

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF IDEOLOGY
IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES.
EAST-WEST COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH THE ANALYSIS
OF CERTAIN PARADOXES. I

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Abstract

The capacity of totalizing knowledge in order to get an extensive picture regarding both the outside and the inner environment of developing human personality means first of all a methodological divorce from any preconceived ideological, philosophical, psychological and sociological framework which would disrupt the approach of the complex human being through a reductionist overlook. Using cross-analysis we can deduce important features of psychology that should be taken into consideration for their use in the direction of increasing the educational potential of Maslowian self-actualization concept.

Cuvinte-cheie: cercetare complexă, metodologie inter și transdisciplinară, psihologie, sociologie.

Keywords: complex research, inter and transdisciplinary methodology, psychology, sociology.

Motto: “There is only one evil among the people – the ignorance; and against this evil there is only one remedy – the learning; but this remedy must not be taken in homeopathic doses but with the buckets and with the container”
(Dmitri Pisarev, 1840–1868, Russian philosopher).

1. INTRODUCTION

The present analysis is not intended to be a narration of historical data, a compilation of various information which would regard the discussed period of time, but an introspective look upon its phenomenology that benefits of the great advantage of the possibility of observing the past things in their complex dynamics through a transversal section – it is a kind of psycho-analytical vivisection regarded through the past perspective which there is no more but which lives through us in the continuous present of the human being. It is an approach that intends to underline the complex interactions in which the psychology of the human being is socially determined.

A normal question may arise: why would be necessary such an approach?

The only answers that present a particular interest for the researcher are:

1. There is no person or society born from nothing, but from the creative or destructive forces of the past; thus, from the point of view of practical consequences, we belong to a long past tradition, either positive or negative, though present, and which is continued through each of us, more or less modified; so without an analysis of the past we cannot find our identity, rather go on because this going on, if it is not a real jump forward, it is even a regression into the historical cycle.

2. Fortunately but also unhappily, beyond any idealistic or elitistic constructivist approach, humanity has significant issues in focusing its pride, envy, hate against its own kind, arrogance, the bestial dominating, possessing, killing, subjugating instincts, the conjecture of its action being ruled by interests, lusts, affinities, open antipathies or covered by different ideologies, believes, tendencies.

“The older Goethe’s idea of «elective affinities» reappears here as a sociological idea. The entire society, notes Durkheim, is an association based on elective affinities, meaning a solidarization of those that are having the same affects, being related through these. People choose themselves basing on affects or more precisely, the affinities group peoples in two main classes: the ressemblant ones and the different ones. Thus, the affinities make the social because they gather people, respectively they divide, differentiate and spread them. The main line that gathers some of them and divides others is objectified in values, believes, etc. As a consequence, to the theory of the social has to be added also a theory of the values (believes)”, Ilie Bădescu, 2002, p. 217.

If those stated above did not destroy till now the humanity, it is for the presence in the history of three factors that overcome any human capacity of understanding:

- the transcendent factor, meaning the wish of the man for reaching the absolute, inspired and nurtured from another plan than the social or human ones, more or less accessible to the knowledge;

- the imagistic creative factor meaning the capacity of creating, dimensioning, imaging and realizing audacious ideals of any kind (from the historical to social and artistic ones); this factor has a profoundly esthetical and constructive character;

- the natural vital factor meaning that capacity of the human spiritual and psycho-physical being of continuous self-regeneration also through more and more “non-conventional” methods, signifying that it “sprinkles life” and that it follows its way with all that it has more valuable pushing aside the “evil”, the “immoral” and the “dehumanization” (that drives to the loss of the human qualities).

3. Paradoxally, the disunion between the people, consolidated, beyond their unsecure life, their inner being unity (in the Christian theology it is evidenced the character of being structure unity between the individuals); although we became maximally individualized (the individualization is that spiritual and psychological process through which man consolidates a powerful and expansive identity) we are obliged to build our life in society; it depends on us if the European society (the concept of European society supposes two essential features: an identity of the organizing structure and a common cultural and social plan; their simultaneous

existence is a sine qua non condition) remains a theoretical union or becomes a real communitary identity.

4. Because the XIXth and the XXth are the ending of a multi-millenary historical cycle, it is the time to realize certain analyses that would drive us to a redimensioning of the XXIst century, a century of absolutism both of the “good” and of the “evil”.

In order to make more effective and more accessible the transhistorical analysis, we shall put into debate both successively and simultaneously the enounced problematics. The proximate purpose is that of avoiding the accidental segmentation of historical processes that had an intrinsic continuity and a decisive causal relationship.

Starting from a complex approach of Weberian type¹, I am obliged to note the lack of a bibliography that would focus on a depoliticized comparative analysis and that would go deeper into the inner phenomenological structures. The present work is intended to fill this absence through **a multi-level investigation**.

2. THE IMPACT OF CULTURE INTO SOCIETY

During certain historical intervals, the dynamic forces of the social **collective unconscious** create the premises of great changes which come to point out the fact that the human being is not living into a close and static but into an open and expanding horizon. This horizon is defined by the impact of culture into society. This is why we can state that the absence of culture throws society into gregarity which is, at its turn, a certain facet of community.

“Another aspect of the new doctrine of Jung, according to which the neurosis have their origin into the present not into the past, it is represented by the correlation of the neurosis with culture because, according to one of the main statements of Jung, the fragmentary culture of the XXth century was equivalent in fact, with the schyzophrenia concept seen through the perspective of the individual. The nevrotic could not be blamed for the mixture between the life duties because the collapse of the old XIXth century certitudes and the «organic» moral code provoked to him doubts regarding his real duties of life. So the real cause of neureosis was not the sexual insatisfaction but the impossibility of the individual to establish his cultural duty” (McLynn Frank, 1996, p. 318).

The revolutionary currents that characterized the XIXth century tended to eliminate the suffocation provoked by the morally outdated structures of a societal world that did not correspond anymore to the urgent developing social needs of man.

The revolution was coming both from the inner psychological strata of the social collectivity and from the dissatisfaction of certain elites that could not have access to the mechanisms of political and administrative ruling. It is hard to suppose that a housekeeping woman which would have gone in the street to speak out her

¹ Max Weber (1864–1920), german sociologist and economist; he is the one who introduces into the scientific research the plurivalent analysis of the psycho-social causalities with economic impact.

discontent regarding the social order would have been taken into consideration by the people, the phenomenon itself starting a revolt or even a revolution. On the other hand, revolutions that developed through the century were not typical ones, but they took extremely various forms (from scientific inventions and breakthroughs, culture to wars and even pacifying alliances).

Variety of examples: the French Revolution (1789–1794); 6 August 1806 – The holy Roman Empire of German nation officially ends its existence; the bourgeoisie democratic revolutions in Europe; the 28th of September 1860, London – the foundation of the International Labor Association (the First International Conference; 1873, Bruxelles – the International Law Association; J. Dalton (1803–1804) elaborates the atomic theory; A. Avogadro (1811) enounces the molecular theory (Oțetea, 1972).

3. REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL FORMALISM

We need to watch comparatively the idea of revolution with that of social formalism. It is necessary to apply an expansion of the revolution concept, stating that a revolution is a change which can affect any level of the psychological or social structure, change which, even if often takes unbloody forms, drives to radical modifications of the course of history. Any social change is first a change of the understanding level of that certain cultural paradigm. Let us take a few illustrative examples.

– **Regarding the problem of the state self-determination**, we note that in the Eastern Europe, the small states ruled by great (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Tzarist) empires wanted to implement the idea of nationality, of independence, of self-determination. Why? Was the independence something better by itself in that certain context? Certainly not but its effects were supposed to solve in a certain measure the disadvantages of subordination: what was dictated into the imperial center did not correspond anymore to the needs of its provinces; the distance of the decision application was too large and the local social realities were changing too fast and the social individualities had become too strong to admit anymore an outside command.

The national cultures were on the merge of creating authentic values and needed a real social framework that would respect the dynamics of their own development. In the conditions of exceptional development of personal life of certain elites involving strong individual features of personality, appeared the need for change which if it was not willingly accepted by the center, it might have been imposed by force – the need for self-determination proved that a sequence of national society from the multinational empire had reached the conceptual and organizing level of the center and needed to overcome its outdated model.

– **Regarding the role of the bourgeoisie**, we observe that in the Western Europe simultaneously with the development of the capital and industrial structures, the new social layer was thought to be a solid mediator between the rich and working

classes. It had the fundamental role of absorbing those persons from the lower levels (farmers, agricultors, workers, etc.) that proved to be socially viable through their various (intellectual, professional, economic) qualities and that of being constituted as a support level for accessing the rich class assuring thus a valide balance in the circuit of elites in society and minimizing the inner pressure between the social semi-static classes. It is a question in debate the problem of psychological morality of those belonging to the rich class as well as that of the means used for becoming rich and for hierarchic ascent. Though the cultural framework is enriched with a special reflection space both from the psychological and social points of view – we are talking about that time needed for intellectual creation.

The apparition of the bourgeoisie and its presence through the history were the elements that fundamentally determined the circulation of the abstract or concrete values fluidifying the social, cultural and economic circuit. The psychological and intellectual productivity is the fundament for real social development including also economy.

– Analyzing **the rapport between society and culture** we have to deal with the difference between **the culture of elites and that of the masses**. In order to do so it is necessary to sketch the structure of society and culture in that period of time in order to operationalize our analysis. Society is the product of a culture only in the measure in which culture precedes and cultivates the mental of the society members. If society precedes culture then culture appears stratified accordingly to its utility and functionality and only latter on it tends to become stable and rafined. Thus, between the elite and mass culture appear important qualitative and quantitative differences on one hand, and also programatic ones, on the other hand. As more and more generations of rich people are successively born, their culture becomes more rafined, at least theoretically, toward its abstract sides. The masses that are living at their own economic limit of working capacity cultivate themselves only in the directions for which there are requests on the working market, in this case discussing about a culture of skills or professions (from agriculture to industry).

– Another aspect that we have to take into consideration is **the relationship between culture and economy**. The Eastern and Western Europe have a similar but variable societal and cultural existence as structure till the West enters in a full process of industrialization and technologization. **The interaction modality between economy and technological organization has obviously an important social and cultural impact**. From this moment the East, which has a rudimentary technology and does not have an industry, remains behind step by step, even if, maybe politically and culturally, it remains ressembling to the West (the cultural communication between East and West was powerful because both the aristocratic and the bourgeoisie levels of society of the Eastern areas knew the languages belonging to the great European cultures). The prolongation of the feudal and agrarian historical period of time in the East gives it a hard knock down in the developing process becoming from now on the main level fracture between the two European areas. Thus, it appears an essential difference between a productive social culture in the West and a culture of pleasure in the East.

The industrialization of the West modifies the rapports between civilization and culture both inside and outside in its relation to the East. The industrialization and the effectiveness of the production means in the West, drive to the elevation of the civilization and culture standard.

In the East, the late presence of the feudal forms of organization determines a rudimentary level of civilization at the level of masses, the ascending trend being present mainly at the levels of aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the economic support for the culturalization process being extremely reduced.

4. THE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: ALPHABETIZATION AND LITERACY

It is the moment to discuss about **the cultural infra-structure**. It is necessary to introduce a fundamental distinction regarding culture, that of form or type. Practically the XIXth century presents an interesting infra-cultural combination – the popular and traditional culture survives at the mass level dispersed in the rural and mainly agricultural environment; those who come to town tend to form themselves in the skill culture, a practical profession having or not a schooling framework; those already present in towns follow a process of partial or complete schooling stage according to their personal abilities and to their financial possibilities; they are also oriented toward practical professions; another special category continues its high-school or university studies orienting itself toward administration or liberal professions (commerce, healthcare, teaching, law, etc.).

The issue of alphabetization and of illiteracy associated with the social policy direction enters into our attention now.

Even if the process of alphabetization had to cover all the regions of Europe, an important segment of the rural population and even of the urban one mainly from the area of the ex-S.S.R.U., continues to be illiterate in the XXIst century continuing to have a social life that remembers the XVIIth century. The alphabetization process in East and West went through different stages and had another type of significances (even if during the communist regime took place an impressive alphabetization process, it never covered all the territories from the vast area of the ex-S.S.R.U.; and even there where it was done, the purpose was the political indoctrination not the creation of a new free and democratic environment). We can talk about an acute lack of individualizing culture and about its direct effect – the incapacity of generating an individual and social collectivity capable of generating democracy.

The poverty has also political consequences, one of the major ones being the absence of schooling. In the East, the Bolshevik revolution from 1917 gathers an important number of adherents which were still illiterate the previous centuries because the extreme poverty became secular blocked the access to school. This aspect will have enormous repercussions by accepting the communist dictatorship, acceptance grounded on an extreme lack of social orientation (Riasanovsky, 2001). In the small countries of the East, the social and cultural tendencies from the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries to the beginning of the XXth century to which we can also add

the imperial teaching programs, contained inside of them an important number of children but not significant rapported to the total number of population (Oțetea, 1972). The accent put in pedagogy on the mechanical memorizing will make harder the process of social and individual maturation.

The economic development through the schooling has an important professional, economic and social impact in the West where the alphabetization tends to be a mass phenomenon because the development of towns needed and attracted a bigger number of persons able to accomodate to the changes. Practically the Western society that had a very developed elite culture (with secular roots – *Ibidem*) was open to a massive alphabetization, the civilization standard being superior to that of the Eastern societies. There was the interest of alphabetizing people in order to determine a greater social mobility.

The investment in science and culture becomes an engine for the economic development and let us not forget the fact that the West was self-determined and politically independent in comparison with the East which was living in complex determinations (political, religious and mental ones, Maria Todorova, 2000). Culture is independent and has an innovative movement while in the East it is usually borrowed necessitating a metamorphosis and particularization process that is possible only through the length of centuries. Paradoxally the East possesses an existential mystics that the West has lost during the process of rationalization of Cartezian type – that of a spiritual ethos integrative into a cosmology which is closer to the nature than to the artificial intellect.

So neither in the West, nor in the East, culture is not a mass social phenomenon in the XIXth century but a process reserved to certain population categories. Masses can enjoy only the social irradiations of this culture through publications, through artistic performances but they do not reach the level of taking an active part in the cultural processes.

5. THE ROLES OF ELITES

The role of the elites is essential when we are talking about **the psychological and social role of mentality** impregnated by **the spiritual belief**. Although it seems to be isolated from the social mass, the rafined culture influences greatly the rulers and the upper level of the rulling class with ideas from the anterior centuries, fact which gives them new impulses toward modernization, toward the accessibility to culture in a manner that is still hard to notice (probably through a mentality oriented toward solving different individual and social issues). The academic world is almost completely separated from the rural one but, even if very difficult to reconcile, the two worlds make an exchange of experience by the way of researches that want to make easier the social transfer of ideas through the attemps of explaining the inner mechanisms that rule it (Eugeniu Speranția, 1944).

Because the political, economic and social elites had access to the most elevated forms of culture, it is normal to attribute to them the responsability of

creating certain political and social doctrines. What remains to be analyzed is the way in which ideologies find a way to enter into the social dynamics and to find their inspiration or filliation sources. The XIXth century brings into modernity also the aspects regarding mentality. The medieval mentality is overcome by the new realities and certainly by the ideas of the 1789 French Revolution. The influence of this type of revolution is overwhelming not only for the century in discussion but even for the XXth century (Edmund Burke – 1790, *Reflexions on the French Revolution*, in Ștefan-Scarlat, 2000).

The representation of the Transcendental in the world has changed, the consequence in the West being the isolation of the institutions that represent both formally and practically the Transcendental in the world, those of the Roman Christian Church. It takes place a necessary (for that moment) separation between the Church and the State, between the clericalism and society, between the representatives more or less “adequate” of the Transcendental in the world and the power of society. The aristocratic institutions of feudal type become extinct in the entire Europe during the XIXth century under the effect of socio-mental domino effect (Benjamin Constant – 1819, *About the Antics freedom comparatively with the Modern liberty*, in *Ibidem*). The aristocracy had become anachronistic and rigid, not receptive to the social needs. From the moment when Church is separated from State, the theology of the sacramental institutions which was a torch for a long period of time, becomes outdated. The cause consists in the lack of adaptation of its thinking system to the cultural currents of social and humanistic origin. In the East the situation prepares the field for dictatorship.

The passing from theology to ideology is a passing from the role of the Transcendental in history to that of the contingent. It gives a free way of access to certain thinking currents which were initially isolated but which will gain consistency in time and they will become socio-political doctrines that will gradually take over the ruling power. Specifically we can speak about a passing from a theologico-transcendental approach essentially viable but socially outdated to a socio-contingent mentality based mainly on the need for concrete and immediate fulfillment of the human being. **The need for concrete and immediate fulfillment** as a process is in fact a last phase of late Renaissance during which the preoccupation for man and society tends to replace the one dedicated to Transcendental and aristocracy (Hegel – 1821, in *Ibidem*). From the social needs will be born the conservatism, the liberalism, the socialism both as political and economic doctrines ambiguously oriented toward capitalism and communism (Joseph Schumpeter – 1942, *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, in Ștefan-Scarlat, 2000).

6. CONCLUSIONS

In the XIXth and XXth centuries each of these mainstreams will play its role in the social dynamics and they will succeed each other in different historical phases

with an unpredictable end. I used the term “ambiguous” regarding the capitalist and communist directions because, even if generally the terms of capitalism and communism were explained from all the possible perspectives by the political sciences, their content was not completely elucidated (Milovan Djilas – 1957, *The new class*, in *Ibidem*). The reason consists in their powerful philosophical and cultural charge that practically creates different cultural sub-layers and that has as first consequence the apparition of significant political and social fractures in the XXth century such as fascism, stalinism, World War II and the Cold War. The supercapitalist banking elite that financed all these changes produced at the individual psychological level an enormous detour passing European societies through an Apocalyptic bloodshed whose results have not yet come to an end. This situation places psychology into a difficult position. The idea of creating a “new man” without spirituality, with an alienated personality and highly receptive to indoctrination comes into the attention of the psychologist interested into elucidating the complex causes of personality disorders that are exponentially growing. Psychologically speaking and following Jungian analysis, the social crisis always reflects and creates complex determinisms into the individual life.

As a conclusion to this first part, we consider that psychology has to go back to its social roots in order to bring its contribution to the process of raising harmonic personalities from the first moments of life, the psychologists having the fundamental role of actively participating to the growth of human individualities during the entire schooling time according to the age and to the mental evolution process.

In the second part of the study, we shall see the correlations between the social environment and the individual development of personality.

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REZUMAT

Capacitatea totalizantă a cunoașterii în direcția obținerii unei perspective extinse atât asupra mediului intern, cât și asupra celui extern al dezvoltării personalității umane, înseamnă înainte de toate un divorț metodologic cu orice cadru ideologic, filosofic, psihologic și sociologic preconcept care ar bloca abordarea ființei umane complexe printr-o privire reduționistă. Folosind analiza încrucișată putem deduce importante trăsături ale psihologiei care trebuie să fie luate în considerare pentru folosirea lor în direcția creșterii potențialului educațional al conceptului maslowian de auto-realizare.