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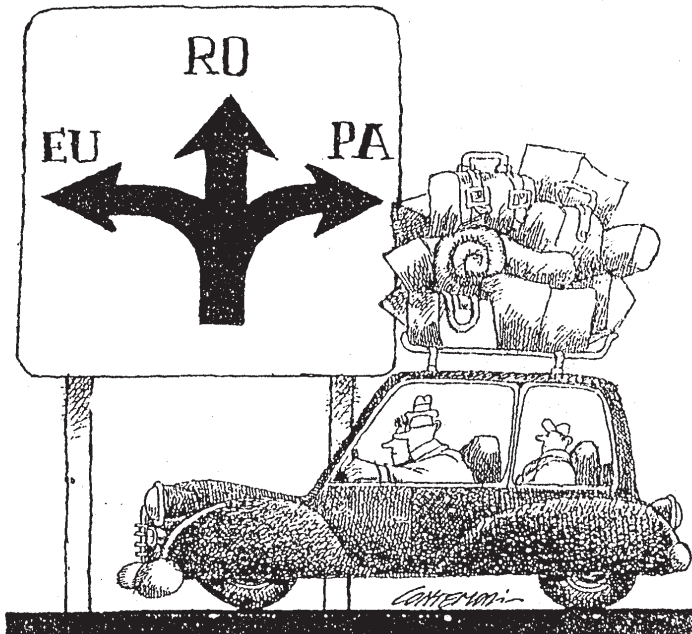
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A PSYCHOHISTORICAL INSIGHT INTO PAST AND PRESENT ROMANIA



Theoretical Background

Since this text represents the very first extensive psychohistorical approach to Romanian realities¹, linking together the past with the present in order to suggest a psychogenic continuity of motifs and collective obsessions, a theoretical outline of the method proves to be necessary.

As Lloyd deMause puts it², "psychohistory has become a new science of *patterns of historical motivations*, less a division of history or psychology than a replacement for sociology...". According to Paul Monaco³, a sharp contributor to the same debate, "psychohistory is an approach, not a discipline. That it is the most compelling of approaches to history is a

conviction, not a dogma. To claim to be formalizing psychohistory's task of creating a >>complete history of the human psyche<< is gratuitous."

The above quotations delineate the two main trends psychohistorians have acknowledged so far: Lloyd deMause, by far the most creative psychohistorian ever, will always insist that psychohistory is a >>science<< bearing clear marks of scholarly independence, while more cautious historians will say it is a mere alternative >>approach<< to historical realities.

"Psychohistory as a science - replies Lloyd deMause to Paul Monaco's position⁴ - will always be problem-centred, while history will always remain period-centred. They are simply two different tasks." As such, psychohistory will not deal with the narrative history, that is a history captured by facts and determined by singular events, such as wars, battles or deeds of kings and politicians, but with the deep psychic motivations of historical individuals and groups. "Understanding history through motives and motives through history: this is psychohistory. Psyche causing history, making it intelligible."⁵

In order to achieve this, one has to discover the "general laws in history"⁶, how they function as a subliminal psychic motivation of individuals or groups, and the way they create psychogenic corridors throughout centuries and decades, transforming history into a "system"⁷. The linkage between psychohistory and the French "*nouvelle histoire*", a concept launched by Fernand Braudel and the school of *Annales ESC*, is still a task to be completed, and this paper has no intention of going further into details; however, it seems necessary to mention the fact that both are built on the understanding of the "long run", and on the methodological rejection of the pre-eminence of the "event" in judging historical development. Back in 1906, discussing Edouard Meyer's ideas concerning historical understanding, Max Weber⁸ sharply formulated that "one must consider as meaningless for history, and as such alien to the rigors of a scientific exposition: a. what is accidental; b. the >>free<< decision of particular personalities and c. the influence of the ideas upon the activity of people." It is fairly interesting to note what Max Weber considered to be essential for the real historical understanding: "a. the manifestations of the masses as opposed to individual activity; b. what is typical as opposed to what is unique; c. the evolution of communities and of social classes and nations in particular, as opposed to the political activity of the individuals."

It goes without saying that Max Weber did not advocate the use of psychoanalysis in order to reveal the collective depths of history. His ideas probably bear the influence of naturalism and Zola, and for him history is still a rational being, functioning however differently. The key word here seems to be “evolution”, understood as “progress”. History “progresses” with each experience left behind: it is an organism looking straight forward, well-trained in the cult of the future so as not to repeat the gloomy mistakes of the past. In this light, the past is considered to be an imperfect present, and the present an imperfect future. What results is that progress proves to be the endless history of self-deprecation and of resentment. It is easy to understand now why it became the main religion of the proletarians.

Quite on the contrary, for psychohistorians the key word in understanding history is “regression”. The term comes from Freud (*Die Traumdeutung*, 1900⁹), and denotes the capacity of the psyche to shift back in time in order to find a response to an external, traumatic stimulus. Regression is always present in Lloyd deMause’s works, he was interested in showing that the reaction of an individual or a group to a specific historical event is ambivalent, the “internal development”¹⁰ based on the regression to the informal material of the deep psyche being more relevant than the particular, rational response of consciousness. The psyche and consciousness act simply differently: as such, historical motivations appear to be the “truth” of the psyche, and only on a secondary level the approval of the rational mind.

This pattern of historical understanding is strictly evolutionary, and it is based, methodologically speaking, on the capacity of regression of the historian himself. The morphology of psychohistory supposes - and it is interesting to note this detail - the openness to regression of historiography itself. “Like all sciences - Lloyd deMause says -, psychohistory stands or falls on the clarity and testability of its concepts, the breadth and parsimony of its theories, the extent of its empirical evidence, and so on. What Psychohistory *does* have and is distinguishes it, is a certain *methodology of discovery*, a methodology which attempts to solve problems of historical motivation with a unique blend of historical documentation, clinical experience and the use of the researcher’s own emotions as the crucial research tool for discovery.”¹¹

As a consequence, historical motivations will be detected by psychohistorians on a pre-verbal level, which implies, in a strict Freudian lineage, focusing onto the material aspect of history. Materiality is the “womb” of Psychohistory, and in this respect every interpretation will be

seen as a “re-birth” of the interpreter himself. The regression to the pre-formal stage of the psyche drops psychohistory into myth and ritual: history will be perceived as a re-enactment of previous complexes by individuals and groups, and most of all as the subconscious repressions and actualizations of an eternally present, always evolving psychic energy in turmoil.

The term “re-enactment” defines the spontaneous, deep reaction of the psyche to an external stimulus. To perform a re-enactment, the psyche of an individual or of a group relies primarily on its own inner history, which is by all means different from the “real”, external history, event-centred and based on documents. Alice Miller for instance¹² dissociates “regular” and “re-enactment” type responses in the life of children. Regular answers to an external stimulus are the conventional ones, approved by the adults and by society, and corresponding to the Freudian paradigm of the reality principle. Re-enactments involve the free associations of the deep psyche, structuring a “second”, personal history for each individual and group. When meeting an external stimulus, the individual or the group usually reaches back to this personal, backstage history, through the spontaneous mechanism of abreaction¹³. Establishing its personal code, this response usually violates the existing social norms, thus undermining official history, which is by definition a normative one. “To a greater or lesser degree - Daniel Dervin states -, history exists as a record of the violation of or adherence to lawfulness in its totality. And since law signifies prior repression, the power of enacting presumes a potential for anti-social acting out...”¹⁴

To give some examples: wars are interpreted by Lloyd deMause as re-birth and re-sacralization complexes¹⁵; for Robert S. McCully¹⁶, symbols are structured by a continuous re-shaping of a universal “archetypal energy” (“...personality dynamics alone do not fully account for symbol formation; archetypal energy must be activated to re-structure images”); for Henry Ebel¹⁷, Star Trek and Star Wars theology are based on the central image of an irrational hostile force spread all over the universe, a force which is “indifferent” to the needs of the humans, that is, it cannot be personalized. The motif of the pre-formal energy explains the exquisite interest of the psychohistorians in “group-fantasies”, collective obsessions, in filth and dirt, interpreted as primary, ever existing, birth-giving materials, opposed to the “clean” aspects of individuation. In Lloyd deMause’s *Fetal Origins of History*¹⁸, the pre-birth, foetal drama, dominated by two placentas, the Nurturant one and the Poisonous one,

provides “the basis for historical group-fantasies”¹⁹, and it is interpreted as being “imprinted” as a “matrix” in the psychogenic soil of history.

“Although the form that this endlessly repeated death-and-rebirth foetal drama takes in later life is determined by the kind of childrearing which is experienced - Lloyd deMause writes²⁰ -, the basic >>imprinted<< foetal drama can nevertheless always be discovered behind all the other overlays, pre-oedipal or oedipal.” The middle part of the quotation stresses the other great obsession of psychohistory: childrearing, Lloyd deMause being the editor and first contributor of a famous *History of Childhood*²¹. I do believe childrearing topics are overemphasized in contemporary Psychohistory, excessively formalizing the discipline, and lessening its impact on the academics or professionals belonging to other intellectual fields²². That is why I consider it necessary to restore the original meaning of childrearing, as it appears in Lloyd deMause’s writings²³, where it denotes above all the practical, empirical forms that foetal energy has taken throughout the centuries. Since history is interpreted as a succession of re-birth re-enactments, the evolution of childhood shows an endlessly re-staged primal experience of birth or death, of liberty or suffocation. Each generation regresses several times in its existence to the pre-formal level of experiencing that something around it is “nurturant” or “poisonous”. Historical crises activate the “poisonous” level of the collective subconscious, while the sacrifice offered in response opens the “gates” of the “nurturant” blood, relieving the “patients” from social anorexia.

Setting this perspective in contrast with the methodology of psychoanalysis and applied psychology makes obvious the anti-individuation complex of psychohistory. Regression to the informal expresses in the very first instance a subconscious reluctance to accept the burdens of individuation; the psyche feels protected by the informal, just like a foetus feels protected in the mother’s womb. Facing an external stimulus, every individual or group experiences the threat of individuation, as an obligation to pour the reaction to the stimulus into a specific form, to limit it.

Traditional history is the diachrony of successive limitations, while psychohistory offers the joys of the unlimited regression to the informal. Quite opposite to the progress-centred history outlined above, history, as psychohistorians understand it, is a living organism composed of different psychic strata, each of them potentially active in the fascinating Oriental carpet embroidery of the present. This means that history is not lived as a continuous separation of the present from the past, but as a dynamics of

present and past interchanges: the present can activate, as a response to an external stimulus, whichever elements it wants from the past, and the past can be interpreted in the focus of a psychodrama that the present is always likely to perform. The model is subtly illustrated by Georges Devereux²⁴, who insists in the first theoretical half of his paper on the importance of selective regression for the understanding of history, seen as a living body of energy and virtualities used by individuals and groups in order to assimilate the experience of the present.

My paper will therefore deal with regressive shifts detectable in Romanian history. Politicians as children, exonerated from their possible sins by virtue of lack of responsibility, politicians as players or garbage cleaners, not to mention the extensive myth of the politicians seen as a distant "family", parasiting on the "pure" soul and body of the sacred motherland are all examples of regression. Significantly, this regression appears whenever Romanians face a new historical experience. For instance, in the very period I concluded my research for accomplishing this paper (that is mid July 1997), the imagery of child sacrifice suddenly burst out again in the Romanian media, after a long "amnesia" imposed by the electoral victory in November 1996 of the Democratic Convention²⁵. I must confess that as a trained psychohistorian I was pretty sure that this outburst would appear, expressing the ambivalent public fantasy of shame for Romania being rejected from admission into NATO and the European Union ("we are a bad nation, killing our children; it is not at all surprising that they disposed us") and of the fear of being abandoned again, as a helpless child of the unfair political sandbox. In the same period, Bill Clinton's strange visit to Bucharest, following USA's option to recommend the omission of Romania from the list of the former communist countries invited to join NATO, got in the Romanian media the connotation of a joyful carnival, performed by cheerful children who gathered in the University Square as in the "womb" of the December 1989 revolution to admire a strange being - an American president using athletic metaphors to boost Romania's morale - and enjoy some benefits of the great American civilization (Coca Cola, Pepsi Max) free of charge. As if to test psychohistorical perceptions, a Romanian teenager was presented as taking Bill Clinton's seat while the American president was speaking, childishly suggesting a familiarity coming from a nation magnanimously ready to forgive its oppressors (as - textbooks teach us - it has always done during its history ...).

The following research will insist (not only as a tribute to Lloyd deMause's extraordinary work) on some aspects of childrearing in Romanian history. I do believe that childrearing procedures haven't changed too much from the 19th century to the second half of the 20th century, that is during the decades of modern Romanian history. Swaddling is still dominant in the rural areas²⁶, but civilization has erased the habit of using children as poison containers, enabling them with the projection of demonic spirits. On the contrary, childrearing in Romania is rather loose, taking up the forms of the *Abandonment Mode* described by Lloyd deMause in *The Evolution of Childhood*²⁷. The literature and mass media imagery of modern Romania are full of lost children, children who cannot find their way back home, and children wandering on the roads alone. Their parents are so "unattentive" that they do not even realize that the children are missing, and when they do, they do not rush to find them. A child, the subliminal message says, can always find its way back home, because the centre of the house, dominated by the fireplace, is magical and is provided with a magnetic power. The mythology of the fireplace ("vatra") is extremely persistent in the Romanian public fantasy, defining a person from the point of view of the distance which separates him/her from the centre. The centre, the "womb" is maternal, feminine, and it is defined as being safe. On the other hand, leaving the "womb" is always dangerous and treacherous. Being on the road is perceived as malevolent in the Romanian subconscious. As a result, a complementary structure emerges: the fireplace (the "vatra") is assimilated with timelessness, defined as a magical circle which one can leave only at the price of being exposed to various dangers. As a consequence, history as an expression of Time is full of bad projections in the Romanian public fantasy.

As they represent continuity - signifying the trespassing of the magic circle of the family's self-sufficiency and strife to build up an immemorial fireplace protected from the intrusion of the invaders -, children are perceived as threats in the Romanian public fantasy. *Per definitionem*, they have always belonged to history. Traditional Romanian housebuilding confirms the spiritual structure. In the village areas, each house has mainly two parts: the front room, which is perfectly clean, not inhabited by anyone and open to guests only, and the rest of the building, crowded by a family of usually numerous, successive generations. Guests or people coming from the outside do not penetrate this area. In case of extensions, more rooms are added to the back, intimate structure, leaving the front part of the building magically untouched.

Ready to sacrifice

Romania is an ideal place to test psychohistorical patterns. After the December 1989 revolution - or popular *coup d'état*, as recent analysts have suggested - the country experienced a rebirth complex through a very strong "lost child syndrome"²⁸. Mass media and international TV channels intensely reflected the misery of the Romanian orphanages, the roaming gangs of homeless children sniffing bags of *aurolac* (a fermented glue) on the streets of Bucharest, and the "deadly" unhygienic conditions in the Romanian schools of all grades - deprived of running water or soap and using filthy backyard lavatories. The tragedy of the gypsies - who are as a rule structured in socially marginalized families with numerous children, living in tents, cottages or even the local garbage fields -, the frightening March 1990 street fights between Romanians and Hungarians in Tîrgu Mureş - a town lying in the mid part of Transylvania -, and the June 15-16 1990 punitive expedition of the miners to Bucharest sharpened the media image. Romania was seen as a third-world country which had gradually lost its immense popularity - acquired with the December 1989 mass uprising - and had implacably sunk to a sort of formless, "pre-civilised" creature (sucking a "poisonous placenta"²⁹), pregnant with hatred, social turmoils and nationalistic prejudices.

The two terms of Ion Iliescu's presidency (1990-1992; 1992-1996) generated a suffocation syndrome due to a weak, practically impotent government run over by deep and almost generalized corruption, by a complete lack of public authority or control and by the desperate effort of the President to maintain power through political cleansing and pressure (e.g., his attempt to coerce the bank leaders and major managers of the country to become members of the main ruling party, The Socialist Democratic Party of Romania /PDSR/). The functional weakness of the leading party was compensated for by dragging into a so-called "governing arch" two extremely active nationalist parties - the Romanians' National Unity Party (PUNR), and The Great Romania Party (PRM) - which brought along an overt anti-European discourse, nationalistic megalomania and the Messianic ideology of the "pure", "ancient", "organic" inner values. President Iliescu's quest for a third, anti-constitutional term was overturned by the November 1996 vote, the very first in the whole history of the country when a president was unseated through legal elections.

Having no specific ideology or political program, former President Iliescu's re-election campaign insisted in vain on nationalistic issues, built

on the stereotypes of the menaced tribe surrounded by bloodthirsty neighbours and undermined from the interior by a villainous, double-faced enemy (the Opposition, including Hungarians) ready to deliver the country to a voracious monster: Europe. On the other hand, the Opposition, led by Emil Constantinescu, former Rector of the Bucharest University and from November 1996, President, developed the anti-syndrome of the voracious monster, that is the monster you have to avoid by accepting the gentle embrace of Europe. The name of this monster is Russia, a country which has always been perceived as malignant through Romania's history. Communism was imposed in Romania by the Red Army and by the discretionary will of the Kremlin, and left deep scars in the people's memory; the anti-Communist rage became the principal informal ideology of post-revolutionary Romania. A former student obediently completing his studies in Moscow and later a member of the red nomenclature, President Iliescu formally contributed as a hate target to the extension of the anti-Soviet feelings in a period when every mistake made in the process of European integration was publicly interpreted as a drawback dictated by Moscow.

Summing up, former President Iliescu's elections staff insisted on ethnic values, while the Constantinescu group - including many leading intellectuals, such as Gabriel Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu, Octavian Paler or the poet Ana Blandiana, nor to forget the intellectual front of Romanian exiles, very active especially in Paris (Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca, Sanda Stolojan, Paul Goma, etc.) or in the USA (Matei Călinescu, Virgil Nemoianu, Vladimir Tismăneanu, I.P.Culianu) - stressed ethical values, which revealed the common European heritage Romanian culture and civilization have shared for more than a century. Nevertheless, it is an illusion to believe that chauvinistic, nationalistic beliefs suddenly dried out in Romania with the November 1996 elections. Resorting by analogy to a pattern outlined by Peter Brown in *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*³⁰, Romania could be seen as a "two-level" society: intellectuals, newly born managers and newly emerged "yuppies" have a cosmopolitan, pro-European and pro-American orientation, while the older generations (which still provide informal leaders of opinion particularly in public places and factories), the peasantry and its offspring (as a mentality representing more than 65% of the whole society, some of them having lived for decades in towns, unassimilated and looking for rural motivations or social links) cherish organicist, traditional, self-sufficient and nationalistic values. Psychoclass conflicts play a huge

role in nowadays Romania, the ideological split between traditionalists and modernists on the political panel expressing actually a deep schizoid social identity.

As a consequence, after the '96 elections the main group fantasy in Romania was the "brotherhood complex" of "joining the fellow states of Europe", which could be understood as a fatal loss of national identity (that is, death). I shall analyze later on Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea's formal acceptance speech (December 1996), which can be shortened through a psychohistorical subliminal Fantasy Analysis to a message that sounds as follows: "*We ... as Romanians ... are ... nothing.*" The verdict was involuntarily confirmed in March 1997 by the Minister of Finance, Mircea Ciumara, who shocked the whole country by publicly stating that the strict and almost unbearable steps taken by the new government to enforce the revival of the Romanian economy would "probably cause the death of a thousand people"³¹, but it was better to do it this way than to cause the collapse of some millions later.

This paper intends to analyze the three psycho-social syndromes outlined so far: the "rebirth complex" experienced after the revolution of December 1989; the "suffocation syndrome" of President Iliescu's two terms; the "death and loss of national identity" complex, which emerged with the victory of the democratic and pro-European forces in November 1996.

Since they re-enact recurrent group fantasies also detectable in the history of Romania, some back glimpses prove to be necessary in order to understand the shift from a traditional, self-sufficient and Messianist patriarchal society to a modern "brotherhood type" society seeking integration with NATO (a major desire and immediate new goal of the new government) and with Europe. In this rebirth process, Romanians are now ready - as newspapers and statistics put it - for sacrifices. The long list of potential victims includes old traditions, customs and the almost sacred habit of "boycotting" (as philosopher Lucian Blaga remarked³²) history. In other words: they are ready to sacrifice *their parents*.

A history of child neglect

The modern history of Romania starts in 1859 when the two principalities, Moldavia and Muntenia elected - ignoring the recommendation of the Turks, who exercised suzerainty over them - one

and the same Prince: Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Belonging to the Free-Masonry, Cuza established a brotherhood-like society which lasted only seven years. When in 1866 Cuza was unseated, the country looked for a father-figure, it eventually found in the person of Carol I, who belonged to the royal house of the Hohenzollerns. The quest for a father outside the country is highly significant, showing the complex of a lack of paternity, which may seem rather surprising if one takes into the consideration the fact that the great families of the "boyars" were still active, pulling strings, influencing politics and marriages. The hypothesis of an option for a "European father" instead of a domestic one should also be taken into consideration³³, given its significance of a radical separation from the historical tradition, fostered by a modernist generation interested in speeding up the process of reaching European standards.

A careful perusal of the texts of the "classical" period in Romanian literature, contemporary to the start of the dynasty, will lead to the immediate realization of two major complexes. Firstly: the fathers are absent from these texts. Secondly: the children are mostly nasty, bad, annoyingly loud and clothed like adults. The literature of the period clearly expresses the main public fantasy of a loose parentage and of an unrestrained, inexact, capricious and improper behaviour. The pattern of confusion doubles each impact of the Romanian immemorial soul with history: less than three decades later, the traditionalist ideology of two rural inspired social movements (*sămănătorism*, *poporanism*) will emphatically sanction this "errant" behaviour.

For instance, in I.L.Caragiale's (1852 - 1912) *Visit* the protagonist, dressed up like a cavalier, wearing shiny brass buttons and carrying a sword terrorizes his mother as well as her kind and shy visitor, and in the end bestows him with a jar of jam poured into his uppershoes. The father is absent. In *Mr. Goe* (both are compulsory pieces for school textbooks), the spoiled offspring of a bourgeois family is taken to Bucharest by train as a "reward" for his - so far - school failures: the child wears a sailor's costume, shocks the passengers and the train crew with his behaviour, locks himself up in the lavatory, brings his mother to hysteria and takes an excited step down to Bucharest, hoping to see the king on the "avanyou" (that is >>avenue<<, the form >>avanyou<< being an equivalent of the original French distortion in the text). No male accompanies the child, the quest for a surrogate father being obvious.

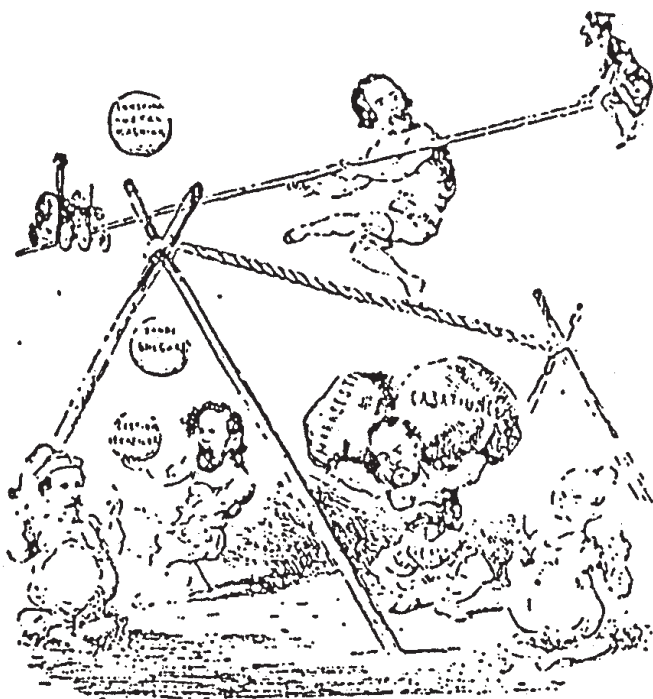
Ioan Slavici's (1848 - 1925) classical novel *Mara* depicts a possessive, Mutter Courage-like mother, living alone as a bridgekeeper with her two

children - a son and a daughter. Titu Maiorescu (1840 - 1917), the leading figure of those years' literature emerges directly as an adult, like Athens from Zeus' chest. At the age of 24 he is already Rector of Iași University: his *Daily Notes*, published later, show a child without childhood, attentive to "mature chat", eager to climb the steep steps of the social hierarchy and ready to pull up the unbreakable walls of the Conservative Party. Ion Creangă's (1839 - 1889) *Remembrances From My Childhood* apparently built up the myth of a happy childhood in Romanian literature. In fact - as Corina Ciocârlie has already noticed³⁴ - the text depicts a child you wouldn't keep happily in your house: he is selfish; avoids tasks; destroys the harvest; terrorizes the villagers and his relatives; abuses animals. His supervisors are females; the males - when they show up - are always distant and necessarily punitive.

The list can be continued with Mihai Eminescu (1850 - 1889), the "national poet" of Romanian literature. His brilliant career starts with the rejection of his father's name, and the adoption of a surrogate father: the literary critic Iosif Vulcan publishes his first verses by changing the poet's name from Eminovici to Eminescu, without previously asking the consent of the new star. Eminescu doesn't care about such an intrusion: his work as a whole suggests a strong mother-complex, the only father which appears in his poems (in *Luceafărul*, as "Father of the Universe") being cold, distant and repulsive. Eminescu is also the "inventor" of the concept of serene childhood in Romanian literature, due to a decisively Romantic influence. There is no "true" childhood in his poems, but an artificial one, built up on cultural stereotypes and linked with dreams and memories, which reveals the fact that it is a mere aspiration, not a reality.

The subliminal rejection of the father in a period when Romania consolidates its political structures and its monarchy seems quite odd and, at a first glance, incomprehensible. It is, therefore, legitimate to ask: where are the fathers in this world? Why are they so carefully rejected? The answer is rather surprising: the fathers are in politics. They sit in distant lodges, play the endless and childish game of politics (see Illustrations 1-4), "tie and untie" the country, and leave everyday life and struggle to females.

In Illustration 1 (from 1869), liberal leader Ion Brătianu juggles with three difficult "stones" of the epoch: the Bulgarian threat; the Jewish question; the Austro-Hungarian conspiracy. The other leader, C.A. Rosetti, is dancing on the rope while balancing the Jews and their influence on the major challenge of the period: the extension of the railroad network. In Illustration 2 (1869), the French emperor Napoleon III (in front of the



O trupă de Saltimbanci



(1)

Illustration 2



Illustration 3



Illustration 4

horse) theatrically expresses his disappointment because of liberal leader Ion Brătianu's inability to move forward, his wooden horse being held back by the Russians and the Prussians. In Illustration 3 (1859), Ion Brătianu and C.A. Rosetti help young prince Dimitrie Ghica to "keep the right pace", while in Illustration 4 (1869), the already mentioned couple, Brătianu and Rosetti, enjoy - represented as Janus bifrons - the excitement of a train voyage, the wheels impassively treading on the body of the country lying down across the rails.

Since the males are exiled in politics - the group fantasy says - they are necessarily in filth because politics is dirty. Females keep things going, males spoil them, according to this thinking. Males - the period says - are like nasty, uncontrollable children: they have their own game; are reluctant to see the sufferings of the people; live far "above the earth"; must be incessantly supervised not to do too much harm to "real life".

This Manichean perception explains a lot of things that are essential to Romanian history. To start with, kings (meaning the period starting with Carol I) were bad "fathers" in Romanian history and perceived as such because they didn't belong to the sacred and ancient roots of the tribe: they were "foreigners".

On the other hand, no politician has become a "good father" figure in Romanian history, in spite of the multiple attempts made to promote such a lineage. The last such attempt - and probably the most intrusive one - was made by Nicolae Ceaușescu (leader from 1965 to December 1989, shot at Tîrgoviște) using the whole strategy of the communist propaganda: endless marches of children dressed alternatively in red, yellow and blue (the colours of the national flag); cheerful pioneers bringing thousands of bunches of flowers; collective political baptizing rituals. Neither his successor (Ion Iliescu) nor Emil Constantinescu tried to copy these efforts, through the group fantasy of a good, protective father image being still active in the backstage of today's Romanian public life, as a shadow anti-crisis figure, constructed by nostalgic communists, some people from the army and the Security forces and by the resentful nationalists.

The "exile" of the fathers to the filthy dens of politics has had another impact on the historical group fantasy of the Romanian people. Due to this conviction, what is "authentic", innately and purely "Romanian" belongs to the mothers, a perspective which satanizes politics as such. Nobody loves politics in Romania at present and nobody loved it before - you can respect politics, enjoy the fruits of a tree anchored with its roots in filth and mud, but not love it. That is why politics is ugly, dirty and by

all means "alien", "foreign" or, to put it differently, it is not part of "the clean soul of the Romanian people"³⁵. As a consequence, sodomizing foreigners has always been a public show in Romanian history, and a projective stereotype, always at hand when the "pure soul of the people" was to be exonerated from sins or failures. "The other" - come it from abroad or be it an ethnic minority (Hungarians, Germans, Gypsies) - becomes a projective hate target in Romania's public fantasy, playing the classical role of the cleansing poison container.

Anti-Hungarianism and anti-Semitism are part of this attentively directed public hysteria. The most important social and political movement of the thirties (Archangel Michael's Legion = the Iron Guard), including prestigious intellectuals like Nae Ionescu, Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, Emil Cioran and thousands of others, was Messianic and had a decidedly anti-Semite accent. Stepping forward in time, it is significant to mention that a still active group fantasy, risen in Romania after the 1989 coup, explicitly suggests that in 1947 communism was imposed on Romanians by Jews and Hungarians (zealous executives of the Kremlin), the message being that this historical "shame" was "alien" to the pure soul of the inmates. The fantasy of cleansing was extremely strong in 1990, when tabloids shouted that the executed dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu, was actually not a Romanian but a ... gypsy!

Romania "invented" its idealistic childhood ideology as an appendix to the nationalistic pride promoted with the annexation of Transylvania (1918). This led to the formation of the "round" country as we have it today, by reuniting three main historical regions: a conservative Moldavia, built on old family values; a rather nervous Muntenia, where the centrifugal forces of individuals have always been more powerful than centripetal ones; a cosmopolitan Transylvania, having strong Hungarian and German urban communities. It is therefore worthwhile to note that the ideology of the serene childhood emerged in the Romanian public unconscious from two main drains: the traditionalism of Moldavia on the one hand, and the pride of the new historical birth stressed by Transylvanian intellectuals and political leaders on the other. Both spread down to Bucharest, and united in a sort of official public fantasy, fashioned by the idea that Romania is an underprivileged "child of Europe", neglected by nasty parents, one who has to thrive on its own to be accepted in the "great family" of nations. Thus, the Romanian "underprivileged child fantasy" is based on frustration and compensates through self-sufficiency. According to this complex, the father of the child might be lost, but his mother never. The mother is the nation itself.

Indeed, in the first three decades of the 20th century the children portrayed in the books of literature are always threatened, almost lost in the dark corners of the universe, and found again by adults seemingly not too surprised by not having them around for such a long period. The anxiety of being alone, not protected by the family characterizes the child projections of Mihail Sadoveanu (1880 - 1961), whose very first writings include *The Graveyard of a Child* (1906). Another heroine of his, Lizuca, ventures in the black and frightening forest, and finds her way back without the interference of her parents. Her return is not accompanied with an outburst of relief and joy: it seems that the adults haven't even noticed her absence. The "absent male" motif is the main frame of Sadoveanu's novel *Baltagul* (*The Hatchet*, 1930), built on the mythical pattern of the Isis-Osiris quest: worried by the absence of her husband, a woman leaves her home to find him and discovers that he has been murdered by greedy shepherds. The structure of the novel interferes with the main frame of the popular ballad *Miorita* (*The Little Sheep*), considered to be the archaic root of the Romanian way of life and psychology. "Home" is equivalent here with protective motherhood: distress and death (of the males, generally speaking) come when you leave home and are confronted with aliens or with foreign places. *Intra muros* means the protective womb of the nation and ethnicity; *extra muros* comprises the villains, "the others", anybody who is not a member of the ethnic club.

Lucian Blaga's (1895 - 1961) *Hronicul și cântecul vîrstelor* (*The Chronicle and the Song of the Ages*, 1965, written a long time before its first publication, as Blaga died in 1961) starts with a speculation of the motive of the rejected world: the child doesn't speak for four years, delaying the contact with a hostile world, in which he has to struggle alone, as his parents are not of great help. To come back to Bucharest, Ioan Alexandru Brătescu-Voinesti's (1868 - 1946) short stories are full of abandoned, lonely children. The happy family seems to be absent from Romanian public fantasy, being replaced by the complex of the protective surrogate family, that is the nation. This leads to the utter rejection of the foreigners (Germans, Hungarians, Jews), even if they live next door. If asked, Romanians say today that Hungarians or Jews are hostile *per se* because they are well organized and structured in impenetrable family units, a stereotype which explains a recurrent dimension of the historical public fantasy in Romania: that of the attraction represented by fraternity.

Fraternity is here a substitute for maternity, namely the integration in a bigger "family", the great family of individuals sharing the same blood.

To attain this level, you have to surpass heredity and interpret fraternity as a spiritual linkage, more efficient than the strict flesh and blood dependence. Blood becomes here spiritualized, and the wound of somebody is the wound of everybody, the whole nation functioning as a big organism having the same blood vessels and sharing the same heart.

In *Psihologia poporului român (The Romanian People's Psychology)*³⁶ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru interprets national psychology as an "ability to create a national culture". The development of a population is determined - Motru says - by three main factors, the biological or hereditary fund, the geographical conditions and the institutions, some people experiment history forever from a "pre-historic" stage, being unable to rise to the higher level of "spirituality". "In the case of populations with unconsolidated spiritual institutions the influences of heredity and of the geographic climate are overwhelming."³⁷ On the contrary, "spirituality is not - Rădulescu-Motru maintains - a produce of time"³⁸, which means that by spirituality a population surpasses its condition of being a historical victim, reaching a dignity which is beyond time and its vicissitudes.

The Romanian people, though not entirely articulated - Rădulescu-Motru concludes - is determined by "spirituality" rather than by biology or landscape, which means that the pre-condition of a person who creates values is to surpass its biological linkages. Family means time, brotherhood means eternity.

One would expect Rădulescu-Motru to assimilate fraternity with challenge and openness, with the adventure of taking chances by meeting somebody distant. The surprise of the text is, on the contrary, the equivalence between "spirituality" and self-sufficiency. "Spirituality - Rădulescu-Motru says - is like an isolating armour", the myth of self-sufficiency and historical isolation sneaking back in the room at the very moment you thought it had been forever thrown over the threshold.³⁹ But the ideal of the artificial (Rădulescu-Motru calls it "bourgeois") fraternity is formulated again by the distinction between the "subjective" and the "institutional" individualism, the aim being to transform the biological, subjective person into a strong, self-dependent, "institutional" character.

This ideal of spiritual fraternity was promoted in Romanian culture and public life by a major generation of philosophers and writers who emerged in the thirties and concentrated around the fascinating figure of Nae Ionescu, a philosopher, journalist, politician and professor at Bucharest University. His disciples included a select list of names like Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran and Constantin Noica, living in the deep shadows of a rightist

and extremist ideology, characterized by national Messianism, the irrational cult of a Saviour (the leader was Constantin Zelea-Codreanu, "The Captain"), by the excited pathos of the fantasy of spiritual collective cleansing through action, violence or culture and by sharp accents of xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

This paper does not intend to get into the details of this ideology⁴⁰, but it would be impossible to step further without mentioning the sharp fraternity characteristics of the Iron Guard, built on male initiation rites and separation from the biologic family. The spiritual movement led by Zelea-Codreanu represented the climactic rejection of the mothers in the modern history of Romania, this tendency being doubled by the emergence of a new motif in Romanian art and literature: that of the sensuous, strange, magnetic female⁴¹, a fascinating target to be conquered by energetic males who earned their energy by leaving boring homes, wives and mothers behind in order to experience the self-destructive combustions and strains of the "real life". The key words of the new epoch are "solidarity" (of independent spiritual "brothers"⁴²) and "experimentalism" of life through interpersonal links.⁴³

The rejection of the parents is obvious. The discussions hosted by the leading newspapers and literary magazines of the period (for instance: *Vremea*, Christmas 1932) insist on the necessity of such a "sacrifice", by saying that the new generation is the first one in Romanian history to conquer a place without spilling blood. Blood is, by the way, everywhere in the public subconscious: at first, as shame (the previous generations died for the independence of the country in 1877, then in World War I, which led to the integration of Transylvania), then as urge and necessity. As outer targets aren't available any more, history being rather calm at that time, public fantasy turns towards the inner "sins" of the poisoned national body, due to some traditional enemies: first of all the foreigners, then the politicians and in the end the forefathers who kept the country in the sinful contemplation of a village-centred community.

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To take a glimpse into the mid/late 20th century: Romania experienced two further public fantasies. The first of them was the fantasy of the powerful father, that is the father-centred society introduced by the Russians' arrival in August 1944, consolidated by the communist regime until December 1989 and discretely promoted by Ion Iliescu's regime until November 1996. The second one is the strategy of the fraternal society, promoted by

President Emil Constantinescu's election campaign team during the fierce media fights which announced the November 1996 change of power. It is interesting to note that President Constantinescu was raised to power by a brotherhood type political coalition, and not by a single party or democratic force, the "fraternal" quarrel for positions and privileges being the main show of Romania's post-election period. The government formed at that time is still a conglomerate of self-interested individuals, belonging to a loose family of slightly different ideologies.

Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime (1965-1989) brought about at least two public fantasies which prove to be essential to understanding the evolution of Romanian society after the *coup d'état* of December 1989. First of all, it promoted a strong father figure, especially after 1971, when Ceaușescu returned from China and North Korea and tried to implement in Romania - successfully, one must say - the cult of personality admired there, with huge mass rituals of children wearing uniforms from the age of 3, and frantic gatherings of people meant to pay tribute to the nurturing powers of the leader. This mass hysteria was associated with a carefully projected father-image, centred around the family of the dictator.

The second public fantasy was the result of a rather tricky strategy, and I must confess that I cannot determine how much of an official, though never recognized, persuasive image-building strategy was in it, and to what extent it was the result of a spontaneous public reaction. I am referring to the public image of Elena Ceaușescu, the dictator's wife. On the one hand, she was officially worshipped as a nurturant mother and world-wide recognized scientist, although she had some difficulties in building up a simple and coherent sentence. On the other hand, public opinion satanized her and this "poison container" syndrome was used by informal propaganda to cleanse the dictator, attributing everything that went wrong in the country to the mad influence of his wife.

As a consequence, female satanization became a common practice in Romania during the eighties and has never stopped since. The party found atrocious 180-pound de-feminized monsters (Suzana Gâdea, Alexandrina Găinușe, Lina Ciobanu), and promoted them to leading positions. You can hardly find a delicate lady in the literature of the period. After 1989 the satanization went on: there have been no females in public positions or in the leadership of the parties, as if they didn't exist at all, although statistics say that Romania has always had more females than males in its demographic composition.

Former President Ion Iliescu quickly understood the situation and never promoted his wife Nina, while former Chamber of Deputies President Adrian Năstase unsuccessfully tried to ignore the pressure of the public, his elegant wife being violently rejected by the crowd when she led gymnasts Nadia Comăneci and Bart Conner to the altar. In the twilight of Iliescu's regime (Spring 1996), a female minister emerged (Daniela Bartaș) - significantly - in the Health Department, replacing the former holder of the position (Iulian Mincu), who had the notorious reputation of a butcher.

Subsequently, in the very first months of 1990, famous female dissidents like Doina Cornea or Ana Blandiana were sent to the backstage of political life and possible leaders (like Smaranda Enache) were set aside without reasonable explanations. At the moment, male domination is fully accomplished in Romanian society, although female figures (Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Gilda Lazăr, Iolanda Stăniloiu) appear on TV screens every now and then, having the precise role of *serving* their male counterparts. Recently (end of June-early July 1997), the Government sacrificed Gilda Lazăr, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a response to a scandal revolving around her alleged abuse of power to get a distorted negative image of Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea's visit to Washington from the media.

Pollution through sacrificial killing: a paradox?

Romania killed her "father" on Christmas Eve 1989, at Tîrgoviște, after a short and hasty trial. The execution was carried out by misinformed "children" against a father they unjustly hated - said Elena Ceausescu, while taking her last steps to the wall where she was a moment later literally riddled with shots. The patricide was - public opinion considered afterwards - a sinful decision, which polluted the initial purity of the mass uprising. Accordingly, the Romanian revolution entered from the very beginning in an ambivalent mode, the main tendency of the public fantasy striving to pollute and not to cleanse the initial steps of the revolt.

The reasons for such a behaviour are easy to understand. The revolution had been started five days earlier in Timișoara by a Hungarian Protestant priest, László Tökés, an "intrusive" act from a member of a minority which somehow overshadowed the theatrical self-esteem of the natives. The Orthodox Church experienced the deepest sorrow: already a target of suspicion because of its collaboration with the "ancien régime" and its

secret police, it felt the privilege of the sacred and collective recognition slipping away from its hands. Consequently, there appeared the necessity of a new start and the elaboration of a new myth with an appropriate dosage of sparkling lights and dark shadows, good guys and bad guys, terrorists and occasional heroes. The strategy had something essential: it simply didn't have to be logical.

In the first weeks of 1990, the country experienced a popular rebirth fantasy. People spontaneously cut out the arms of the Socialist Republic of Romania from the national flag, the hole becoming the symbol of an escape from the uterus and of the delivery⁴⁴. A ghost-faced spiritual father, the politologist Silviu Brucan evasively explained to the "children" of the new era the further steps of the democratic alphabetization, learned by him in Moscow during the fifties and accomplished later through random research in Washington D.C. Lorries loaded with goods frantically crossed the borders, regressing each Romanian to the stage of a child happy to go home with both hands full of gifts: bananas; second-hand clothing; outworn typewriters; pens of all sorts; shiny computers, which they had just started to learn to handle - in order to play exciting electronic games.

Democracy seemed to be a ludicrous socializing form, played by politicians who were not entirely responsible for their decisions. As already stated in this paper, politics has always been assimilated in Romania with play. In the first years of the post-Ceaușescu era, the public fantasy of assimilating the politicians with children had three main reasons.

Firstly, it exempted politicians from the sins of errors, alluding to the real sense of the new leadership: the aspiration to take power in a single, firm hand. A childish politician is allowed to make errors, but he is never guilty. It is interesting to note that in the media imagery of the period (see Illustrations 5 and 6) President Iliescu is always represented as a protective parent, the nasty child being in both cases Prime Minister Nicolae Văcăroiu⁴⁵. Another similarity: in each of the cases, the child is disciplined by being dragged in front of an institution (the school). The stereotype is transferred in the July 6, 1995 issue of the same newspaper onto Minister Mircea Coșea, responsible for the major "play" of the period: the privatization of the former socialist industry.

Secondly, this strategy pervades the fantasy of a strong, almost sacred leader, the holy father of the nation. Illustrations 7-8-9-10 suggest President Iliescu's omnipotent power: with an aura around his head (Illustration 7⁴⁶); as an icon, worshipped by an orthodox priest (Illustration 8⁴⁷); as a saint (Illustration 9⁴⁸); or as a hospodar, sitting on a throne (Illustration 10⁴⁹).



Illustration 5



Illustration 6



Illustration 7



Illustration 8



Illustration 9



Illustration 10



Illustration 11



Illustration 12



MILITIE : 75%
POLITIE : 25%



Picture 14

It is worthwhile noting that all these illustrations have been deliberately selected from the leading newspaper of the Opposition, which is by definition not favourable to the President. The tricky thing is that the persuasive fantasy of the illustrations published by this paper unwillingly undermines the explicit message of the texts which surround them⁵⁰.

The third aspect concerns the relation between the individual, or the common man, and the power. In the Romanian exercise of power, the common man has always been a victim of the institutions of power and not a beneficiary of their services (although he has always been a good and humble taxpayer). The media imagery of the period (Illustrations 11-12-13) insists on showing the common person as a little man (or child), delivered to the omnipotent discretion of the Police, embodied by giants⁵¹. Picture 14⁵² completes the message featuring a man who kisses the hand of a policeman.

Pollution was the main public fantasy during former president Ion Iliescu's two mandates (1990-1996). Romania experienced the three forms of the "upheaval" stage, delineated by Lloyd deMause in *The Foetal Origins of History*⁵³, though simultaneously and not alternately. The Christmas 1989 "regicidal" killing promoted the former leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu,

as an enemy; however, his assassination, formally approved by the majority of the population, didn't serve to purify the atmosphere by a sacrificial death, but - rather paradoxically - to pollute it.

There were several reasons for such an outcome. First of all, the impurity of Christmas and the pollution of the new political structures with former communist leaders - Ion Iliescu was just one of them - created a fantasy of impotence and fatalism, which can be very easily transformed into a political manipulation in Romania, a country where fatalism has always been a public ingredient to all sorts of historical failures. The enigma of the "terrorists", who acted in the streets of Bucharest after Ceaușescu had been executed, the moral crisis of the army - which at first shot into the crowd and then fraternized with them - and the reluctance of the new leaders to promote transparency and public control over the decisions which continued to be taken behind tightly closed doors led to a fantasy of impurity. This was reinforced by the "shame" induced by the Western mass media, which started to talk about the filthy conditions of the Romanian orphanages, about abandoned children sniffing fermented glue ("aurolac"), and about the exaggerated figures concerning the victims of December 1989. In Paris in March 1990, huge placards hanging outside the headquarters of several leading media agencies asked one and the same question: "Who lied in Romania?"⁵⁴

The child was born, but it was dirty. In these circumstances, the new Romanian power resorted to the "Martial solution" by inventing an internal enemy, the Hungarians of Transylvania, over whom the rage of the polluted people could exercise power. The street fights between Hungarians and Romanians in Tîrgu-Mureș in March 1990 inaugurated several political and strategic plans, which had been "in the cards" a long time before December 1989. The first step was the reactivation of the Secret Police, of the Securitate. Then, the clashes legitimized a nationalistic outburst, having as flagpoles two hysterically extremist parties, the PUNR and the PRM⁵⁵. But the most important outcome was the public fantasy of the threatened nation (a stereotype of Romanian history), funnelled into the conviction that history is again hostile to the country but general and unfair animosity can be overcome if everybody reacts *as a pure and sincere Romanian*.

Thus, ethnicity became a cleansing device again, used to sanction centrifugal forces and keep the people together. Law and reason ended at the gates of the pride of being a Romanian. This energetic Messianism covered the deepest corruption one can imagine. Hundreds of thousands of people came to Cluj to participate - and lose their savings - in an

enormous pyramidal game (an economic swindle, like the one whose collapse caused the 1997 riots in Albania), but when it was stopped, nobody uttered more than a few sighs of confusion. Romania is not Albania... The childish desire to get rich without working transformed Cluj into a mass hysteria and the pyramidal game owner Ioan Stoica into the Epiphany of Jesus. "Suicidal individuals - Lloyd deMause says treating the third upheaval form, the <<Suicidal Solution>>⁵⁶ - often resolve internal ambivalence through a fantasy of a <<Hidden Executioner>> who helps them in their suicidal effort in killing the bad, polluted part of themselves so that the good purified part can be loved again." Romania's leaders experienced this solution in June 1990 by asking the miners from Petroșani to come to Bucharest in order to drain the "pollution" represented by the street protests in the University Square. The "Hidden Executioner" fantasy has been used several times since, the miners coming to Bucharest each time "the young and the restless" part of the society (i. e. the students) advocated real democracy and openness. In September 1993, the new "father" (President Iliescu) sacrificed his own "son" (Prime Minister Petre Roman); however, public opinion didn't receive the message as a purifying solution but as a new confirmation of the general pollution of the society.

Death, leisure and happy family values

Starting with Spring 1996, the imagery of the Romanian press suggested the decline of Iliescu's power through reiterated symbols of death and decomposition (Illustrations 15-16-17-18-19). Two of them (no 16 and 18⁵⁷) suggest mass sacrifice as a price paid for the privatization of the industry requested by the cunning Western capitalist world, represented in the June 24 1995 issue of the same publication by a US dollar mousetrap (Illustration 20). Other images of general collapse introduced Prime Minister Nicolae Văcăroiu (Illustrations 21 and 22⁵⁸), known for his passion for drinking.

The difference from the previous period lies in the new habit of representing the President as a childish, irresponsible fellow (Illustrations 23-24-25-26). The subliminal message suggests the regression to a family "womb", where politicians wash their laundry and boil the ingredients of politics without knowing properly what is going on outside the walls of their reclusion. Illustrations 23 and 25 show the happy family formed by governing leaders Ion Iliescu, Adrian Năstase and Oliviu Gherman (the President of the Senate at the time⁵⁹), while the children in Illustrations

24 and 26⁶⁰ are the interpreters of the national ideological “score” promoted by the power, party leaders Corneliu Vadim Tudor and Gheorghe Funar. In Corneliu Vadim Tudor’s case, the message of opportunistic sacrifice is obvious, because the text says: “Do we clean him, or do we conceive another one?”

The popular image of politics as a self-sufficient game, played by deaf-to-reality individuals has always been a stereotype of the Romanian perception of the state affairs, having its roots in the ontological understanding of ethnicity as a thing to itself, an *a priori* type “essence” (“Romanianism”) incorporated in a worldly structure, namely the state as a historical phenomenon. This rather simple theory, shared by the majority of Romanians, has as a turning point the belief that historical vicissitudes may alter the worldly identity of the state, but cannot harm its deep, good-for-ever “substance”. Since 1990, the interpretation of communism in Romania as an imported plague, which corrupted some millions between 1947 and 1989 but didn’t harm the ethnic substance of the natives, has been a recurrent stereotype of public debates in Romania. To challenge it is sacrilegious. A similar mental stereotype is associated with King Michael I, living now in Switzerland, whose role in arresting former head of state Marshall Ion Antonescu on August 23, 1944 and in turning Romania against Germany at the end of World War II is still a topic of debate amongst historians.

The conclusion would be that politicians belong to the historical forms of the state, and not to its timeless “substance”. As such they are the nasty children of a restless family, scratching only the crust of the universe, but never reaching down to its core. This perception explains the great frequency of the imagery of play and leisure involving politicians in the Romanian mass media (Illustrations 27-28-29-30⁶¹) during a period dominated by the fantasy of rebirth into a world which must be destroyed entirely in order to gain purity (Illustration 31⁶²).

It should be noted that pollution, dirt or filth are ambivalent as symbols. They do not have only a negative connotation, but, isomorphically, a positive one too. In this respect, dirt is associated with debris, that is with the warm and secure ecstasy of the lair, of the den. Lair means here regression to the formless, the certainty of the womb. Starting from the treatment of the debris, there are, one may believe, two kinds of societies: disposal societies and thrifty ones. Disposal societies are, so to say, detergent trained societies. I mean by that the continuous exercise of leaving behind unnecessary things, or - to put it differently - the exercise of making one’s way in life by always leaving the past behind. On the other hand, thrifty societies cope with the

present and with the new stimuli by crouching in the lair, that is by protecting themselves with the debris of their past.

Romania is a thrifty society. If you pass through villages, or enter houses, the first thing that strikes you is the absence of evacuation symptoms: "memories" of past years, old tools, broken cutlery, outworn cloths and bags pile up topsy-turvy into room corners, backyard lumber boxes or barns. If asked about the reason for keeping all these things, the owners generally have one and the same answer: one never knows when you need one thing or another.

The real, psychic reason is the desire to lessen the impact of the present by having at hand, as a protection, a certainty of the past. I'd call it, stretching a Jungian term a little, social abreaction. That is why historical analogies have always been present in Romania's way of life, where the only true step is the step legitimized by tradition. "The population of the Romanian villages - Constantin Rădulescu-Motru concludes - stays under the tradition of collective work. Every peasant will act as he believes everybody will act. He doesn't feel the incentive to start work but at the time everybody starts it. To step aside the line is, for the Romanian peasant, not merely a risk, but sheer madness."⁶³ As things have gone on this way for centuries, Romania's "shame culture"⁶⁴ wasn't distressed too much by the media images of the dirty children roaming in flocks in the streets of Bucharest or by the similar illustrations of the roms. Filth is the metaphysical substance of the past: why bother if you find it on your threshold?

Politicians as garbage cleaners

A suffocation syndrome characterized Ion Iliescu's final months of presidency (Spring - Summer 1996). Clear symptoms of the "collapse" phase turned into a media imagery which embodied the shared fantasies of abandonment and suffocation. Though Romania is not part of an evacuation trained civilization and it is by no means sure that the press illustrations contributed to the drop Iliescu's popularity in the polls, media representations insisted on the fantasy of a country led by politicians surrounded by dirt and garbage, as symbolic equivalents for social disintegration, corruption and crisis. For instance, in Illustration 32⁶⁵, President Iliescu is featured sinking into water, while in the October 14th issue of *România Liberă* (Illustration 33) the disastrous state of the health care is represented by a sleeping child, seemingly abandoned in a sort of

floating basket, like Moses or - nearer to us - the mythical ancestors Romulus and Remus. In Illustrations 34⁶⁶ and 35⁶⁷ President Iliescu appears as a garbage man, in the second picture sharing the joy of the disposal with Adrian Năstase, his major henchman and former president of the Chamber of Deputies. In Illustration 36⁶⁸ (an extremely acid and unusual one for the Romanian media) President Iliescu enjoys the pains of defecation, using the Constitution as toilet paper.

The titles of articles published at that time clearly expressed a suffocation crisis. Here is a sample of them: *Trash. The Ecologist Organizations Require that Salubrity Should Be Paid by PDSR*⁶⁹ (*România Liberă*, Nov.1996); *Timișoara: The Opera Square Again in Turmoil* (Ibid.); *A Plague Called Răducănoiu*; *Mudava: Our People's Head Is Rotten* (Academia Cațavencu, no 41/1996); *From Toplița to Borsec: Poisoned Water for Everybody* (*România Liberă*, Oct.26,1996); *When Food Becomes Poison* (*România Liberă*, Dec.16,1996); *The American Ambassador Is Blind* (*România Liberă*, Sept.14,1996); *Sclerosis of Our Roads* (*România Liberă*, Oct.9, 1996); Ion Cristoiu: *"Iliescu drags the sacred values of Romanianism into the mire."* Not at all surprisingly, the September 16, 1996 issue of *România Liberă* puts an article on its front page saying that in the previous six months of the year Romania registered the sharpest deficit of population in her whole history. Romania sacrifices children.

It is then obvious that when times change, media imagery insists on representing the newly elected leaders as poison drainers or detoxifiers, like Illustration 37⁷⁰, which shows Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea killing corruption virus holders with a bug tox pump.

"We ... as Romanians ... are nothing"

Nationalism kept being a major issue in Romania's Autumn 1996 elections, which brought to power a "political fraternity" (the Democratic Convention, built up as a coalition of numerous parties) and a new President, Professor Emil Constantinescu, former Rector of Bucharest University. Ion Iliescu's PDSR was, paradoxically, a party without a personal ideology. To compensate for such a deficiency, the leaders of the party stressed an opportunistic and very poignant nationalism, a popular persuasion which was exacerbated during the first and the second ballots, when President Iliescu realized that things were going really wrong. The

victory of the Democratic Convention was therefore presented as a farewell to the sacred and ancient values, and as a fatal loss of national identity.

Romania is sharing now the public fantasy of frustration because of the cautious hugs of a rejective surrogate mother (Europe) and a similarly repulsive surrogate father (NATO). The lack of parentage is very obvious in recent public fantasies: the government is accused of being non-protective, insensitive to the needs of its "offspring". Actually, Romania experiences a completely new leadership system at the moment, based on the premeditated diffusion of the Centre, the responsibility being taken up by a loose fraternity of equals.

The crisis is illustrated by the public fantasy of travelling, of being on the road (that is nowhere), the most controversial minister of the new Government being Traian Băsescu, the head of the Department of Transportation. Articles about deadly unsafe belts of communication and about absurd road taxes to be paid by car-owners blasted Romanian media until mid July 1997, associating the officially induced enthusiasm to join Europe and NATO with the subliminal public fantasy of threat and expulsion because of a cut umbilical cord.

A Fantasy Analysis of Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea's discourse at the presentation of the Governing Program and of the members of the Government to the Parliament⁷¹ shows, contrary to its explicit, primeval message, a subliminal fear of losing identity when joining Europe and NATO. Words suggesting a catastrophe start from the very beginning of the text, circling around the fantasy that *"we ... Romanians ... are nothing ..."* Here is a sample of the analysis of the discourse:

"We, Romanians ... are not ... not capable ... we, Romanians ... do not ... we mustn't have complexes ... Romanians do not make quality products ... must change destiny ... we are not condemned ... not a miracle ... mustn't fear ... bad ... for everybody ... winter ... sacrifices ... total war ... fight against ... crisis program ... ministers who do not ... the picture of the Romanian reality is distressing ... dangerous loss ... our life expectancy is the lowest in Europe, infant mortality the highest ... the biological being of the Romanian people ... affected ... Romania ... still a risky country ... painful evaluation of the situation ... the top of pain ... children infected with AIDS ... malnutrition ... fear ... not transform ... will not hide ... not notice ... Romanians were not told ... unsafe Christmas ... waste the resources of a rich country, Romania ... sap the Romanians' intelligence, initiatives and everyday strife."



Illustration 15



Illustration 16

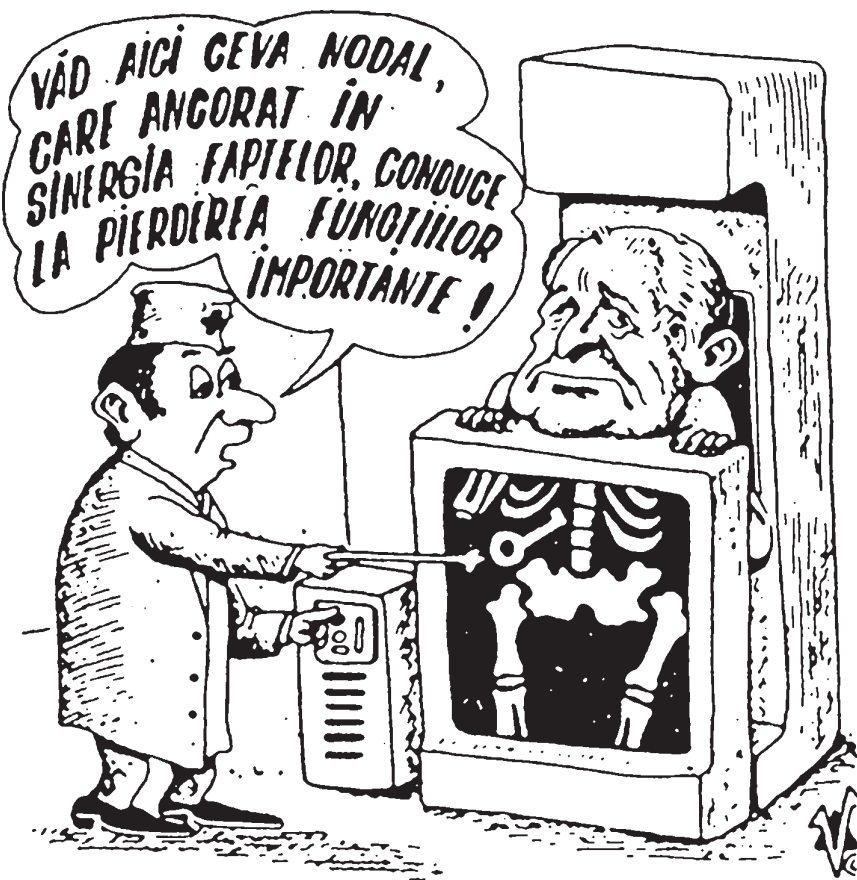


Illustration 17

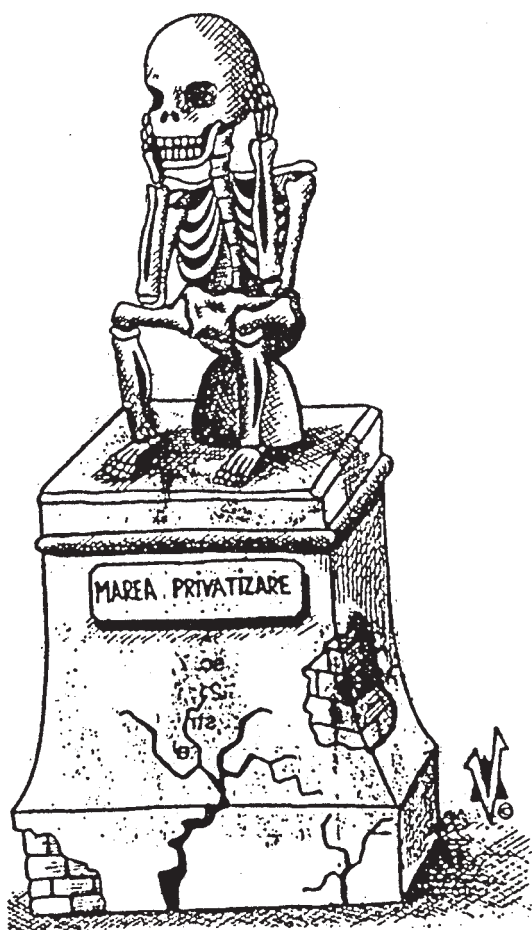


Illustration 18



Illustration 19

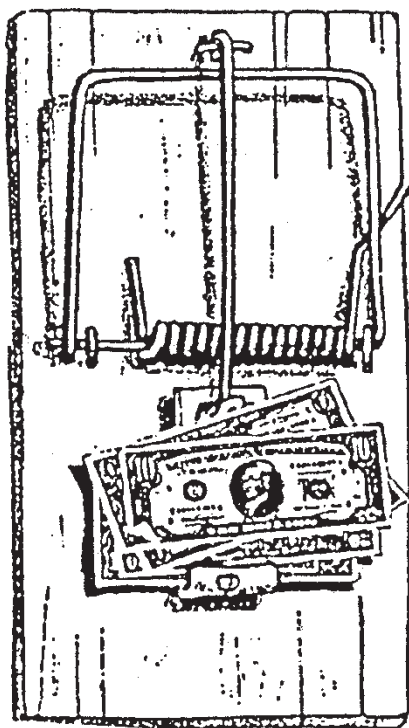


Illustration 20



Illustration 21

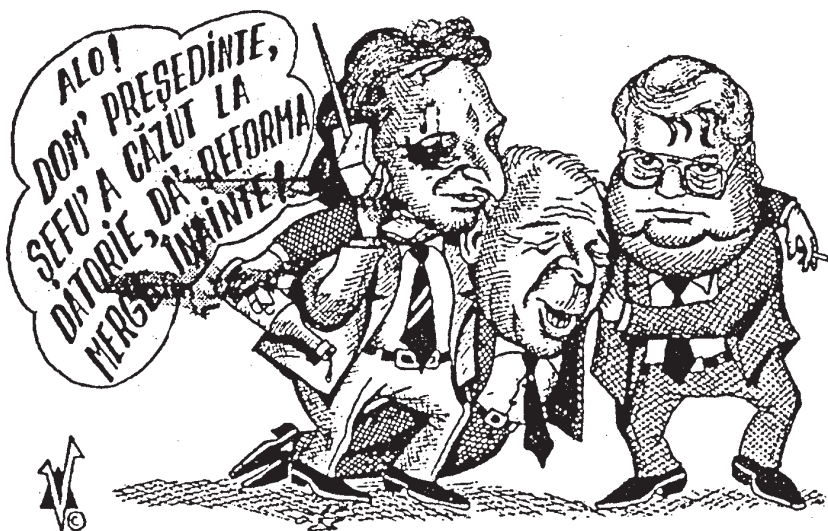


Illustration 22



Illustration 23



Illustration 24



Illustration 25



*DIN OCEANUL PACIFIC,
A IESIT UN PESTE MIC
SI PE COADA LUI SCRIA
REMANIAT ESTI DUMNEATA !*

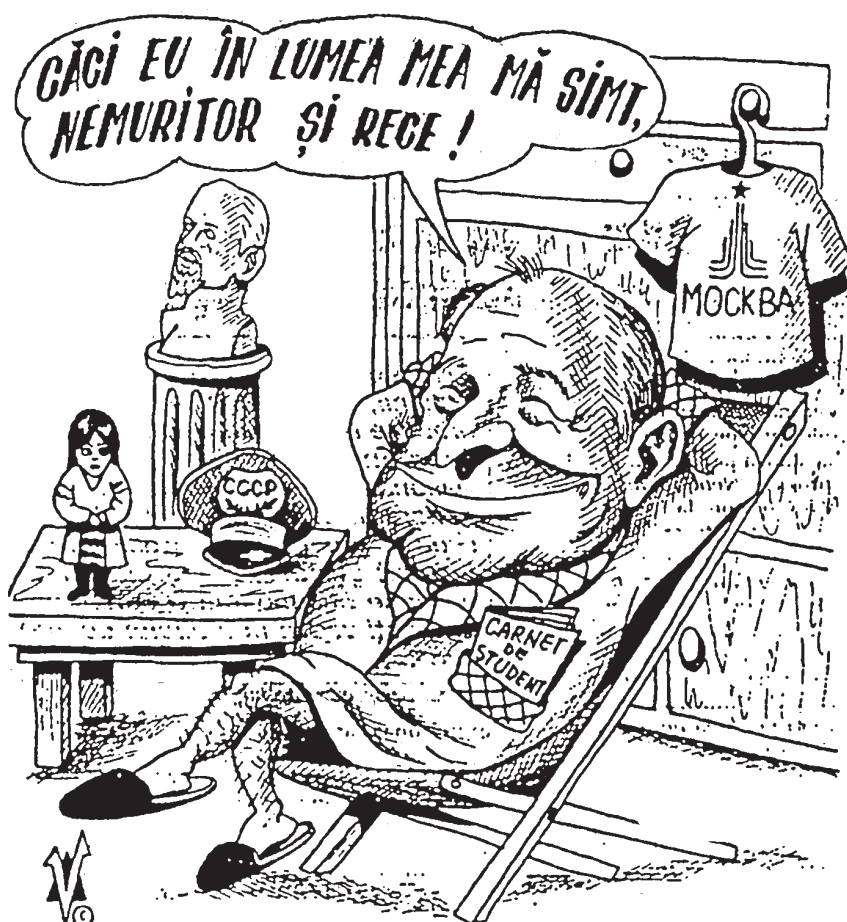




Illustration 28



Illustration 29



România se află în preajma unui butoi cu pulbere



Illustration 32



Illustration 33



Illustration 34



Illustration 35



Illustration 36

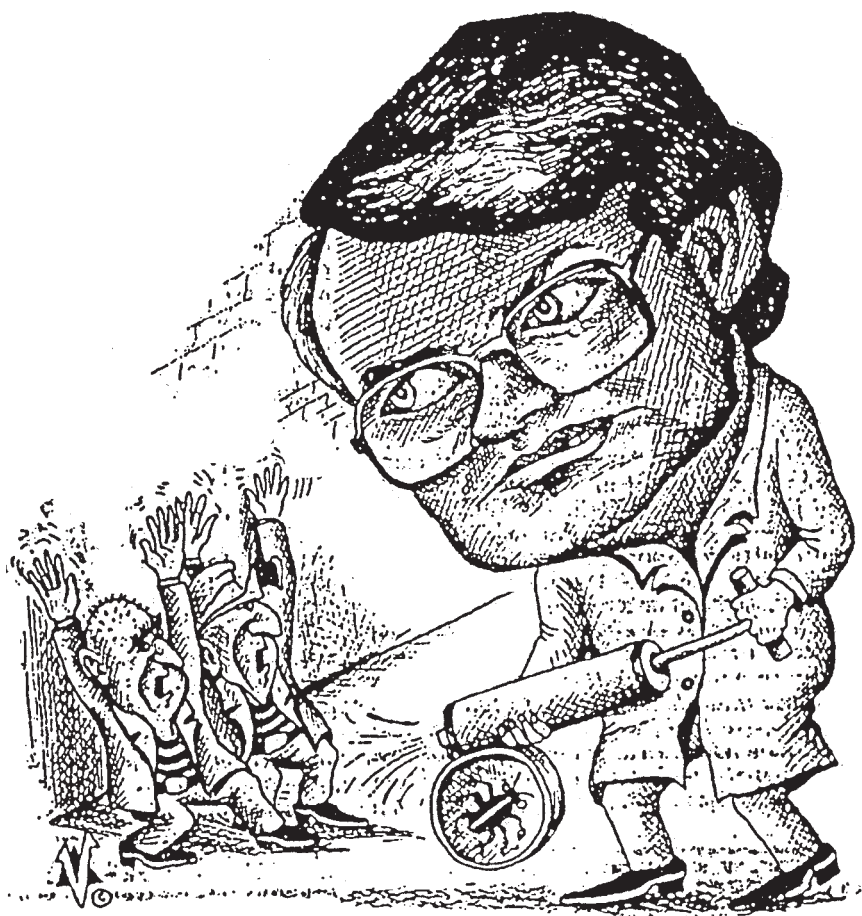


Illustration 37

In its last passages the discourse reiterates the ambivalence of the "terrible moments" of history (understood as the empirical cover of ethnicity) and the deepest imperative of "surviving as a nation", thus shifting politicians from the generally accepted level of the surface to the deepest level of the essence for the first time in a Romanian political discourse. It is also interesting to note that the cooperation with ethnic groups as well as the understanding of the minorities are exiled to the abstract reef of "the common platform of the religious morals"⁷². The whole speech claims the exigence of "making history together", in order "to leave anonymity and modesty" as national marks of self-appreciation and identity behind. The fantasy analysis of the discourse suggests a dangerous state of peril, poisoning, helplessness and hopelessness. As quoted above (see note 25), in less than eight months from the date of the discourse, tabloids announced that only Albania kills more children than Romania in Europe.

NOTES

1. Previous approaches include: Stefan Borbély: *Romania and the Myth of the Lost Child, Romania literara*, no. 48, November 1992 and the whole issue of *Echinox*, Cluj, XXVII, no. 3-4-5, which includes the Romanian versions of texts by David R. Beisel, William L. Langer, Henry Lawton, Bruce Mazlish, Alenka Puhar, Juhani Ihanus, Paul H. Elovitz, Howard F. Stein, Stefan Borbély.
2. *Psychohistorians Discuss Psychohistory*, in: *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 3, no. 1, Summer 1975, p. 124
3. *Psychohistory: Independence or Integration*, *ibid.*
4. *The Independence of Psychohistory*. In: *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 3, no. 2, Fall 1975
5. Rudolf Binion, in the debate *The Joys and Terrors of Psychohistory*, in: *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 5, no. 3, Winter 1978
6. Carl Hempel: *The Function of General Laws in History*, in: *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. by Herbert Feigl and Wilfred Sellars, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1949
7. Ortega y Gasset: *History as a System and Other Essays toward a Philosophy of History*. With an Afterword by John William Miller. The Norton Library, W. W. Norton & Company Inc. New York, 1962
8. Apud: Hervé Coutau-Begarie: *Le phénomène >>Nouvelle histoire<<. Stratégie et idéologie des nouveaux historiens*, Economica, Paris, 1983, pp. 18-19
9. See Jean Laplanche & J.-B. Pontalis: *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, PUF, Paris, 1967

10. Lloyd deMause: *The Independence of Psychohistory*, in: *Foundations of Psychohistory*, Creative Roots, Inc., New York, 1982, p. 89
11. Op. cit., p. 90. The italics belong to the author, but the marks underlining the final part of the quotation belong to me, in order to stress the acceptance of personal involvement, of "transference" by Psychohistory.
12. *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware. Society's Betrayal of the Child*. Translated by Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum. A Meridian Book, 1990, pp. 19-20
13. The *abreaction* is defined by classical psychoanalysis as the dramatic reenactment of a previous traumatic experience by the deep psyche (See: Andrew Samuels, Bani Shorter, Fred Plaut: *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London-New York, 1986. *Abreaction*)
14. Daniel Dervin: *Enactments. American Modes and Psychohistorical Models*. Madison-Teaneck. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. London: Associated University Press, 1996, pp. 35-36
15. *Historical Group-Fantasies*, in: *Foundations ...*, ed. cit., pp. 172-243
16. *Archetypal Psychology as a Key for Understanding Prehistoric Art Forms*, in: *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 3, no. 4, Spring 1976
17. *The New Theology: Star Trek, Star Wars, Close Encounters and the Crisis of Pseudo-rationality*, in: *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 5, no. 4, Spring 1978
18. *The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 9, no. 1, Summer 1981, reprinted in the *Foundations of Psychohistory*, op. cit., pp. 244-332
19. Op. cit., p. 261
20. Op. cit., p. 260
21. *The History of Childhood*. Lloyd deMause, editor. The Psychohistory Press, New York, 1974; The English edition: A Condor Book. Souvenir Press (E&A) Ltd., 1976
22. See in this respect Dan Dervin's *Critical Reflections on Key Aspects of Lloyd deMause's Seminal Psychohistory*, and Lloyd deMause's *Reply to Dan Dervin*, both in *The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 24, no. 2, Fall 1996
23. Especially in *The Evolution of Childhood*, printed both in *The History of Childhood* (op. cit.) and in the *Foundations ...* (op. cit.)
24. *La psychanalyse et l'histoire: une application à l'histoire de Sparte*, Annales ESC (20) 1965, reprinted in Alain Besancon's *L'Histoire psychanalytique*. Mouton-Paris-La Haye, 1974
25. *Aproape 100.000 de copii abandonati în instituții de ocrotire*/Almost 100,000 children abandoned in foster homes/, *România liberă*, July 19, 1997; *Societatea românească nu-și mai poate permite să piardă copii în instituții de tip lagăr*/Romanian society can no longer afford to lose children in concentration camp type institutions/, *ibid.*; *Cei mai mulți copii se îmbolnăvesc din cauza sărăciei*/Most of the children get sick because of poverty/, *România liberă*, July 21, 1997; *Doar în Albania mor mai mulți copii decât în România*/Only in Albania do more children die than in Romania/, *România liberă*, July 22, 1997

26. An excellent model of childrearing for the Balkans can be found in Alenka Puhar's *Childhood Origins of the War in Yugoslavia*, I-II, *The Journal of Psychohistory*, vol. 20, no. 4 Spring 1993 and vol. 21, no. 2 Fall 1993
27. *The History of Childhood* (op. cit.), p. 51
28. See my text in *România literară*, November 1992
29. Lloyd deMause's terminology from *The Fetal Origins of History*, see *supra*
30. The University of Chicago Press, 1981
31. TV and media reports, May 1997
32. *Spațiul mioritic*, Bucharest, 1936
33. I am grateful to Prof. Jerry Atlas from Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York for this suggestion (St.B.)
34. *Pragmatica personajului* /The Pragmatics of the Hero/, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992; *Fals tratat de disperare* /False Treatise of Despair/, Hestia Publishing House, Timișoara, 1995
35. The expression is a commonly widespread public stereotype in formal debates and informal arguments in Romania (St.B.)
36. Short version in: *Enciclopedia României*, București, 1938, pp. 161-168
37. Op. cit., p. 161
38. *Ibid.*, p. 161
39. It's necessary to say that Constantin Rădulescu-Motru's theory opposes Lucian Blaga's famous thesis concerning "the boycotting of history" expressed in *Spațiul mioritic* (*The Mioritical Space*, 1936). As Blaga puts it, the psychology of the Romanian people is based on the reluctance to face history (that is, by the desire to "boycott it"), its actions being performed in a "pre-historical" time ("eternity"). On the contrary, according to Rădulescu-Motru, "spirituality" rises a nation beyond time and contingencies, in the "pure" space of creative values.
40. See Norman Manea, *Felix Culpa*, in: *On Clowns. The Dictator and the Artist*. Grove Weidenfeld Press, New York, 1992; D. A. Doeing, *A Biography of Mircea Eliade's Spiritual and Intellectual Development*. Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of PhD, Ottawa, 1975; I. P. Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*, Cittadella Editrice, Assisi, 1978 (Romanian version in 1995, by Nemira Publishing House); Man Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade. The Romanian Roots 1907-1945*, Boulder Co., East European Monographs, 1988; Z.Ornea: *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească* /*The Thirties. The Romanian Extremist Right*/, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1995
41. Camil Petrescu, *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*, I (1930); G. Ibrăileanu, *Adela* (1933); M. Sebastian, *Femei*(1933); Gib I. Mihăescu, *Rusoaica* (1933); M.Eliade, *Maitreyi*(1933), *Domnișoara Christina*(1936); G.Călinescu, *Enigma Otiliei* (1938)
42. M. Eliade, *Cuvântul*, VIII, no. 2502/ July 11, 1932
43. P. Comarnescu, *Azi*, no. 1/ 1932. The term "experientalism" is a forced creation of the author

44. The significance of rebirth from a malignant womb theatrically reemerged on July 11, 1997, when President Bill Clinton visited Bucharest after blocking Romania's access to NATO. When finishing his speech, Petre Roman, Iliescu's former Prime Minister and the actual President of the Senate unexpectedly offered the American President a flag having a hole in its middle. By doing this, Roman tried to persuade the guest to legitimize Romania's new political leadership by raising the unfolded flag of the December 1989 revolution in front of the enthusiastic crowd. Clinton either misunderstood the claim, or was reluctant to honour it. (St.B.)
45. *România Liberă*, 1995, May 9 and June 9 respectively
46. *România Liberă*, July 1, 1995 (It is worth mentioning that the beneficiary of a similar consecration was President Carter, represented with an aura around his head in Lloyd deMause's *Reagan's America*, Creative Roots, 1984, p. 18)
47. Ibid., July 1 1995
48. Ibid., May 6 1995
49. Ibid., April 18 1995
50. For further details see my text *Psihoistoria în imagini /Psychohistory in Illustrations/*, *Echinox*, XXVII, no. 3-4-5/ 1995, pp. 3 & 20
51. *România Liberă*, 1995: February 6, June 15 and March 20 respectively
52. Ibid., June 3 1995
53. Creative Roots, Inc., New York, 1982, pp. 246-247
54. Personal observation (St.B.)
55. PUNR: Partidul Unității Naționale Române /The Romanian National Unity Party; leader: Gheorghe Funar, until end of March 1996; after losing the elections, Funar was unseated, and the party elected a new president, Valeriu Tabără; PRM: Partidul România Mare /The Greater Romania Party; leader: the anti-Semite poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor/
56. Lloyd deMause, op. cit., p. 246
57. *România liberă*, February 1 and March 30 respectively
58. *România liberă*, March 1 1996 and February 7 1996 respectively
59. *România liberă*, February 16 and 9 1996 respectively
60. Ibid., April 22 and July 15 1996 respectively
61. Ibid., February 15, April 3, January 24, January 10 1996 respectively
62. Ibid., June 9 1995
63. C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Psihologia poporului român* (op. cit), p. 161
64. The term belongs to E. R. Dodds: *The Greek and the Irrational*, The Regents of the University of California Press, 1951 /Romanian version translated by Catrinel Pleșu: *Dialectica spiritului grec*, Meridiane, 1983/
65. *Academia Cațavencu*, October 16-22 1996
66. *România Liberă*, October 14 1996
67. *România Liberă*, September 26 1996
68. *România Liberă*, September 28 1996
69. PDSR = Partidul Democrației Sociale din România, the leading party until the 1996 general elections

70. *România Liberă*, December 16 1996
71. *Discursul Primului Ministru desemnat, Victor Ciorbea, cu ocazia prezentării programului de guvernare și a Guvernului în fața Parlamentului*, in: *Dreptatea*, nr. 121, December 18-24 1996, pp. 15-16
72. It is worthwhile noting that in the Romanian Constitution (1991), the President is the only point where the mundane meets the sacred...