course, on the redressing of the «balance» (of the «right measure» or «equilibrium»). Also, it depends on what Jean-François Mattei has identified as a «civilisation's capacity to 'unveil, in a **virtuous circle**, its own barbarity, questioning (...) **the recurrent effects of violence and destruction** – my emphasis – which are to be traced in its very substance.» [4: 93]

What would happen, though, if this capacity were missing? Or if it were insufficient or ambivalent? If its own repressed barbarity were projected upon alterity (cultural, conceptual, religious or simply human)? [5] One might assume that, in such circumstances, the hermeneutic practice, however spectacular and impressive its results may be, does nothing but burden, exhaust and, in the end, completely block, the creative impulse. It opens the door to the desert or to... barbarity. Despite appearances, what lies beneath these concepts is not so easy to identify as such. There are many traps within, as well as enough confusion (often stemming from arrogance). How could one distinguish, in the social reality, between the effects of growth and of re-assembling – which presuppose manifestations of benign discrepancy – and the effects of barbarity? Jean-François Mattei gives a possible answer:

«One may talk about an effect of barbarity every time an action, a creation or an institution of the socially involved person **no longer creates meaning but destroys or consumes it** – my emphasis – in a kind of "parasitizing" of or sponging on previous works or of their historical residue.» [4: 27] This description may be applied to communism in order to grasp what it really signified for people. What would be the proportion

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between the meaning which is produced and the meaning which is destroyed, consumed and "parasitized" under communism? When are we going to proceed to an objective and thorough evaluation of the damage inflicted by communism, but also of its gain, in terms of human treasury? It is possible that, within this framework of **inertial barbarity** or **post-barbarity**, it would be easier for us to process in a **different code** – from that of imprecation, pamphlet, satire, and fierce or deliciously ironic and contemptuous incrimination – the avalanche of events, the Maya of the present.

Actually, Mattei emphasises, **barbaros** did not even initially refer to a «barbarian» or a «foreigner». «**Barbarofonus** is someone who mumbles, who articulates poorly and, by extension, spoils his/her own language before spoiling others along with their cultures.» [4: 39]

### Reflections on an Expired Totalisation

Professor Willis W. Harman, Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Politics from the Stanford Research Institute, wrote in 1976:

«As the Reformation and the Copernican revolution were accompanied by a time of troubles and a century of religious wars, so we can expect (in this speeded-up age) that a fundamental paradigm change will bring with it at least a decade or two of tumultuous and of relative social disruption...» [6: 640-641]

What is distressing is not so much the fact that this researcher's prophecy was fulfilled, but that, at least in the field of social sciences, the "fundamenta" character of the paradigmatic change is still being downplayed and obscured through laborious efforts to recover, consolidate and multiply the smashed pieces or fragments of the old paradigm, to retotalise what we may label in an only apparently cynical turn of phrase, an **expired totalisation**. [7]

It is an approach to which not even researchers from the post-communist countries are immune as long as they cannot overcome a certain complex they have developed about the unfortunate (and not easily accessible, in terms of excellence) relationship with the paradigm in its «perfect» (fully accomplished) form – the old one. Not only does such a complex obliterate their vision but, when it contaminates them, it blocks any considerable creative impetus they might have, mummifies them and **turns them into mummifying agents**. One of Havel's old thoughts comes and flickers its **reminder**, at the hazy

boundaries of our consciousness: «Somewhere, in the very foundations of the social power which took the path of entropy (and whose supreme wishes would be to liken the man to a computer in which any inserted program could be operated with the certainty of its remarkable accomplishment) lies the *principle of death*. And the stench of death can be felt even in the image of the 'order' which this type of power promotes, order in which any manifestation of true life – an original action, a personal expression, a unique idea, an initiative or an unforeseen desire must be necessarily perceived as a sign of "disorder", of "chaos", of "anarchy".» [8: 41]

What I actually wish to emphasise is that the unconscious emotional matrix [9:307] of a specific expired totalisation (like the one specific to Romanian communism) renders us more receptive or more vulnerable to the mermaid song of the global expired totalisation.

We should not be surprised, then, that even when it comes to dealing with relatively simple matters, the argumentative machinery, connected to the more sophisticated engine of a scientific and cultural complex which absorbs all mental energy, maps out a glum labyrinth made of endless and intricate – never perfect, never complete – bows to abstraction rather than to the slimness of the thought which provides the solution.

Furthermore, one may notice in the case of some researchers a tendency towards restricting *the very essence* of change to the limited sphere of the political and to its frequently mean reasons for action, which deprives them of the chance to enhance, through their reflection and work, the circumstances that allow for the manifestation of that *something else* which is assailing the boundaries of consciousness. A *something else* which has the potential of bringing about a radical, humanistic reconfiguration, even of the political.

I am referring to researchers or «intellectuals» in the narrow sense of the word, as they are defined by Katherine Verdery: «to "be" an intellectual means to make claims to knowledge/value, to have gained a certain degree of social recognition of such claims and to participate in social relationships based on the exchange between claims and recognition.» [10:36-37] Or, states the same author, «I consider "intellectuals" to be the temporary occupants of a **privileged place**– my emphasis – in the formation and dissemination of discourses and thus in the process of devising means through which **society is "mentally perceived"** – my emphasis – by its

members, during the formation of human subjectivity.» [10: 37]

From this perspective, the concept subsumes, besides researchers, all those who compete for the «**privileged place**» in all its four aspects: political, journalistic, managerial and administrative. If those in the first two categories have as an objective the stage (and the central position it offers), those in the last two focus on the backstage and its techniques (from the prompters, to the machinists and to the experts in special effects).

Another consequence of the definition given by Verdery is related to the responsibility of these people for the state of society, which is inevitably determined by the manner – adequate or not – in which society is “mentally perceived”. Such responsibility is evaded and even side-stepped with the help of a tireless incrimination of ethnic flaws, cultural insignificance and “outlooks”.

One of the present-day paradoxes we are being faced with is that many intellectuals with a classical or psycho-sociological background, caught as they are in the web of an insatiable referentiality (the western knowledge of the field which they wish to gain in their turn), which has become relatively accessible to them once communism collapsed, are among those who make **the least use** of the gift – and what a long awaited gift this is – of freedom of thought [11] and speech. Similarly, when one of them does make use of it, s/he is exposed, alone, to the fiercest attacks precisely because, unavoidably, such an act touches ‘sensitive spots’ in our society. Professional solidarity seems to be, at least for the moment being, a condition *sine qua non* not only for rebuilding immunity, but also for applying a way of thinking which is truly sociological. Its shaping presupposes, apart from other factors I am not going to discuss here, both understanding and surpassing the so-called *retrograde amnesia*. This type of amnesia «manifests itself in culture through the fact that cultural memory becomes, in a certain way, detached: recent history is being deliberately ignored while spiritual priorities are being selected from the deepest layers of the past.» [12:188]

It would be, however, wrong and dangerous to let ourselves enraptured exclusively by the groups, technologies, practices, and visions that are mobilised on the building sites of the rehabilitation and refreshing of what we have called, earlier in this study, **expired totalisation**... Even if it is a world that is fascinating precisely because it does not acknowledge – or does not wish to

acknowledge – that it sits at the same time in two different punts, and, subsequently, it puts at stake all its intellectual mastery in order to keep the «weight» evenly distributed, readily adding up the «ballast». [13] But, while the punt (paradigm) which is familiar becomes increasingly heavier, the other punt (paradigm), which is deliberately ignored, becomes lighter, rises in the air and «pulls the other one up», which is, obviously, thematised in terms of management of complexity, crisis or risk. The increasingly fragile balance between the two punts is affected both by the overloading of the former (which translates as «fortification» in terms of management of complexity) and by the lightening (or the vertical distancing) of the latter, which enhances the tension between them («foreign» or «non-rational», approximated by the theory of chaos or strange attractors). In a nutshell, it is a world on the point of being torn apart, while the end of this process remains elusive, a world which an artist of genius like Salvador Dali, envisioned and portrayed more than half a century ago.

The Stanford Professor Willis Harman uses, closely following Thomas Kuhn, the word paradigm [14: 11] as:

«The basic pattern of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and acting associated with a particular vision of reality. As a part of the culture, the paradigm is communicated nonverbally and absorbed unconsciously and largely by example. Its role is primarily an invisible one; the vision of reality on which it is based is seldom reexamined, and the implicit premises it contains are generally unchallenged. By its very nature it is not easily identified, nor can it be concisely deliniated. It is like “common sense”- no one can define it but everyone responds to it...». [6: 641-642]

But keeping in mind all the circumstances which made hardly accessible the old paradigm, does not mean to forget the already known features – as weakened or blurred as they may appear today in the highly-developed societies. Unfortunately, the oblivion becomes a sort of professional training for the ones who, on the both sides of the world’s ladder, are engaged in keeping its implicit premises unchallenged. Needless to say what wrong, even insane paths this could take. Especially while approaching the underdevelopment’ various topics, including the post-communist ones. It is precisely through the mass production of the what could be named, by extending the well-known Bourdieu’s syntagm of «omnibus facts» [15: 17], the omnibus answers, that the available layers of knowledge are

made if not invisible, at least «unpopular», unattractive. By the way, I think it could be useful to consider more closely the way in which the main industrial state paradigm characteristics [16] were adopted in communism. Because it is precisely *that way* that the beginning of the «savage», «corrupted» even grotesque capitalism' was shaped in our country.

### Two Types of Implicitness and «A New Magical Circle»

It is of course hazardous to consider post-communism from the perspective of a global paradigmatic change – to which it opposes resistance or specific passivity yet to be decoded. But the risks are higher if this concept is «grounded» in a fortress with quasi-medieval twists and turns, traps and hide-outs, as is the one where part of the sociological thought is tempted (through the meaningful sparkle of a «residue»? through the call of a new mastership?) to turn for refuge. Chambers of torture with oversized abstractions, labyrinths of bulletproof concepts and shades of some older quarrels about the would-be task of the sociologist might be fatal to the little courage he has left and which he is willing to stake in the game of the end of an époque and of the millennium. Such positioning makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the sociologist to produce, through awareness raising [17], the knowledge necessary to break away from the **undesirable implicitness of the experienced communism and of the imagined or craved for capitalism.** [6: 644]

Gianni Vattimo's following statement may be perceived either as an argument in favor of a cynical resignation, or as a somewhat anxious warning:

«Generally speaking, the intense development of human sciences and the intensification of social communication do not seem to lead to a growth in the society's self-transparency, but rather they seem to function in the opposite direction.» [18: 28]

Considering Vattimo's evaluation, a simple question arises: what is the purpose then of the unrest, the torment, the deadlock of such awareness rising, if these two forms of **undesirable implicitness** would anyway vanish, swept away by whatever brand of *incipit vita nova* or *brave new world*? Indeed, that would be pure nonsense if everything could occur unconsciously, overnight and out of the blue.

Unfortunately, these forms of implicitness seem to be part of the few things which cannot be

solved unconsciously. On the contrary – the longer people are unaware of such implicitness, the stronger it will be defended and the longer it will last (in a sort of magical sympathy with what Mircea Vulcănescu named «The tormented, despaired, gasping, convulsive character of inner contraction which these active returns of the Romanian soul possess».[19:145] ?!) thus blocking the way for the new implicitness, for the new paradigm.

Moreover, let us keep in mind that, after all, **these forms of implicitness come together**, in an **unprecedented combination** whose composition and consequences in psychic space and time are not exactly known. That is because they are still haunting us. The outcome is the corruption of thought and action at a time when, in the highly developed countries, «post-materialism» [20: 40] has become an increasingly debated topic. I find it suitable to mention here Karl Popper's comment on the conflict between cultures. Popper notices that the conflict may lose in value if one of the cultures in conflict considers itself universally superior, and even more if it is regarded as such by the others. [21: 77] This happens – the author remarks – because the possibility of a critical attitude is thus annihilated. «If one of the parties assumes the idea of **its own inferiority** – my emphasis – then its critical attitude of trying to learn from others would be replaced by a sort of blind acceptance, in a **new magical circle**» – my emphasis. [21: 77]

Therefore, it is not at all surprising to see that many authors are still enclosed in this new magical circle and to detect in their comments the – perhaps specific – gloomy mark of such imprisonment. I have taken a sample from Eric Gilder and Anișoara Henrieta Mitrea:

«This late capitalist order would quickly **re-imprison** – my emphasis – all of us, by (...) denying us all any possibility of non-utilitarian existence or of utopian thinking, since the death of the communist project (...). In a world without ideological contrasts, thinking becomes strenuous even in the case of the smart. Instead of thinking, there are **sets of thoughts** – my emphasis – instantly available to individuals now belonging to socio-economic groups which are better and better defined and easier to define through these sets of ideas which they operate with.» [22: 231-232]

The picture is, indeed, very familiar. On the one hand there are the processes (the utilitarian exacerbation, the denial of utopia, the blurring of ideological contrasts, the strenuous thinking), on the other hand the «objects». «The sets of

thoughts» moving in distinct and more or less closed socio-economic groups are part of the mindscape. But what the two authors seem to overlook is the fact that the mindscape itself, far from being a fatal development aiming at re-imprisonment, is in fact the result of some symbolic works performed by «workers» whose grasp on contemporary reality is constantly narrowed down, caricatured and staged the baroque way, by the simultaneous action of the two forms stipulated by implicitness.

Within his analysis of the pluralisation of the contemporary world and of the metaphorical return to polytheism, the French sociologist Michel Maffessoli remarks at a certain point that: «there are moments in which societies become more and more complex by making use of procedures that are also complex. The purified classicism may be followed by a luxurious baroque. And as classicism is linear, visual, closed, analytical and liable to clear analyses, it is known that the baroque is in a process of becoming, it is clustered, open, synthetic, and leading to a relative obscurity or at least to an approach relying on *chiaroscuro*.» [23: 192]

If we admit that even in the post-communist societies such «complex procedures» – more or less **baroque** – are at work, we may presume that, on the one hand their unfolding is marked by ambivalence and on the other hand, just because of this ambivalence, it is the «relative obscurity» area that is primarily augmented. It is an orientation which paradoxically results from the ambitious endeavour to retrieve the classical categories of characteristics, by also making use of logocratic approaches. Thus, in Pareto's terms, the **residues** are several times secured through the – baroque – opportunity of the **easy production** of quite «clustered» **derivations**.

Let us now return to Gilder and Mitrea with whom, indeed, thinking becomes stiff not because it would be fatally trapped in a contrastless world, but due to a certain ideological uniformity which it itself has engendered, and also due to a **uniformity imposed** by the taboo-isation [24: 30] of the «contrast» (identified, without any reflection, with the forbidden – since «communist» – one) and by the **psychological contamination**.

Psychologist Dan David defines the latter as follows: «Psychological contamination refers to the manner in which false or irrelevant information unconsciously influences us – without our will or ability to control it – our behaviour, the way we think and take decisions, and our own emotions.» [25: 181] On the contrary – writes the author – the

more we are aware of the falsehood of the information and the harder we try to prevent it on a conscious level, the better the contamination succeeds. «It is from here that a pragmatic suggestion derives: if you want to manipulate one, offer him/her false information, without considering the fact that one knows it is false; this shall be expressed in his/her implicit, unconscious behaviour» [25: 123]. On the other hand, decontamination may hypothetically be performed if the subject is exposed to a contrasting informational content [25: 123]. According to the pattern of the «sanitary belt» [26] already mentioned, the author refrains from contextualizing the concept under both communism and post-communism.

Let us now consider the way in which this approach on conditioning is helpful in understanding «stiff, strenuous thinking». I believe this perspective to be useful if we define contamination merely as an overlapping or intertwining of two layers, each containing a different symbol for the same two objects, as follows:

Layer no.1: communism +, capitalism - and

Layer no.2: communism -, capitalism +

The two layers – whose coexistence, blurred as it may be, cannot be denied – might be regarded, to a great extent, as **neutralizing** each other. Therefore, the **zero degree**, the «ideological uniformity», the obstruction of thinking and its anxious refuge into «sets of thoughts».

The description above is obviously a mere initiation, a rather rudimentary sketch of what might be called a **two-layered contamination pattern**. This pattern is self-sufficient in the attempt to approximate the «ray» [27] of the magical circle. The resulting «sets of thoughts» would thus be expressions of the «innocent» or «allowed» (or *safe*) retrieval of the contrast or of the difference, on the secure level of inter-groups and even intra-group relations (as the frequent quarrels between members of the same party or the same intellectual group have proven).

Although this last aspect might be considered, from a certain point of view to be a positive sign of some amelioration of character [28: 36], it is especially, a symptom of a horizon dramatically narrowed by the unfortunate combination of constraints of the implicitness – **the magic circle** mentioned by Popper!

Why dramatic? Because, first of all, it makes it impossible for us to properly use or process -

assuming that we receive it - essential information about the world that we are and the world we are in. As James Halloran says:

«People might have the necessary information on any given subject, but they might not have *the social skills* -my emphasis- of translating the information into adequate social action.» [29: 38]

This has unrivalled consequences in a post-communist social space: the overbidding of imitation but also the use of failure in its «implementation» and effectiveness, in order to increase the «bank» of arguments for the identity negativity. Furthermore - and this also applies to our situation - «Others may also have the information, but they might have *conflicting information*, as well - my emphasis - or opposing attitudes or *past experiences*» - my emphasis-. [29: 38]

Therefore, it is not so much «the late capitalist order», mentioned by Gilder and Mitrea that is responsible for the «the denial of non-utilitarian or utopian possibilities of thinking», but the «conflicting information» regarding not only our social nature, but also our psychological and spiritual nature, as human beings. Even though on the surface it bears the linguistic marks of democracy, the burden of the unspoken world - be it social, psychological or otherwise - encourages the conservation of the valences of unhappiness, or «unluckiness» of a cultural pattern which, through victimisation and self-victimisation, preserves the trauma and/or the traces of authoritarianism. Notice how accurately Theodor Reik presents it, let's call it, *exhibitionist* nature:

«We know that it is a psychological necessity for masochism to have witnesses,

spectators or confidants to the discomfort and suffering. In the social form of masochism this feature assumes such a form that the persons concerned are far from concealing their defeats, their bad luck, their failures and mistakes, but they hook or crook manage to inform their friends, their family, their acquaintances, and even strangers of these mishaps. The offense and disadvantage are demonstrated, as it is the fate, the lack of any chance, and the fact that one is predestinated to suffer shipwreck. The masochist does not hide his misery; he shows it to everybody, he propagates it...». [30: 318]

The pressure towards conformity exerted by the authoritarian cultural pattern, in our country, is still so high that very often even the happier circumstances or hypostases are either:

1. **decoded in masochistic terms** (i.e. persons who respond to a compliment like «You look good!» with the concise formula «Yes, but actually everything is rotten on the inside» or with a more detailed account of troubles of all sorts, diseases, high cost of medicines etc.),

2. **diminished** (through «beginner's luck», «by accident» or «exhausting work», «chronic fatigue», «nervous wreck») or, finally,

3. **relativised** (through a complex reply such as: provisional character, uncertainty, anticipation of more or less «punitive» consequences).

Finally, I would just mention the link between such an inertial cultural pattern and Vattimo's «magic circle». As long as the burden of the unspoken world is still so heavy, one can hardly see a way out.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Beck, U., *Risk Society, Towards a New Modernity*, Sage Publications, 1992
2. Spengler, O., *Le déclin de l'Occident, Esquisse d'une morphologie de l'histoire universelle, première partie, Forme et réalité*, Librairie Gallimard, 1931
3. Castells, M., «Flows, Networks, and Identities: A Critical Theory of the Information Society», in *Critical Education in the New Information Age*, Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, inc., 1999
4. Mattei, J.F., *La barbarie intérieure, Essai sur l'immonde moderne*, P.U.F., 1999
5. There are many examples of such a projection of barbarity. Among the most recent ones, I would mention the repression of the Jedwabne Jewish community ( Jan T. Gross, *Vecinii*, Editura Polirom, 2002) and G.W. Bush's 'Axis of Evil'
6. Harman, W.W., «The Social Implication of Psychic Research», în Edgar D. Mitchell, *Psychic Exploration, A Challenge for Science*, Capricorn Books, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1976

7. It is as if a multitude of beings were concerned (and making use of the most ingenious technical procedures) with the repair, bit by bit, of the shell of a huge (sacred or **dogmatic**) egg, (using the well-known metaphors of Brancusi and Ion Barbu), while completely ignoring... the miraculous being just coming out of it!
8. Havel, V., *Viața în adevăr*, Editura Univers, București, 1997
9. See the theoretical foundation of the **social character** concept, given by Erich Fromm (1941, 1965) in *Escape fom Freedom*, Avon Books, 1965. This quote may be useful here: „The fact that ideas have an emotional matrix is of the utmost importance, because it is the key to the understanding of the spirit of a culture. Different societies or classes within a society have a specific character, and on its basis different ideas develop and became powerful,” in *op. cit.*, p.307
10. Verdery, K., *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, Humanitas, 1994
11. Which is often restrained to the freedom to approach a topic or a theoretical ramification without contextualisation in the present or recent social life. A random example is *Minciună, contrafacere, simulare (Lie, Counterfeit, Simulation)* Polirom (1997), by Constantin Cuceș. Even if theoretically decent, it preserves an amazing distance, maybe even a phobical one, from the way these concepts could be identified under communism. The author only mentions „the hiding syndrome” (sindromul dosirii) and has but two laconic comments: „the silent consensus of hypocrisy”(p.15); „when he finds himself in front of the front door, the individual is overcome by shyness and even panic”(p.16) Actually, the last sentence has an excellent metaphorical value for a part of the post-communist production and theoretical orientation which we could conceive of in Pareto’s terms as a *derivations* of the two residues: shyness and panic „before the main door”.  
Could we assimilate the more general reflexive behavior of detachment from recent history, with a strange (for implies non exploitation of a huge psychosocial deposit) settling down of a „sanitary belt”? Also, there is freedom to consume (or to produce variations of) a large menu of *trendy* conceptual products, debates, books, topics ..  
Here I do not refer to those who, certainly felt free to act, to become involved in „administrative research” and to gain a maximum of personal benefits from shaping an „expert” professional status.
12. Starodubtseva, L., «Memory and Culture» in *Social Sciences and Political Change*, I.E.-Peter Lang, 2003
13. Is it accidentally that the 20th century was marked, at the beginning by the *Titanic* actual shipwreck and to the end, by the metaphorical one, considering the enormous success of the movie?
14. As Ian Parker observes, " Kuhn himself used the term ‚paradigm’ in at least 21 ways", in *The Crisis in Modern Psychology and How to End it*, Routledge, 1989
15. And not through exclusively normative involvement as it usually happens, since the latter may at best be used to produce an empiric “material” to be studied and analyzed.
16. Bourdieu, P., *Despre televiziune* urmat de *Dominația jurnalismului*, Editura Meridiane, 1998
17. such as:
  - 1) Acquisitive materialism assumed as a dominant value; economic-man image implicit
  - 2) Efficiency sought through organisation and division of labor; machine replacement of human labor
  - 3) Faith in unlimited progress and technological-economic growth.
  - 4) The dominant form of search for knowledge is utilitarian – a wedding of scientific and technological advance.
  - 5) Man seeking control over nature; positivistic theory of knowledge; manipulative rationality as a dominant theme.
  - 6) Individual responsibility for one’s own destiny; freedom and equality as fundamental rights; nihilistic value perspective, individual determination of the „good”; society as an aggregate of individuals pursuing their own interest [6: 644]
18. Vattimo, G., *Societatea transparentă*, Pontica, Constanța, 1995
19. Vulcănescu, M., *Dimensiunea românească a existenței*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1991
20. «We identify two tendencies: a shift from the „crisis values” to the „post-materialist values”», in Anthony Giddens, *A treia cale. Renașterea social democrației*, Polirom, 2001
21. Popper, K., *Mitul contextului*, Editura Trei, 1998

22. Gilder, E., Mitrea, A.H., «Învățămintul superior ca agent al angajamentului naiv sau al distanțării ironice: utilitatea socială și telos-ul cunoașterii» in Neculau, A., Frreol, G., *Psihosociologia schimbării*, Polirom, 1998
23. Maffessoli, M., *Les Temps des Tribus. Le déclin de l'individualisme dans les sociétés*
24. *és de masse*, Meridiens Klincksieck, Paris, 1988
25. „The taboo type of interdiction lacks all foundation; such interdictions have unknown origins; we cannot understand them, but they are natural and self-evident for those who succumb to them,” in Sigmund Freud, *Totem și tabu*, in *Opere I*, Editura științifică, București, 1991
26. David, D., *Prelucrări inconștiente de informație. Contaminarea psihologică în mass-media, practica clinică și juridică*, Editura Dacia, 2000
27. see note 11
28. I am tempted to see this “ray” in relation to the **Schwartzchild ray**, for it defines the „capture zone” of a blackhole. ”The Schwartzchild ray of a body is the ray of the sphere which, if it concentrated all the mass of the respective body, would determine such a space/time curvature that even light would remain in it.” in Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers, *Între eternitate și timp*, Humanitas, 1997, p.67. We could therefore imagine, the “mass” of all the false information, compressed in a sphere that would not only curve time/ space, but it would also completely... absorb any spiritual light.
29. Meaning that it would signal an estrangement from a not very honourable „Romanian feature”, which Constantin Rădulescu Motru (in 1937) describes as:  
" When a Romanian is in doubt, be sure that it is not because s/he has to defend a personal conviction, but because s/he does not know which side to take, which group to join." Or: "To Romanians, a person of character is not the one who is consistent with herself/himself but the one who never disobeyed the group's command, in others words s/he who always followed the beaten track:" in *Psihologia poporului român*, Paideia, 1999
30. Halloran, J., «Mass Communication Research: Asking the Right Questions», in *Mass Communication Research Methods*, Macmillan Press Ltd.
31. Reik, T., *Masochism in Sex and Society*, original title *Masochism in Modern Man*, Pyramid Books, New York, 1976