CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY ENLISTED UNDER THE IMAGE´S FLAG: TOO MANY IMAGES AND TOO MANY "FLAGS"

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"I am a stain of blood which speaks".
Nichita Stănescu
Romanian poet (1933-1983)

Abstract. *Philosophy determines the necessity to discern between two grand categories of images: ideal and symbolic forms (archetypes, myths, mental representations) and images dwelling in the daily existence (political creations, more or less symbolic and more or less ephemeral as are the political logos, the varied electoral types of "creations", or the stereotypes etc.). Following in a strict manner the social and political relevance, we can identify ample series of relevant types of images: redundant, entropic, international, national, patriotic, xenophobe, myths, resounding representations (such as odes, marches, electoral songs, hymns), local images, global images, emblems and logos of the parties or of the NGOs, institutional images (of the political parties, of different social or political movements, of the parliament, army, of the Romanian Orthodox Church etc.), images of the commemorative manifestations, images of the vindicating or silent, or apathetic masses, royal images, presidential images, popular images, democratic or undemocratic images, static visual images, traditional or conservative images, left wing or right wing images, progress oriented, feminist, ecologist, communitarian images, images of the minorities, (post)modern images, mythical images, images of the vagrant, images of the foreigner or emblematical images (images of the president, patriarch, leader, unionist, popular tribune protecting the plebeian citizens, reformist, revolutionary, radical, terrorist, shaman etc.) and so on and so forth. The study emphasizes the mythological, archetype and metaphor foundation of image and especially the social ordering, solidarity and meaning institution functions of the image.*

Keywords: *ideal forms, archetypes, myths, mental representations, order.*

This tremendous force of the image of the stain of blood which speaks surprises the particular greatness of image, in general, and of the mechanisms setting in motion the influence of images on mankind. The same stain of blood could trigger the meditation on revolutions and revolutionaries, on civil war or any other kind of war, on the rebellious or creative man – anyway, it sets for sure a landmark, a referential of greatness, dripping meaning. This aspect is rather relative; not any referential represented by image is similarly or equally great in comparison to others, although they are all oriented toward some type of superlative quality, identifiable in a symbolic form. The essay on man of Ernst Cassirer has the background of a philosophy of symbolic forms, profoundly present within the structure of resistance of mankind, of the humane and of human culture. Symbolic forms are at least the spiritual double if not the true environment for human life, the nourishment, the water and the air for man. In this respect, the interpretative perspective sustained by E. Cassirer converges with the perspective of Mircea Eliade from his entire work and especially from *Images et symboles* (1952).

Human culture and, even more, human existence and the reality of the humane cannot stray far and they cannot totally emancipate themselves from the great images of humanity (which are varied enough, if not divergent, but they are all acme images, expressing a high mark, in the sense interpreted by Camil Petrescu, images of tragedy, again, of greatness, of peace or of war, of victory or of revelation, of ascension, of union or separation, such as, for illustration, the Chinese Wall, Trajan's Column, or any other column, the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, the moai or the Easter Island heads, the flight, the smile, the handshake, the hug, the varied abstract representations of the sun, as are these from the Romanian popular garments or from the wooden peasant houses' gates etc.).

Contemporary societies gather around images as primitive societies do around fire. There certain categories of powerful images triggering agreement, while describing social and political aspects of human reality – the institution of hierarchy, the structuring and the functioning of human society etc. –, and then others, describing the attitudes, the values and the hopes of man. Among the first set of three categories and the last set of three categories there is a permanent mutual influence taking place and, even more, we could notice that image, any image maintains traces of all these aspects. Images generate solidarity, unity and continuity when they describe the hopes and values of the people. At the same time images generate as well scission, divergence and separatism when they describe the convulsions of human community caught among multiple uncertainties, the difficulties of the constitution of the extended human community (R. Rorty[1]) and the distortions of the distant ideal of the eternal peace (I. Kant[2]), or between the symbolic images of the Western peace and prosperity and the

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[1] Richard Rorty, *Adevăr și progres*, translation by Mihaela Cabulea, Bucharest, Univers Publishing House, 2003.
[2] Immanuel Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace", in *Practical Philosophy*, translated by Mary Gregor, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

images of the migrant ripples, the new disinherited of the fate and the new oppressed, and the images of the terrorist anti-hero.

Man, as symbolic animal, as described by Ernst Cassirer is a consumer and a producer of meaning, inclusively through the production and consumption of images. Man is a representational bio-reality, creating and consuming representations. From the cave walls pictures, to the ceremonial images generated by the rituals, by the historical chronicles to the musical or personal video productions posted on Facebook, to television and film, image accompanied humanity as a factor of order, of motivation, but especially as a factor inducing meaning and order through meaning within human societies. Let us recall the image of Saint Constantine the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles, the luminous cross beyond the sun, a daydream vision inscribed "*in hoc signo vinces*", repeated in the night dream of Emperor Constantine with the recommendation of Jesus Christ to use it on the flags of the soldiers as a protective sign in fight. Especially this image-vision determined Emperor Constantine to take the Christian side and to act on behalf of Christianity, creating history, creating the Byzantine Empire and a specific contribution to the history, the culture and the constitution of our world[3].

The entire activity of the society is developed under signs and the "flags" of images able to condense the hopes for triumph of the leaders and of the people. The grand narratives disappeared, as announced by J. Fr. Lyotard[4], although the little grand narrative still perpetuated are the images which took their place and continue to support and impose, accordingly to the case, power positions in society and culture.

A man could die, the nations could attain culmination, or destruction, but an image, the image is going to continue to survive. This paraphrasing of the words of the American president John F. Kennedy only prepare the terrain for our approach oriented to investigate the inexpressible, profoundly meditative, creative, representational and imaginative, of man and human societies. We can imagine the scenes similar to so many movies where we encounter the absolute tragic scene: after the disappearance of human race statues, various objects of art and architecture, technology and scientific achievements remain dripping meaning in void, for no one to grasp. The heroes and the heroisms of history, the historical enemies the national and international stereotypies are but products of human representative and (or) imaginary capacities of man, painted in the memory of humanity, through words, light, in science, history, or arts. The very establishment of relations passes through images and is founded on images.

Metaphorically, but also in many real contexts, too, under the image's flag victory dwells. For as long as an image is alive, functional, and vibrating, it constitutes a type of foundation, validation and justification instance, explanatory instance and currency for social and political relations, for hierarchies, for attitudes etc.

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[3] See, for example Ioan Rămureanu, *Istoria bisericească universală*, vol. 1, Bucharest, EIBMBOR, 1975. The event is captured by Eusebius of Caesarea in *Vita Constantini* and Lactantius, in *De mortibus persecutorum*, 48, 5.

[4] J. Fr. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, translation by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Foreword by Fredric Jameson, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984.

Let us approach the definition of "imagology". Imagology could be defined as a critical, contextualized and consequential analysis of the characteristics attributed to institutions, ethnicities, groups, nationalities, everyday people or political, social, cultural personalities etc.[5] The foundation of this mechanism of characteristics' attribution is symbolic: not in the sense that it is derisory, but in the sense that it orders and associate to each signifier a cluster of signified attributes with a specific contextualized hierarchy, according to a certain social capitalization, composing hierarchies of symbolic values, completing the puzzle-like image of the local, regional, national, or international order. The functioning of this symbolic mechanism is indebted to the profound foundation of human culture and human society on a symbolic, archetype and mythological type of understanding for the current reality; an approach which seems involuntary and immediate. The image has a "gift" to offer a substitute (or an expressive support) for explanation along with the feeling of instantaneous understanding of a situation.

Defining imagology is sustainable precisely because it represents the effort of critical investigation of the symbolic mechanism of attribution for the explicative characteristics of the daily phenomena, of the mythological landmarks on which the interpretative-explicative cultural matrixes are built, establishing what is and what is not representative for the "normality" of a culture and society, as well establishing the whole register of possible threats addressable to a specific society. Media is the discourse of society in dialogue with herself (G. Gerbner) a discourse possible especially doe to these symbolic and mythological landmarks, generating social and political representations in a merry-go-round[6] of images, offering a certain type of cyclical stability for the cultural concepts, elements and complex explicative-interpretative matrixes of reference of cultures. All these images indulge a story-like, a narrative quality. For instance, the image of man in modern and contemporary society still narrates a type of heroic story of the savior, wanderer or prodigious son, even though they are hidden, convoluted or diluted in top records' stories, in sports performances' stories, or, in the derisory areas of daily existence in womanizing, drinking or eating stories of success. Similarly, the politician (man or women) conveys the image of the mythical reinstituting instance of society, a different kind of savior – law maker, or law enforcer, or law commenter and decision maker; an image which narrates about the one who talks for us, a well of micro or grand narrations, the one deciding the beneficial actions, changes and directions in which society should go, the enemies and the friends of community, the one who strengthens in various ways, but mainly through words, speech, discourse, the community of destiny of a certain society. Similarly, the images of woman and family include narrations and mythical references behind daily phrases in use.

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[5] http://imagologica.eu/pdf/historymethod.pdf, 17 March 2013.
[6] This is as well a reference to Eliade's idea of circularity in mythology and to a cyclicity of the mythological time.

The keywords associated to imagology, "image" and "imagery", led to confusions. Philosophy is not as much interested with images *stricto sensu*, as in topology or military and technical approaches in the army treaties, or as in medical sciences where an image is a proper representation of an organ. In philosophy images are involved in specific investigations of the truth, of the interrelation between appearance and essence. For the neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer man relates to the world and understands the world through the symbolic forms. His philosophy of symbolic forms is developed in a dialogue with philosophy of life as presented in the ideas of Wilhelm Dilthey, Henri Bergson, Max Scheler, Georg Simmel and Martin Heidegger, but subjected to Hegelian historical dialectics[7]. As a part of daily exploits of the human life the symbolic forms fulfil the expressive function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), a function of representation loaded with meanings originating in the mythical consciousness and from the emotional universe present in human life, without any particular interest in dissociating the appearance from whatever is permanent, essential, universal or real in full and deep philosophical sense, although mythical thought is based, at least to a certain extent, on a Kantian categorical foundation proper for the rational identification of the universal and principled aspects of reality. The second function of the symbolic forms is *Darstellungsfunktion* or the representational function with the main role of capitalizing whatever is related to the expression, while accomplishing through processes of thought and communication the perceptions associated to the object in case, to the objects in focus, or to the objects signified, along with the tension between the object and the substance of the object, its manifestations, the position of the speaker and a pragmatic foundation for the relation to the world. This function is in concordance with Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The correlation between thought, representation and relation, to the world and to the other (human) beings brings the specific depth to the manner in which the language used influences our manner of seeing (that is, conceptualizing) the world. The conceptualization of language outside the interaction among people, and the interaction between people and the world, is leaving aside important symbolic forms, in their role, and in their purpose, concentrating merely on language as a partner of the speculative intellect, of thought, at an abstract superior level of rationing (this is going to be the speculation, or thought creation, accomplished by the third function) and on the third function of the symbolic forms. This third function of the symbolic forms is stating the identity of thought at the superior level, which is associated to the systematic and rather individual and dialectic investigation of truth and reality – *Bedeutungsfunktion*, the function assigning signification[8]. Within this neo-Kantian approach, as a result, human thought discerns, analyzing the forms, the systems of formal relations and the universal law.

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[7] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. by Ralph Manheim, introduction by Charles W. Hendel, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955.

[8] *Ibidem*. See also Michael Friedman, "Ernst Cassirer", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/cassirer/, accessed at 8 December 2016.

Thus, symbolic forms are in a specific manner, forms of subjectivity, and this theoretical perspective justifies the discussion of the common aspects of the subjective forms at Cassirer and Wittgenstein. In our view, we can state that symbolic forms are with necessity part of specific "forms of life" (Wittgenstein) – such as, for instance, the creative behavior, the liberal behavior, the tolerant behavior, the warrior behavior etc. – involving contexts relevant for the accuracy of meaning and specific cultural linguistic and social games, with a specific relation and a specific influence on the scientific approach. Knowledge, as a result of human typical experience and perception, as a certain characteristic human manner and necessity of expression, which amounts to higher levels of order, becomes a double of the human experience with order and symbolization.

A complex of perception, either of scientific type, or of cultural type, identifies order at the core of experience, through symbolic processes that are uniting within meanings both physical and spiritual dimensions. The symbolic form is accordingly to the case a product or an instrument in human knowledge production and belongs to a specific cultural sphere. All the three functions are as well functions of the consciousness, as they are modalities of relation between subject and object[9].

For imagology, imagery is a sum of representations and these gather a sum of relevant characteristics serving an idea, a person or an organization. In politics images create an environment of familiarity with the political actors, events and phenomena, via television and virtual information platforms. Against the excesses, we have the approach sustained also by Titu Maiorescu in Romanian culture, the approach animated by the spirit of logic and by the importance of the emphasis on the value of the Romanian specificity. For a modern logician as Titu Maiorescu the categories of thought are to be clear, distinct and disjunctive and to sustain clear images provided we can discern the significant differences – either a, or b, p different from q – because only this way we can convey clearer points of view, a logical thought, a rich and justified content, which is also Romanian. On the other hand, the Romanian literary critic Eugen Lovinescu was animated by a cultural spirit of the debate of ideas, rather "democratic" in its specific (Nicolae Manolescu), at the same time, admirative of the West and entertaining a vision of synchronization with the Western level of development placing the accent on the institutional forms which were expected to bring about the same civilizational and democratic content as in the West[10]. *The distinction between form and content* may seem rather forced, but it entertained an important debate around the visions regarding the modernization of Romania: the vision of Eugen Lovinescu known as synchronism was a plea for the correspondence of national level of development with the contemporary Western nations, while

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[9] *Ibidem*.

[10] Eugen Lovinescu, *T. Maiorescu*, editor Maria Simionescu, Foreword by Alexandru George, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1972. Titu Maiorescu, *Opere I,* editor Georgeta Rădulescu-Dulgheru and Domnica Filimon, Introductive Study by Eugen Todoran, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1978. Ştefan Zeletin, *Burghezia română. Originea şi rolul ei istoric* (1925); *Neoliberalismul. Studii asupra istoriei şi politicii burgheziei române* (1927), edition by Cristian Preda, bio-bibliographical notes by C. D. Zeletin, Introductory Study by Cristian Preda, Bucharest, Nemira Publishing House, 1997.

Titu Maiorescu criticized this path toward modernization as a dangerous one, because it ignored the autochthonous social, political and economic contents the only guarantee of natural development in constituting institutional forms both functional and durable since are adequate to local circumstances and characteristics.

Image is reproduction and representation. As a consequence, image is tributary to the proficiency and talent for representation and reproduction, indebted to the stereotypes of the context of knowledge and perception, circumstance and social group of the one involved with this activity, but not as much directly to knowledge of the realities represented. According to Walter Lipmann[11], the stereotypes are the stenography of social representations due to the "pictures in our head", in our view, based on the typologies induced by archetypes and mythology in the symbolic and cultural relation of the human being to the world.

The meditation around image tends to consolidate as subject of study around the investigation of the public images in society, politics, public relations and publicity. Erkki Karvonen[12] composes the term "imagology" from *imago* and *logos* to emphasize the investigative approach of image. Another perspective, the analysis of images within a philosophy of media emphasizes the mythological dimension of the constitution, functioning and exchange of public images in society. E. Karvonen underlines the importance of the role of metaphorical foundation fulfilled by images, metaphors which are also silent premises in the understanding and interpretation of the great images of humanity.

Philosophy determines the necessity to discern between two grand categories of images: ideal and symbolic forms (archetypes, myths, mental representations) and images dwelling in the daily existence (political creations, more or less symbolic and more or less ephemeral as are the political logos, the varied electoral types of "creations", or the stereotypes etc.). Following in a strict manner the social and political relevance, we can identify ample series of relevant types of images: redundant, entropic, international, national, patriotic, xenophobe, myths, resounding representations (such as odes, marches, electoral songs, hymns), local images, global images, emblems and logos of the parties or of the NGOs, institutional images (of the political parties, of different social or political movements, of the parliament, army, of the Romanian Orthodox Church etc.), images of the commemorative manifestations, images of the vindicating or silent, or apathetic masses, royal images, presidential images, popular images, democratic or undemocratic images, static visual images (such as the electoral posters, for instance), video images (electoral videos, interviews, press conferences etc.), traditional or conservative images, left wing or right wing images, progress oriented, feminist, ecologist, communitarian images, images of the minorities, images of the oppressed, images of marginality, modern images, postmodern images, mythical images, images of the vagrant, images of the foreigner or emblematical images (images of the president, patriarch, leader, unionist, popular

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[11] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, Harcourt, Brace, 1922.
[12] See Imagologia. Imagon teorioiden esittelyä, analyysia, kritiikkiä (Imagology. Some Theories of the Public Image Presented, Analysed and Criticized), http://www.worldcat.org/title/imagologia-imagon-teorioiden-esittelya-analyysia-kritiikkia/oclc/58262326.

tribune protecting the plebeian citizens, reformist, revolutionary, radical, terrorist, shaman etc.) and so on and so forth.

Within all the contexts, philosophy offers an important analytical key to the understanding of the image as ideal form and, more precisely, as twinning of knowledge and good, an interrelation, which cannot be but accompanied by a comparable aesthetic performance and due to all these dimensions, we could interpret image, in general or in daily encounters, in the perspective of distancing from or closeness to the ideal form, a benchmark form that maintains a complete substantial content in terms of ideas, values, completeness. The human being feels the determination to associate her existence an objective dimension, that of the ideal forms, or of the perfect landmarks, establishing this way for human existence as well-meaning and order. Political philosophy offers us concepts, mental images with role of reference, all twinning of knowledge and good, evolving in the direction of contextualization, completion or correction of beliefs, intuitions, truths, certainties opinions, or common impressions (to the extent they qualify in front of the requirements generated by the above-mentioned twinning of knowledge and good).

The magic and somewhat religious dimension of the images and symbols is overlapping the philosophic dimension of the symbolic forms, and these correspond to the founding and legitimating "thread" of social and political order and are to multiply, exacerbate and, at times, dilute, in more rudimentary formulae assumed by the electoral games and the trade. The images promote and sell products of all imaginable categories, from the strictly material ones and up to the intellectual, political or artistic ones. The consumption of image is competing with the alimentary one. Image became our daily bread and water. Even within the Islamic cultures, which are traditionally keeping their distance from the graphical representations, the consumption of image takes place, in specific forms induced through the newer technologies, architecture, art and words.

Promoted by media, through the institutional cultures, through literature and film the images sneak into people's minds, make room within the diverse correlations of ideas and play a rather conservative role, maintaining most of the status quo situations. A fact that does not mean that the images do not happen to appear as well in unexpected contexts and roles, accompanying change or triggering it, sanctioning certain realities correlated with the inequities and inequality in society, or, with certain traditions, sustaining other states of affairs than the current ones, more progressive, or reforming, or novel (maintaining though always certain aspects unchanged). The image of the woman in the kitchen may have evolved into being surrounded by more efficient technology and by a sort of image of the specialized woman which are newer elements, and the new image is accompanied by that of the entire family in the kitchen, by the image of the efficient or inefficient father involved with such activities, which are partially images induced by the desiderate of gender equality, while the conservative elements of bourgeois happiness, of woman's elegance in the kitchen and even that of beauty in the kitchen etc. are maintained.

A necessary direction of investigation is the sublime of political power and the kaleidoscope of images of the divine, virtuous, legitimate and righteous ruler. In the image of the ruler we identify the heroic aspiration of self-actualization of the human being and the participation of this being to a sacred reality, be it only the sacredness of duty to one's people. We stubbornly insist to hold up the mirror of princes although, in democracy, for different reasons than during the Middle Ages, and although the time of this current and the time of princes themselves faded away in a significant measure. We are still staring at the majestic face of power even though nowadays we relate to a secular power, perceived either as closer or as farther from the divine one, nevertheless, approximating it hopelessly. Secular and "terrestrial" power speculate less the analogy and comparison with divinity or the legitimacy through divine, but bear an echo of this tradition, a certain "trace", as far as the norms, the mores, the beliefs and the laws permit at the time, up to the total separation from transcendence and the foundation of legitimacy in sovereignty, people's will, the good/interest of the people and constitution. One could follow the traces left by the snapshots of the ideal ruler in political thought and compose an immortal landmark. Here it is not the place to do that, although we could bring to the fore, briefly, four illustrations. Neagoe Basarab presents the image of the Christian Voyvod; God's anointed, a Byzantine, baroque and authoritarian ruler as he is to be the guarantor of the providential statesman and the guarantor of the righteous judgement[13]. The responsibility of religious type and the theatrical quality of the government are still hard-core Byzantine elements, while the elements of absolutist technique of kingship are elements of modernity bringing this image of the ruler closer to the image of the Machiavellian prince[14]. Antim Ivireanul portrays the full-fledged Christian and Orthodox ruler, guarantor of salvation, justice and prosperity for his subjects, an image which mixes as well modern elements of kingship within a majority of Byzantine elements of political thought[15]. We should mention here a more modern snapshot of ruler presented by Tudor Vianu in his work entitled *Philosophy of culture*, where the ruler appears as intellectual ideal type (influenced by his admiration for Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, an intellectual formed in the Titu Maiorescu's tradition, marked by the inheritance of the 19th century modernity): "a cultural ruler" seen as an expression of "the man of culture who does not cultivate only one specific scientific discipline, but meditates about the global destiny of our culture and feels responsible for the entire

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[13] *Învăţăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie*, translation, Introductory Study by Gh. Mihăilă, Preface, comments and notes by Dan Zamfirescu, Bucharest, Roza Vânturilor, Publishing House 2010. See also Lorena Păvălan, *Enciclopedia operelor fundamentale ale filosofiei politice*, Bucharest, ISPRI Publishing House, 2001, pp. 20-32.

[14] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Principele*, translation by Nina Façon, Bucharest, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1969. See Ion Goian, "The Machiavellian Revolution", available at http://journal.ispri.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/8-Ion-Goian-75-86.pdf, accessed at 29th March 2016, Pol. Sc. Int. Rel., XIII, 1, Bucharest, ISPRI Publishing House, 2016, pp. 75-86.

[15] Antim Ivireanul, *Sfătuiri creştine-politice*, editor Dorin Octavian Picioruş, translation from Greek by Constantin Erbiceanu, Bucharest, Editura Teologie pentru azi Publishing House, 2010.

orientation of the civilization of the country"[16]. Somewhat similar is the "noocrat" or an individual which is most suitable to rule, part of a "noocracy", a political ruling faction, to be formed by individuals with similar exceptional qualities, not only due to knowledge, culture and ethical character, but also due to remarkable creative thought capacities[17].

An image is a report on the state of the object. How do we see democracy? Which is its image? It is the worse political regime, only that it is the only acceptable one, for it includes a minimal principles' matrix, it is flexible, accepts reforms and improvements at different levels, and, mostly, another regime that is better, more legitimate, less criticisable, humanity did not invent yet[18]. Political philosophy, starting with the writings of Plato[19] and Aristotle[20] enshrines democracy in the image of a political regime rather refused or not recommended. At Hobbes[21] we have the image of democracy as sovereignty of the people, but the people is represented in the image of the "sleeping sovereign" (Richard Tuck[22]), in whose name Leviathan rules. From John Locke[23] we have the liberal image, the most generous among the images of democracy, through the idea of human rights, equality in entitlements, legality, tolerance and the idea of the possibility to change an unfair government or governor. Tocqueville[24] proposes the image of tyrannical majorities as a main danger for democracy. Jean Baudrillard[25] emphasizes the image of the silent majorities, a point terminus for the social, a black area of absorption for any cause and any social and political aspiration, offering in fact a pretty precise image for the increasing *apathy* in the Western democracies (European and American), dangerous for civic democracy

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[16] T. Vianu, *Filosofia culturii*, Publicom Publishing House, Bucharest, 1944, p. 288.

[17] Our interpretation emphasizes the ethical dimensions of the "doctrine of substance" proposed by the Romanian philosopher Camil Petrescu (1894-1957) in 1940 within a scientific and philosophical original conception, a "reconstitution though knowledge": a philosophical creation, opposed to mystifications in social and political life, opposed also to the crises of modernity and history and oriented toward the adequacy to the "concrete", in order to achieve a state order and a sovereignty based on the selection, support and creation of substantial values (overlapping maximum points attained by conscience, knowledge morals, sensitivity and aesthetics). The interpretation relates this image to the discussion role of philosophy in at Ernst Cassirer in *The Myth of State*, to the Rortian ironist and to the image of modern infusion of automatism in human life and Herbert Marcuse´s one-dimensional man. Camil Petrescu, *Doctrina substanţei,* vol. I, II, edition by Florica Ichim and Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu, Bucharest, Fundaţia Culturală Camil Petrescu Publishing House, 2010.

[18] The vast literature dedicated to the subject of democracy could easily lead us to writing a separate volume. In here we intend to create an image answering to the state of political philosophy perspectives on democracy, formed out of other grand political philosophy images, pointing out to the kaleidoscopic character of democracy from the perspective of theory and current experience.

[19] Platon, *Republica*, Bucharest, Antet Publishing House, 2005 (written around 380 B.C.E.).

[20] Aristotel, *Politica*, Bucharest, Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2015 (written in 350 B.C.E.).

[21] Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, ed. Michael Oakeshott, introduction by Richard S. Peters, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2008 (1651).

[22] Richard Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

[23] John Locke, *Al doilea tratat despre cârmuire. Scrisoare despre toleranţă*, translated by Silviu Culea, Bucharest, Nemira Publishing House, 1999 (1689).

[24] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by Eduardo Nolla and translated from the French by James T. Schleifer, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2010 (1835).

[25] Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities or The End of the Social*, Introduction by Sylvère Lotringer, Hedi El Kholti and Chris Kraus, translated by John Johnston, Paul Patton and Stuart Kendall, New York, Semiotext(e)/Foreign Agents, 2007 (1978).

twice: once, for the democratic moderate spirit in the status quo by inaction and twice, for the democratic developments when it gives way to activism without the democratic knowledge of the regime, its procedures, its laws and its principles. Both these directions easily give way to extreme right wing movements and to fundamentalism.

The cinematic and cinematographic character of democracy is interesting for this investigation, too. Paul Virillio connects the concept of politics to the concept of speed emphasizing the threats brought about by this contemporary connections and the deformations accompanying it: such as the deformation of democracy in a simulacrum of acceleration in which only the deformed shapes of democracy are preserved and none of its contents[26]. Viorella Manolache[27] heralds 3D politics as the medium and the message of contemporary political stands, realities and transformations in an interpretation similar to that employed in Godard's film (*Goodbye to Language*) capturing the loose, ever distant and ever more deformed relation of image signifiers to the signifieds in a 3D perspective-like deformation of political meaning along the axes described by representation and representing, mediation and intermediation, geopoetics and geopolitics. In our view film itself becomes and instrument for the investigation of reality, as we can notice in *House of Cards*, where political game seems to gain its own life, as it shuffles and discards players competing for the title of mastermind and building one brittle conjecture and one brittle vision after another. At the same time, reality itself acquires virtual qualities, as we found in the vision from *Matrix*, as commented by S. Zizek: we find fantasies behind realities and truth and truth behind the fantasy. Fantasy is right there, at the origin of all human imagery within a core human need to counter any lack any inconsistency and any obstacle, but this lack at the core of power and meaning, with priority[28].

However, nowadays democracies are still animated by a diversity of more or less knowledgeable civic demonstrations sustaining causes with a longer aim into the future: ecology, the forest (less important on Romanian civic and decisional agenda), the Amazonian forest, the future sustainability of life on Earth, global warming and *deep ecology*, desertification, social and economic sustainability, poverty and hunger, the crisis of urban conglomerates, the impact of the disappearance of the bees, the impact of the organisms genetically modified on the human race, the demographic threat, the aging of the European population, the old and the new migrations aggravating the European conservatism and right wing sympathies, the problem of abortion and its difficult relation to the demographic threat, to ethics, to religion and to gay marriages and adoption

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[26] Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, Introduction by Benjamin H. Bratton, translation by Mark Polizzotti, Semiotext(e), Foreign Agents, 2006.

[27] Viorella Manolache, "Verdictul imaginii: politica 3D", *Saeculum*, vol. 40, no. 1-2, 2015, pp. 39-49.

[28] S. Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London, Verso, 2000. See also Slavoj Zizek on "The Matrix: The Truth of Exaggerations", at http://www.lacan.com/matrix.html, accessed April 2, 2017 and Henrieta Anişoara Şerban, "S. Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*", in *Enciclopedia operelor fundamentale ale filosofiei politice*, ISPRI Publishing House, Bucharest, pp. 15-35.

problem, the abandoned children, the problem of child state care, *lifelong learning*, the quality of life, the quality of the life of the elderly etc. And what is more promising in the political game than the future? Tempting is also that mythical past of the golden age, although we cannot quite compare the force of the mythical perfection of a distant past and the luring attractiveness of the bright future, of the menaced future of future as such.

Democracy embroiled a mix of liberalism and republicanism, being for the most part a beneficial space and a relatively stable guarantor for the accomplishment of a panoply of citizens' rights and entitlements – from their identification and immortalization in documents, to their constitutional legitimacy and their real forms of manifestation and then to the effort to retrieve or mend them after each infringement (all these situated within the public sphere, which is pre-eminently a sphere of the visible and motion, under highly diverse representations, manifestations and forms, from narratives, actions, speeches, celebrations, other rituals, and "films" –, democracy meaning as well citizens' duties and the actions taken for assuming responsibility, presupposing the adoption of the "civil religion" represented by the Constitution and a civic ethos of virtues and political participation, including the vigilance against corruption and abuse. Also, the accent placed in contemporary democracies on the proliferation of the ethical codes, on the celebration of alterity and on inclusion of difference, on the one hand, and on transparency and communication, on the other, is bringing them in the middle of the situation described by the image of the ecstasy of communication addressed by Baudrillard, where the ecstasy of communication has rather the role of a stumping mechanism and some of the strategies of transparency (of the type of the Big Brother of Moms' Swap, trading one mom for another, television shows) describing contemporary democracy as a generalized conglomerate of virtual and television shows, through the image of a *show of freaks* that becomes, gradually, more and more accurate.

Totalitarianisms degrade as well the symbol and sign, rendered technical in the sense of extreme simplification and impoverishment of content in order to force the symbol and the sign (and any image, for that matter) to be vectors of indoctrination (and then the resultant of indoctrination), to be subject to the absolute control, the control of a caricature-dichotomous world, built by indoctrination and through the wooden language. Democracy is expected to display and induce the right balance between rationality and expression, between rationality and emotion, in the context of encouraging free expression, especially the one which is not elitist, the expression of the freedom of creation (although the creator may, however, be at occasions somewhat elitist). The image of democracy is a "multiplex" one, composed of images of freedom, equality and community, images of a community of popular sovereignty, but also of images describing a community of inclusion and an abstract vision of a land of rights and freedoms and institutions that ensure these, with necessity.

Images do not perpetuate only the unity and solidarity. There are representations inequality either successful or accepted as fashionable, or, in

contrast, are respected as tradition etc. the foundation realities also perpetuated by unequal picture games. Such representations are a foundation that will be used and as a promotional vehicle for some ideas about self, reality, political society or culture, are (along with many other types of images) those images of the mind, the structures about which Lippmann was talking, that is, the images that indicate a pre-ordered scheme of "digestion" of information: about the status quo and personal role in relation to it. Image and, more precisely, the mode of reception and selection of images, the manner of relation to images and individualized menu of the images are a reflection of the understanding of things, personally and socially. In other words, liberal images are opposed to the conservative images and often overlap over a category of emancipatory images, sometimes contrary to the various categories of consumer society images, the so-called images of "success".

In the philosophical perspective of Lucian Blaga the national images are the expression of a specific spirituality, of a specific cultural style and matrix founded on the abyssal categories. The rich mythological endowment present at Mircea Eliade and Vasile Voiculescu gains metaphysical force. In Lucian Blaga's imagistic terminology we are "shooting fired arrows" into the "metaphysical darkness" to discover the transcendent which gets down on the ewe lamb's space: "The attentive and persistent examination of our popular culture brought us in front of the comforting conclusion of a Romanian stylistic matrix. The glimpses of the latent meanings enable us to affirm that we enjoy a great cultural potential. All that we can know, without the fear of being contradicted, is that we are the bearers of exceptional possibilities. All that we can believe, without committing an attack against lucidity, is that we were meant to enlighten with our flower of tomorrow a corner of land. All that we can hope, without giving ourselves up to illusions is the pride of spiritual, historical initiatives, out of which, every now and then, a sparkle would bounce around to other nations"[29].

Image is central for any political action, for all the political platforms, or campaign, or program, or project of political marketing. This goes to explain the necessary and not random correlation between art and politics from the past cultures of the ancient and up to modernity and postmodernity. The images fascinate and circulate well, they are undertaken and reproduced, if not amplified, by mechanisms which are similar to the mechanisms employed by rumors. Media, culture, socialization, power and social inequalities, are the auspicious areas where society tests and confront the abstract images of performance, disability, race, age, ethnicity, social class, gender and sexual orientation. Political parties, the NGOs, social movements, the diverse groups or even the individuals, conscious of their life trajectory, elaborate strategies and answers to problems within which the image is the trustworthy "weapon" of the cultural and social desirable change (however, it can be also a resource of the status quo). For

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[29] Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii (The Trilogy of Culture)*, in *Opere* (*Works*), vol. 9, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, p. 331, our translation.

images can be ideal and efficient supporters of interests. The essence of image creation stays in the capacity to use and transform banal or disadvantageous situations in effigies or hymns for the interest represented and described as positive, as beneficial, or as vectors of progress and redemption, through the images.

There is a thirst for image. The interest for image is immediate, part of the modest and "natural" daily life: almost everyone takes and shares photographs and these are partially substituted to wordy impressions, as are the "tribes" of emoticons nowadays and second publicity image becomes a part of relaxed daily conversations, a "neutral" and less problematic subject. There is image in any minute or grand expression of the self, in any grand political vision, in any mobilizing cause. There is image in the effort to convey meaning and in the effort to conceal it, too. Image and imagining ease the unbearable fantasy quality of life and politics gets its leading chapter in this film.

There is a deep mythological, archetypal and metaphorical appreciation of world and society based on the mythological, archetypal and metaphorical social foundation of image and, especially, based the social ordering, solidarity, mobilizing and meaning institution functions of the image. Nevertheless, our world is one of (postmodern) disorder, disunity and uncertainty[30]. There is also an avalanche of images and interests, too many images and too many flags, as we can notice all around us, for instance in the virtual spaces, or in political fights and international relation, in a myriad of centrifugal contexts where "three pence images" build the amazingly intricate architectures of the present times.

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[30] See also Henrieta Anişoara Şerban, "Editorial", in *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations*, no. 1, Bucharest, ISPRI, 2017.

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