



THE 8TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Globalization and Cultural Diversity

**Medical Brain Drain in Romania: Trends
before and after Accession to the European Union**

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Abstract: This article aims to identify the impact of Romania's accession to the European Union on medical emigration, analyzing the evolution of the phenomenon before and after 2007. **Prior work** in this field consists in theoretical and qualitative studies, highlighting the push and pull factors contributing to the emigration of Romanian physicians, the impact and the possible measures. Emigration trends before integration are analyzed using a data set existing in the literature. For the following period, between 2007 and 2010, the data set was filled by collecting statistics on the medical doctors trained in Romania and practicing abroad from the destination countries. The **results** confirm the concern rose about the massive emigration of medical doctors following the integration, compared to the previous period: between 2007 and 2010, Romania lost 8131 physicians. This study has major implications for academics with interest in modeling the effects of medical brain drain on economic development. Also it is a valuable instrument for policy makers, offering an overview of the magnitude of this phenomenon, helpful in adopting the right policy measures. The article offers a unique data set on the emigration of physicians, constituting a starting point in the attempt of implementing a monitoring system.

Keywords: migration; medical brain drain; physicians; Romania

JEL Classification: F22; J21; J24; O15

1. Introduction

Medical brain drain is defined as the migration of health personnel, from developing countries to developed countries, but also between industrialized nations, in search for better opportunities.

After the fall of the communist regime, Romania became a major source country for medical emigrants. An analysis before 1990 is not relevant because emigration was not allowed, the few exceptions being limited to ethnic groups (Germans, Hungarians, and Jews).

The aim of this article is to highlight the impact of the accession to the European Union on the medical emigration. The main objective consists in analyzing emigration trends before and after 2007 in order to verify the hypothesis according to which the number of physicians leaving the country grew considerably after 2007.

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2. Methodology

The analysis of the emigration trends before accession to the European Union is based on the data collected by Bhargava and Docquier (2007) and Bhargava, Docquier and Moullan (2010). The two data sets (the one from 2010 represents an update of the previous one) rely on primary statistics on the medical doctors trained in the country of origin and practicing abroad, collected from 16, respectively 18 OECD destination countries, from 1991 to 2004. Medical emigrants are defined by their country of training, where this information was not available the country of birth or the citizenship were used as criteria. Most of the data were obtained through observation. Breaks in series were filled using a log linear adjustment (Bhargava and Docquier, 2007):

$$\ln[Mi, t + k] = \frac{n - k}{n} \ln[Mi, t] + \frac{k}{n} \ln[Mi, t + n], \quad \text{for } k = 0 \text{ to } n$$

Data regarding the Population and the indicator Phys1000 (physicians per 1000 people) were obtained from the World Development Indicators (World Bank). The indicator PhysTot (total number of physicians) was obtained multiplying the latest two values (Docquier and Bhargava, 2007).

The medical brain drain rate was calculated in relative terms as a ratio between the stock of physicians from a country working abroad and the total number of physicians originating from the source country (residents plus emigrants) (Docquier and Bhargava, 2007).

3. Mobility before Accession to the European Union

The data set from Table 1 reveals that 82.41% of the Romanian physicians emigrate to four main destination countries: USA, Germany, United Kingdom and Sweden. USA is the most preferred destination country by Romanian medical doctors, conclusion that is not new, USA attracting the biggest number of highly skilled (physicians included in this category) from all over the world.

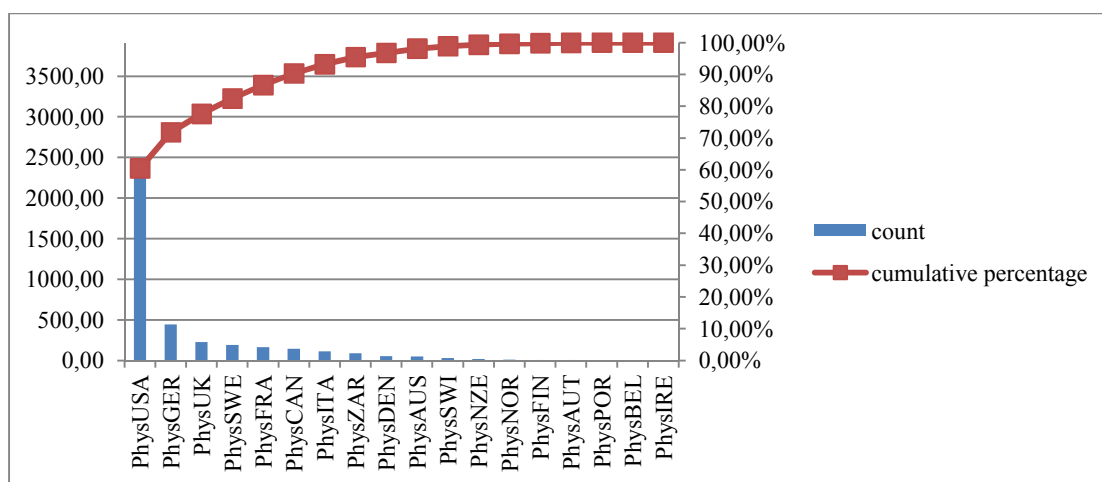


Figure 1. Main Countries of Destination

As the aim of this study is to analyze the impact of the accession to the European Union on the medical emigration in Romania, we will include only the European Union members as countries of destination.

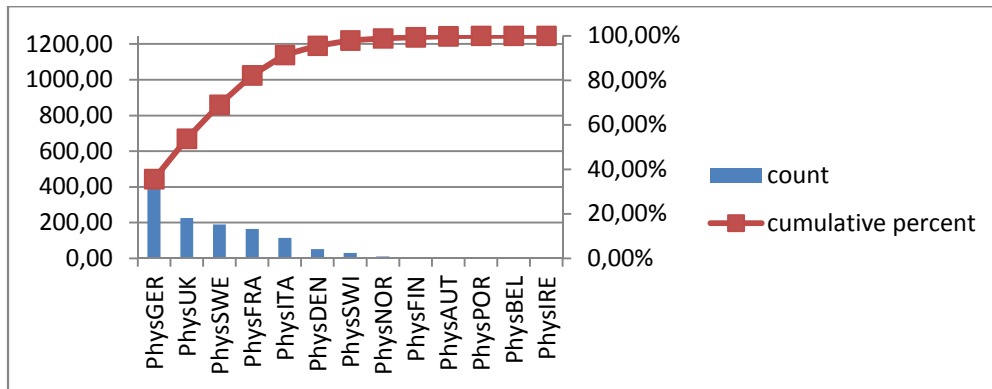


Figure 2. Main European Destinations

The most preferred European destinations are Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden and France, only these four countries attracting 82.25% of the physicians (Figure 2).

Table 1. Medical Brain Drain – Data from 18 Countries of Destination

year	MBD	PhysE mig	PhysTo: r	Phys100 0	Population n	Phys AUS	Phys AUT	Phys BEL	Phys CAN	Phys DEN	Phys FIN	Phys FRA	Phys GER	Phys IRE	Phys ITA	Phys NOR	Phys NZE	Phys POR	Phys SWE	Phys SWI	Phys UK	Phys USA	Phys ZAR
1991	0.03792	1659.6	42101.6	1.81390	23183000	28.20	4.14	0.00	127.00	8.97	0.00	30.00	239.29	0.00	93.80	9.16	12.94	0.00	105.70	48.37	16.00	858.00	68.00
1992	0.03983	1784.0	42522.0	1.86390	22789000	31.08	4.18	0.00	127.00	10.11	0.00	29.00	262.87	0.00	95.21	9.16	13.33	0.00	112.70	46.34	27.00	916.00	70.00
1993	0.04593	1936.2	40265.0	1.76950	22755000	33.95	4.22	0.00	127.00	20.47	1.00	28.00	321.02	0.00	96.64	9.16	13.73	0.00	119.70	44.31	31.00	1007.00	71.00
1994	0.04669	2052.0	40115.7	1.76480	22731000	36.84	4.27	0.00	127.00	26.35	3.00	27.00	338.20	0.00	98.08	9.16	14.14	0.00	126.70	42.28	40.00	1078.00	72.00
1995	0.05092	2152.0	40111.3	1.76850	22681000	39.72	4.31	0.00	127.00	33.90	3.00	25.00	320.81	0.00	99.35	9.16	14.56	0.00	133.70	40.23	34.00	1193.00	74.00
1996	0.05266	2274.7	40920.5	1.81000	22603000	42.60	4.35	0.00	129.00	37.30	3.00	24.00	341.29	0.00	101.05	9.16	15.00	0.00	140.70	38.22	40.00	1274.00	75.00
1997	0.05697	2440.2	40392.0	1.79090	22554000	43.20	4.39	0.00	131.00	39.31	4.00	21.00	349.27	0.00	102.55	9.16	15.45	0.00	147.70	36.19	57.00	1403.00	77.00
1998	0.05128	2696.8	41311.0	1.85580	22503000	43.80	4.44	0.00	131.00	41.68	4.00	33.00	359.62	0.00	104.10	9.41	15.91	0.00	154.70	34.16	68.00	1615.00	78.00
1999	0.05482	2971.7	42871.0	1.90894	22457990	44.40	4.48	0.00	126.00	42.85	4.00	45.00	371.70	0.00	105.67	9.66	16.39	0.70	161.70	32.13	105.00	1812.00	80.00
2000	0.05855	3119.4	42338.1	1.88870	22443000	45.00	4.53	0.00	131.00	44.64	5.00	57.00	378.00	0.00	107.25	9.91	16.88	1.40	168.70	30.10	116.00	1923.00	81.00
2001	0.07315	3296.1	41754.0	1.88704	22132000	45.60	4.57	0.00	132.00	45.34	6.00	68.00	380.10	0.00	108.85	10.17	17.39	2.10	175.70	30.10	142.00	2045.00	83.00
2002	0.07829	3494.7	41145.2	1.88704	21803000	47.88	4.62	0.00	140.00	51.23	6.00	82.00	409.50	0.00	110.49	10.46	17.91	2.80	182.70	30.10	172.00	2142.00	85.00
2003	0.08297	3712.7	41031.9	1.88704	21744000	49.80	4.67	0.00	144.00	50.31	7.00	118.00	444.50	0.00	112.15	10.70	18.45	2.80	189.70	30.10	191.00	2253.50	86.00
2004	0.08708	3913.7	41031.9	1.88704	21744000	51.29	4.71	0.00	144.00	51.79	7.00	165.00	444.50	0.00	113.83	11.00	19.00	2.80	189.70	30.10	226.00	2365.00	88.00

Source: Bhargava, Docquier & Moullan (2010)

Table 2. Medical Brain Drain – 1991-2004

year	MBD	PhysEmig	PhysTot	Phys1000	Population	PhysGER	PhysUK	PhysFRA	PhysSWE
1991	0.00920	391.0	42101.6	1.81590	23185000	239.29	16.00	30.00	105.70
1992	0.01005	431.6	42522.0	1.86590	22789000	262.87	27.00	29.00	112.70
1993	0.01226	499.7	40265.0	1.76950	22755000	321.02	31.00	28.00	119.70
1994	0.01309	531.9	40115.7	1.76480	22731000	338.20	40.00	27.00	126.70
1995	0.01264	513.5	40111.3	1.76850	22681000	320.81	34.00	25.00	133.70
1996	0.01317	546.0	40920.5	1.81000	22608000	341.29	40.00	24.00	140.70
1997	0.01404	575.0	40392.0	1.79090	22554000	349.27	57.00	21.00	147.70
1998	0.01468	615.3	41311.0	1.83580	22503000	359.62	68.00	33.00	154.70
1999	0.01569	683.4	42871.0	1.90894	22457990	371.70	105.00	45.00	161.70
2000	0.01670	719.7	42388.1	1.88870	22443000	378.00	116.00	57.00	168.70
2001	0.01801	765.8	41764.0	1.88704	22132000	380.10	142.00	68.00	175.70
2002	0.02015	846.2	41143.2	1.88704	21803000	409.50	172.00	82.00	182.70
2003	0.02247	943.2	41031.9	1.88704	21744000	444.50	191.00	118.00	189.70
2004	0.02438	1025.2	41031.9	1.88704	21744000	444.50	226.00	165.00	189.70

4. Emigration Trends after 2007

Following the same methodology used by Bhargava and Docquier (2007) and described above, we completed the data set, collecting statistics on the medical doctors trained in Romania and practicing in the four destination countries identified as mostly preferred. Annual data on the number of physicians per 1000 and population were obtained from World Development Indicators, using the interpolation method for the missing values. Information on the annual number of physicians trained in Romania and practicing abroad was obtained from the countries of destination as follows: for Germany, from the Bundesärztekammer (observed), for UK, from General Medical Council (observed), for Sweden, from The National Board of Health and Welfare - Socialstyrelsen (observed for 2007-2010, estimated for 2011), and for France from Conseil National d'Ordre des Médecins (observed).

Table 3. Medical Brain Drain, 2007-2011

year	MBD	PhysEmig	PhysTot	Phys1000	Population	PhysGER	PhysUK	PhysFRA	PhysSWE
2007	0.049674	2163	41380.6	<i>1.912725*</i>	21634371	824	567	560	212
2008	0.059809	2632	41374.92	1.9166	21587666	927	749	717	239
2009	0.069485	3257	43616.27	<i>2.024251</i>	21546873	1112	972	918	255
2010	0.090178	4559	45996.34	<i>2.13801</i>	21513622	1495	1603	1176	285
2011	0.10763	5850.33	48505.54	2.25813	21480401	2105	1931	1505	<i>309.33</i>

* Values in Italics are estimated

Source: Author's calculations based on Bhargava, Docquier & Moullan (2010)

The emigration rate registered a significantly rise compared to the previous period after Romania became a member of the European Union (Table 3). In 2010 Romania registered a number of 4559 medical doctors practicing in the four destination countries mentioned, value more than double compared to 2007 (2163 medical doctors). After 2007, the top of the four main destination countries preferred by Romanian physicians includes Germany, United Kingdom, France and Italy (WHO, 2011). Although Italy surpassed Sweden, with a total of 555 Romanian doctors registered in 2008 (EMN, 2009), Germany, UK and France maintained their positions. Another important destination country is Belgium, registering 248 Romanian medical doctors in 2011 (FPS).

An analysis of the number of doctors registered for the first time each year in the main destination countries could be very interesting. Data available for United Kingdom reveal that, between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of Romanian physicians choosing as destination country UK grew from 7.95% of the total number of physicians emigrating in 2007, to 24.36% of the physicians emigrating in 2010.

Table 4. Romanian Physicians Registered for the First Time in UK

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Physicians registered for the first time	175	233	254	677	449

Source: General Medical Council

The available data from the Romanian College of Physicians (Table 5) emphasis that, between 2007 and 2010 Romania lost 8131 medical doctors, with an average of 2032.75 medical doctors emigrating each year. The results confirm the major concern rose about the massive emigration following the accession to the European Union. However, the situation is not as severe as it was expected (WHO, 2011).

Table 5. Medical Emigration in Romania, 2007-2011

Year	PhysEmigTot
2007	2200
2008	1252
2009	1900
2010	2779
2011 (first 8 months)	1700

Source: Romanian College of Physicians

A country is affected by the brain drain when the emigration rate exceeds 3% of the total number of physicians practicing in the country of origin (WHO, 2011). In absolute terms, the medical brain drain rate in Romania was 4.68% (average, for 2007-2010). The most affected are the countries from Sub Saharan Africa or South and East Asia: Grenada and Dominica, for instance, register an emigration rate in the medical sector of 98.1%, respectively 97.9% - only 2 doctors out of 100 trained will remain in the country (Docquier and Rapoport, 2009). In this context, we can conclude that Romania's situation is not so critical. However, the exponential growth registered after 2007, the decreasing interest of youth in choosing medical career and the ageing population should be taken into account when dealing with this phenomenon whose consequences are affecting not only the health system, but also the economic growth and the national security.

5. Conclusions

This article offers a first data set on the emigration of Romanian medical doctors after the accession to the European Union, relying on statistics collected from the main destination countries. Following the methodology used by Docquier and Bhargava (2007) and Bhargava, Docquier and Moullan (2010), the panel data set was completed with data for the period between 2007 and 2010, collecting information about the medical doctors trained in Romania and practicing in four destination countries: Germany, United Kingdom, France and Sweden. Future research may focus on the extension of the data set for other destination countries, such as Italy or Belgium. This study is an important starting point for academicians with interest in modeling the effects of medical brain drain on economic development. Also, it is a valuable instrument for the policy makers in the health domain. Offering information about the magnitude of the phenomenon, it can be used at the evaluation of the impact on Romania's health system and economic growth. Moreover, based on the category of impact (rather positive or negative) adequate policy measures could be adopted by the decision makers. The main limit in this field is the lack of accurate statistical data about the medical emigration. Most of the data available in Romania are based on the intention of emigration. Relevant information could be obtained from destination countries or international organizations. However, the gaps in the series are filled using estimations, reducing the accuracy.

6. Appendix

Sources for statistical data used in this article:

Germany – Bundesärztekammer/ German Medical Association, <http://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/>.

United Kingdom - General Medical Council, <http://www.gmc-uk.org/>.

France - Conseil National d'Ordre des Médecins/ National Board of Medical Association, <http://www.conseil-national.medecin.fr/>.

Sweden – Socialstyrelsen/ National Board of Health, <http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/>.

Belgium – Federal Public Service, <http://www.health.belgium.be/>.

Romania – Romanian College of Physicians, <http://www.cmr.ro/>.

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**The Analytical Framework of the
Conceptualization of Globalization**

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Abstract: The globalization phenomenon represents a timely experience of our world. Due to the technological, cultural, economic, social, political, military, and other, progress, there is the perception that some phenomena in one part of the world have a global impact, not only a strictly local or regional one. Theoretical models both in the Anglo-Saxon space and in the French one consider that four main coordinates may be described in the framework of globalization: economic, political, social, and cultural. The nation-state becomes a concept which has to be reevaluated in the present context of globalization. We refrained from considering the process of globalization in a strictly determinist manner. According to Giddens, we shall be able to consider globalization much more lucratively for our theoretical endeavor in a multicausal, dialectic logic, as we shall include contradictory concepts in the first instance, in a more general framework. We shall consider that the difference among the theorists of globalization may be understood if we permanently keep in sight the difference between a monocausal logic and a multicausal one. The most lucrative, for our endeavor, is to place ourselves in a multicausal intelligibilization horizon and this because we shall consider that the four main coordinates: economic, political, social, and cultural make a differentiated conceptual universe in the first instance, yet perfectly harmonized in the semantic universe of the concept of globalization.

Keywords: globalization; analysis of globalization; Giddens; world dynamics; multicausal logic of globalization

The phenomenon called globalization is of primary importance for the actual context of the international relations. It also bears a complexity which must not be overlooked or simplistically treated. I propound an analysis of this phenomenon, analysis which shall cover three sections. In the first section represented by this article, we shall refer to the theoretical intelligibilization framework of globalization. In the second section, which will constitute the object of a future article, I shall be referring to the political and social dimensions of globalization. The third section, which will complete this concept, shall be dedicated to the economic and cultural dimensions of globalization. Globalization is an experience of the contemporary world, and the concept refers, in its whole, to the fact that our world transforms into a common social space, under the influence of the economic and technological forces. At the same time, there is a perception on the fact that the progress in one region of the world may deeply impact the individuals or communities in other parts of the world. The contemporary analyses insist upon four main coordinates of this phenomenon, namely: economical, political, social, and cultural, some theorists examining them as a whole, with others opting for a differentiated research thereof. In the academic world, there is a dispute on the manner in which the process of globalization should be conceptualized, as well as on the manner to consider its causal dynamics. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 39) Thus, in the specialty literature on the

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matter it may be ascertained that there are disagreements, on the one hand, between the British and the French theorists, and on the other, between the economists and the researchers in the other social-humanities fields, concerning the notion which should be used to most adequately describe the tendencies of the evolutionary process of the modern world (globalization versus mundialization) and the meaning to be conferred upon these ones. In this context, the following question arises: are we talking about the same semantics or are we merely assisting to a false Anglo-French debate, and a misunderstanding among the researchers in the various social-humanities fields, respectively? (Turliuc, 2002, pp. 21-36) If, in the works of the Anglo-Saxon authors, the term of “globalization” is mainly used, the European authors, especially the francophone ones, prefer the term of “mundialization”. However, it is obvious that the terms present the same suffix, which rather refers to a process, a set of active phenomena which can be analyzed in time (and in the terms of the dynamics of evolution, ruptures, strategies, actions, reactions, and actors) and not to the state of being of an object, which displays certain characteristics (aspect which can be interpreted in the statistical terms of structure, system, etc.).

In this context, the use of the term of “globalization” does not necessarily refer to a strictly economic understanding thereof, but it is given by the use, most of the time during our review, of the specialty Anglo-Saxon literature. Therefore, we prefer to use globalization, as a real process, a continuum, together with the terms of local, regional, and national. At one end of this continuous line there are the political, social, economic, and cultural relations and networks, organized locally and/or nationally, and at the other end there are the political, social, economic, and cultural relations and networks which take shape at the wider scale of the regional and local interactions. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 39)

Starting from this initial remark, we shall try to delimitate the analytical framework of the globalization process, a process which holds several different stages as regards temporality, and which involves certain structural modifications at a political, social, economic, and cultural level. It is why we are again interested in a conceptual delimitation of the dimensions of globalization. This understanding of the phenomena taking place at a global level does not however invalidate the interpretation of globalization as a set of interconnections, of interactions which take place between different agents, because they are represented by nation-states or by multi and transnational companies. And this because we believe that the process of globalization involves the existence of certain interconnections, on the one hand, among its different dimensions (political, social, economic, and cultural), and on the other hand, among the actors taking part in redefining relations at an international level. (Golopenția, 2001, pp. 218-221) To this effect, the analysis of globalization as a social-historical process proposes a critical research of the main explanatory patterns in literature, starting from the so-called “classical” ones belonging to authors such as Immanuel Wallerstein, James Rosenau or Robert Gilpin, and reaching to the ones specific to the postmodern theorists, such as Roland Robertson, Anthony Giddens or David Harvey. As such, the research on the dimensions of globalization is related to the social postmodern situation, in which the territorial boundaries of the nation-states can no longer prevent the “leakage” of economic, social, political, and cultural values and symbols, so the concepts of the social theory of modernity, such as “state” and “society”, must be reevaluated. Certainly, we do not think of globalization in deterministic terms, as a process led by historical forces. On the contrary, the main assumption of our research is that the social-historical process of globalization is a contingent and dialectical one, subsidiarily involving a dynamic, multicausal, often contradictory, logic, based on a series of binary dualities or oppositions, such as universalism versus particularism, homogeneity versus differentiation, integration versus fragmentation, centralization versus decentralization, and juxtaposition versus syncretization. All of

these involve, as we try to demonstrate during the first section, a logic marked by a condition unequally experienced in time and discontinuously developed in space. Besides, the postmodern analyses on the process of globalization emphasize the importance of space-and-time in the reconfiguration of the modern world.

The first one among these is the political coordinate and, as such, we considered it necessary to mainly focus on the paces and tendencies present in the international politics of contemporaneity, as well as on the manner in which political globalization influenced the evolution of the nation-state, the norm and primary unit of analysis in the context of the international political relations from modern age up to today. The social coordinate of globalization starts from the analysis of the “ontological security” specific to the communities in the contemporary world. Theorized by Giddens, this issue represents an important aspect in the framework of the globalization process, mainly referring to the social consequences this process has upon the collectivities in the new world order. At the same time, we are also considering the matter of social identity, both of the individuals in the globalization era, and of the communities that they compose, be these ones at a local, regional, national or supranational level.

We relate the economic coordinate of globalization to all the other dimensions, considering that the process of globalization is practically made of an interrelation of all the aspects involved by the new developmental conditions of social life. Thus, we consider the relation between the global capitalism and the national economies and we also take into consideration the consequences involved by the new global economy at the social level. The cultural coordinate of globalization is the last piece of this conceptual puzzle. Although, basically, globalization refers to an empirical condition concerning the complex connectivity ubiquitous in today’s world, we are interested in the way by which the new global technologies determine the creation of a global cultural space, as well as the part played by culture in the context of the globalization process. We do not claim that we shall approach all the important aspects that this process involves. Our purpose has been a “narrower one”: that of outlining the main elements which “compose” the process of globalization, a process which equally influences both the life of communities, and of individuals.

An empirical approach of globalization presents this process as a widening, deepening, and acceleration of the interconnection at world level in all the aspects of the contemporary social life, from culture to criminality, from finances to spirituality. Contemporary research shows that globalization can best be perceived as a process or set of processes rather than a singular state. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 51) It does not reflect a simple linear logic of development, nor does it prefigure a global society or community. In exchange, it reflects the appearance of the interregional interaction and exchange networks and systems. The spatial span and the density of the global and transnational interconnection weave the relation networks among communities, states, international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations, which make up the global order. These interweaving and interacting networks define an evolutionary structure which imposes constraints and, at the same time, confers power upon communities. In this regard, globalization is similar to a process of “structuring”, by that that it is a product of both individual actions, and cumulative interactions among the numerous agencies and institutions on the globe. Few are those areas of social life to escape the influence of the globalization process. From this perspective, globalization is best perceived as a differentiated social phenomenon, with multiple facets.

Yet, in order to circumscribe the analytical framework from the perspective of which we proposed to study the dimensions of globalization, it is necessary to keep in mind that, even though there are important continuities with the previous historical stages, the contemporary aspects of globalization

constitute a distinct historical form, in itself a product of a unique conjecture of political, economic, social, and cultural forces. Thus, it may be considered that the fundamental aspects of the globalization process may be described in the following terms (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 477):

- 1) *Spatial-temporal aspect*: The historically unprecedented extension, intensity, rapidity, and impact propensity of the global flows, interactions, and networks, comprising all social areas;
- 2) *Organizational aspect*: The unprecedented institutionalization and organization of the political, economic, social, and cultural power relations across the world by new control and communication infrastructures. Globalization is far from being a “chaotic” process and constitutes, on the contrary, the object of some new forms of multilateral regulation and stratified government;
- 3) *Conjectural aspect*: There is a unique confluence of the globalizing influences in all the areas of social life, from the political one to the ecological one;
- 4) *Reflexivity aspect*: There is a world elite in development, as well as a popular consciousness of global interconnection emphasized by the globalization of the communication infrastructures and the mass-media industries (such as satellite television or the Internet). In comparison with the end of the 19th century, when it was defined as a coercive project of forming global empires or of geopolitics, globalization currently reflects the varied and conscious political or economic projects of the national elites and transnational social forces, which often promote contradictory visions on the world order;
- 5) *Objectionable aspect*: The ever more acute awareness of the presence of a globalization process encouraged its questioning in all fields, from the cultural one to the military one, while the states, citizens, and social movements try to oppose or to control the effects thereof. Moreover, the institutionalization of modern politics transformed the objection and control politics on globalization, which used to be, at the beginning of the century, only an internal affair of empires, into a global politics of establishing the agenda, formation of coalitions, and multilateral regulation;
- 6) *Regionalization aspect*: While the beginning of the 20th century testified to the expansion of the global empires, its end saw the crumbling thereof and the significant regionalization of the political, economic, social, and cultural relations worldwide. Yet, unlike the previous periods, when the empires and ideological blocks had as purpose the autonomous development, the contemporary regionalization and globalization processes mostly became tendencies which emphasize each other mutually in the context of the global political economy;
- 7) *Westernization aspect*: The greatest part in the history of globalization was represented by the evolution of Westernization and its questioning all around the globe. Albeit still greatly asymmetrical, the contemporary features of globalization, in the political, economic, social, and cultural areas became less Eurocentric or Atlantocentric as compared to the ones at the beginning of the 20th century;
- 8) *Territoriality aspect*: Globalization consistently contributed, along centuries, to the tracing and retracing of boundaries and political jurisdictions. But the reorganization of the economic, social, and cultural space suggested by the contemporary forms of globalization, in the context of the territorially stable communities, brings forth the territorial principle as the one and only base for organizing political government and exercising political authority. Thus, territory and territoriality stay just as politicized as they used to be in the age of the global empires, although, at present, the threats against the territorial integrity of the nation-state are no longer just external or military;
- 9) *The aspect of state forms*: In time, various forms of globalization have been associated with various state forms. Compared with the beginning of the 20th century, the contemporary government is a “large government”, to the extent in which the states are spending a considerable percentage of the

national income, hire an important number of people and have highly varied responsibilities, not only for the management of economy, but also for the security and welfare of their citizens:

10) Aspect of the democratic government: In comparison with the previous eras, contemporary globalization develops against the background of a global system of states, in which most of them claim to be democratic, but in which the principles of democracy only rarely extend to cover aspects of the multilateral regulation and global government. Taking into consideration all of these aspects of globalization allows for the circumscription of an analytical framework of the globalization process, meant to provide answers to such questions as: What is globalization and how must it be conceptualized? Does contemporary globalization represent a new condition? May globalization be associated with the disappearance, resurgence or transformation of the power of the nation-state? Does the current stage of the globalization process impose new limits on politics? These are questions which we shall try to answer during the present paper.

The conceptual delimitation of globalization owes a great deal to Roland Robertson, who defines the process from the social theory's perspective, thus: "Globalization, conceptually, refers both to the compression of the world, and to the intensification of the awareness of the world as a whole, both to the actual global interdependencies, and to the awareness of the global whole". (Robertson, 1990, pp. 15-30) By this definition, the globalization process thus assumes a genuine ambivalence, which targets both the expansion of society at a global level, the economic, political, and cultural interdependencies which result out of this expansion, the revulsion of the ethno-nationalist tendencies, as well as the transfer of these phenomena from the empirical plane to the one of awareness. Globalization involves a fragmentary, pluralistic logic, contradictory in essence, the passage of humanity to a complex condition, in which the world itself is remade as a social space at the same time unique and diversified. We can no longer talk about *society* in that sense that the social theorists of modernity used to make out of this term, in the context in which the world becomes pluralistic, separated into a whole lot of autonomous units, but engaged into economic, political, and cultural interrelations. Considered to be at least contemporary with modernity and that its starting point (or the "germinal stage", in Robertson's terms) may be found in the 16th century, the social-historical process of globalization involves, in the first place, an economic systematization, then the modification of the international relations, politically, and last, but not least, the emergence of a "global culture". In an ever more restricted world, in which transnational relations, communication networks, activities and interconnections of various natures transcend national boundaries, it becomes ever more difficult to understand the local or national destinies, without referring to the global forces.

The dynamics of the global financial system, the extraordinary expansion of the transnational corporations' activity, the existence of the global ideatic and communication networks, the global production and spreading of knowledge, combined with the important significance of the transnational ethnic and religious ties, with the unprecedented social migration and the emergent authority of institutions and communities which overpass the nation-states, all of these factors prove the necessity to redefine the traditional concept of *society* (in association with the one of *nation-state*), in the sense of a coherent universal totality. But is this possible? In order to answer this question, we shall start by rendering the meanings carried by globalization, we shall review the main explanatory models developed in the context of the social theory, and we shall attempt an analysis of the specific coordinates of this process.

Towards the end of the 20th century, admitting the fact that the planet actually represents a "single place" has again raised the intellectual interest in the notion of universal community of mankind. (McGrew, 1992, p. 62) Even more, events such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of

communism and of the Soviet Union, the transition from industrialism to post-industrialism, the global diffusion of the institutional arrangements and democratic practices, together with the intensification of the world interdependencies at an economic, technological, and ecological level, have signaled to several observers the beginning of the end of the old world order and the onset of a new one, continuing the emergent promise of an evolved world society.

As such, the social theories in the last decade of the 20th century are interested in discovering the forces which lead the social-historical process of globalization. Not by chance, it is considered that one of the main points in the intellectual dispute lining the globalization process targets the issue of causality: what is the process led by? In answering this question, the current demarches tend to crystallize around two distinct sets of explanations: the ones which identify a unique or main imperative, similar to capitalism or the technological change, and the ones which explain globalization as being the process of a combination of factors, including the technological change, market forces, ideology, and political decisions. More simply, the distinction is made between the monocausal and multicausal demarches on globalization. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 36) The starting point of such research may be found in the studies of such authors as Immanuel Wallerstein, James Rosenau, and Robert Gilpin, already become “classics”. Thus, for Wallerstein, the main force which determines the historical “advancement” of the globalization process is represented by the “world capitalist economy” (Rosenau, 1990, p. 5). On the other side, from James Rosenau’s perspective, globalization involves the appearance of an era of “post-international politics”, in which the nation-state is no longer the core element in analyzing the problems which occur at a global level. History has now come to a point of *change*, so that the “current premises and the understanding of the historic dynamics actually represent conceptual boundaries”.

For this author, the historical force which triggered the recent transformations of our world is a technological one. Just like Rosenau, Robert Gilpin is interested in the international politics and the issues which arise in this context, yet arguing that the process of globalization is the result of certain political factors specific to the postindustrial era. His idea is that the enlarged interdependency, interactions, cooperation, and opening of the boundaries of the nation-states towards the global politics follow a normal logic of history. Thus, it is about a linear logic, in the context of which the effect follows the cause with necessity. In a different manner, other social theorists, such as Anthony Giddens, David Harvey or Roland Robertson emphasize other factors which determine the evolution of the globalization process. In their vision, as a social-historical process, globalization follows a multicausal logic.

For Giddens, the globalization process of society represents one of the most visible challenges of post-modernity, as it involves a profound reordering of space and time in social life - which the author calls “space-time distance”, which supposes the formation of a new type of social relations. (Giddens, 2000, p. 14). He stresses the manner in which the development of the global communication networks and the complex global systems of production and exchange diminished the influence of the local circumstances on people’s lives. Thus, the author will say, it becomes possible for the work places of the miners in Scotland, for example, to be more dependent on the decisions that the Australian or South-African companies make on the global market of coal, than on the immediate decisions of the local managers. This example highlights the existence of an uprooting of social relations. An effect of globalization, the uprooting of social relations is also determined by the “deterritorialization” of the global space – “moving” the social relations from the local interaction contexts and recombining them in time and space. What Giddens ascertains is that globalization extends the sphere of the social uprooting process, having as consequence the fact that “more and more individuals live under

circumstances under which uprooted institutions, combining local practices with the globalized social relations, organize the major aspects of daily life.” (Giddens, 2000, p. 79)

The idea which may be retained is that, in a globalized world, the social relations and interactions are no longer dependent on a simultaneous physical presence, placed in a specific location, since the structures and institutions of contemporary society, the relation of which is eased by communication, give rise to certain “intense relations between ‘missing’ social actors located distantly as to every situation of face-to-face interaction” (Giddens, 2000, p. 18). The process of globalization thus utters this overlapping of the “presence” and “absence”, through a permanent interrelation of the “local” circumstances with the “global” ones. Thus, in Giddens’ vision, the social-historical process of globalization supposes more than a notion of the mere interconnection: “The globalization concept is best understood as one expressing the fundamental aspects of the space-time drifting. Globalization supposes the crossing of presence and absence, the blending of distant events and relations with local circumstances.” (Giddens, 1991, p. 21)

The multicausal logic of globalization is highlighted by Giddens by resorting to what he deems to be the fundamental dimensions of this process. We are talking about capitalism, the interstate system, militarism, and industrialism. Theorizing these four institutional dimensions, Giddens utters the characteristics of the global condition of society, in which the “connections between the emergence and spreading of capitalism, industrialism, and the nation-state system” are highlighted (Giddens, 1987, p. 288.). David Harvey also understands globalization as an expression of the modified experience that we have today in what time and space are concerned. But, unlike Giddens, he speaks about a “space-time compression” (Harvey, 2002, pp. 205-331). Using this syntagm, Harvey attempts to underline the almost dramatic direction in which, under the pressure of the technological and economic changes, space and time almost collapsed, so that “today, we must stand up to an increased meaning of the spatial and temporal compression of our world” (Harvey, 2002, p. 240). If, with Giddens, time was differentiated as to space, Harvey argues that objectifying and universalizing the concepts of space and time allow time to annihilate space. This is exactly the process of the space-time compression, a development within which time may be reorganized, so that the constraints related to space may be reduced and vice versa.

The space-time compression involves a “shortening” of time and a “narrowing” of space - progressively, the social time allotted to the performance of certain actions is reduced, and this in turn leads to a reduction of the distance between the social experiences taking place in different points of the global space. In this manner, it can be argued that, if people in Tokyo may experience the same thing as the ones in Helsinki - a financial transaction or a media event - it means that they are actually living in the same place, as space has been annihilated by the compression of time. But David Harvey underlines that the process of the space-time compression, characteristic of globalization, is not gradual and continuous, but it is experienced, at a societal level, following certain sudden changes, during which the social relations are modified and dominated by an increased uncertainty. What is distinctive in the analysis that Harvey makes of globalization is the underlining of the importance of the intensity of the space-time compression. It must be reminded, in this context, that for a theorist like Harvey, what other authors called “the postmodern global state” is not the product of a silent process, be it linear or exponential, of the space-time compression, on the contrary, it appeared following a discontinuous social-historical process, a process marked by explosive phases of space-time compression. These phases, Harvey argues, are associated with periodical crises, followed by restructurations of capitalism, fact which assumes an increase in the “swiftness” of the economic, social-political, and cultural processes. In other words, the social theorists of globalization aim to

establish the awareness of our own experiences of the way in which the increased rhythm of change seems to have become a normal feature of social life. Just as virtual as the release of new fashion styles, new products, even the major political events seem to instantly turn into “redundant history”.

Therefore, it may be considered that, as long as the social “images” have no past or future, the human experience becomes compressed into an oversized present (Waters, 1995, p. 125). In this sense precisely, one of the important consequences of increasing the pace of the social-political, cultural, and economic changes is the intensification of the space-time compression, which leads to an acceleration of the globalization pace itself. For, according to Harvey, “we have experienced, in these last two decades, an intense stage of the space-time compression, which has a confusing impact on the political-economic practices, as well as on the cultural and social life” (Harvey, 2002, p. 284). As it can be noticed, the dynamics of the social-historical process of globalization is one which alters the semantics of unity and coherence, favoring the one of discontinuity and contradiction. Even more, a theorist such as Roland Robertson refers to the process of globalization as one of “universalization of particularism” and “particularization of universalism” (Robertson, 1990, p. 17). Taking these explanatory models into consideration, we shall try, in the second section of this chapter, to conceptually demarcate the dimensions of the globalization process.

In order to understand the form that globalization takes in the contemporary period, the dynamics and consequences of this process, we must take into account its main dimensions. In this context, three main ideas become fundamental, as the theorists of globalization claim: liberalization in economy, democratization in politics and universalization in the social-cultural space (McGrew, 1992, p. 63). In order to “take globalization seriously”, we must emphasize the economic aspect of this process. The economic dimension of globalization contains at its core the idea of a global market. Beyond this, the economic globalization no longer represents a simple abstraction; on the contrary, it has become a reality affecting the daily life of individuals. But the theorists of globalization claim that the globalization of economy implies three other dimensions: the political one, centered on the idea of global politics, the social one, which concentrates on the concept of a global society, and the cultural one, the central element of which is given by the notion of global culture.

The interrelations existing between these dimensions of the phenomenon, the fact that these ones involve each other reiterates the idea that the process of globalization may be understood in the terms of a multicausal logic. In order to decipher the main coordinates of this logic, we propose, in our future articles, a differentiated analysis of the four coordinates characterizing the social-historical process of globalization. The economic dimension of globalization refers to a process which constitutes itself as a result of human innovation and technological progress and which is mainly targeted at the increasing integration of national economies, especially via the commercial and financial exchanges. Although it sometimes considers the issue of people’s migration (as labor force) and the migration of knowledge (technology) beyond the national boundaries, the term particularly refers to an expansion at international level of the same market forces having operated for centuries at all levels of the economic activity, be it village markets, urban industries or financial centers.

The markets promote efficiency by competition and labor division, specialization which allows people to focus on the things they do best. At the same time, the global markets offer greater opportunities for people to get involved into transactions worldwide, this meaning that there is a greater access to capital, technology, cheaper imports and larger markets for export. However, the critics show that the markets do not necessarily insure benefits of an increased efficiency for all of the agents involved. On the contrary, the states or multinational companies must be prepared to adopt the necessary economic policies, and in the case of the poorer countries, which cannot “keep up” with the economic

globalization, the intervention of the international community is needed. Certainly, as numerous theorists claim, the global economic integration is not a new reason. It is considered that three factors have impacted the process of the economic globalization and it is likely that these remain just as influent in the future (Appadurai, 1990, pp. 295-310).

First of all, the improvements in the field of the transportation and communication technology lowered the costs for the freight of goods, services, and the production and communication factors of know-how and technologies useful in economy. Secondly, the tastes of individuals and companies generally - but not universally, favored the capitalization of the opportunities provided by the low costs of transport and communication by increasing the economic integration. And finally, the economic policies greatly influenced the nature of the economic integration, although they have not always followed its increase. These three factors, the quoted author shows, have influenced the "pattern" and dimension of the economic integration in all its important aspects. In this context, the following question becomes essential: does the reality of existence of a global market and of the multi- and transnational economic relations necessarily involve transcending the political identity specific to the nation-state, and, even more, the emergence of a global society and culture? It is a question that we shall try to answer in the following, analyzing the other three fundamental dimensions of the social-historical process of globalization. In what the political dimension of globalization is concerned, it must be specified that, for the theorists of the international relations, the world of modernity used to constitute an etatocentric world system, dominated by the principles of realism. Modernity implies, together with the explanations of the globalization process, the political vision of a multicentric world, which, however, retains certain aspects specific to the modern era.

The assumption that we make is that it is possible to speak, following in James Rosenau's steps (Rosenau, 1990, pp. 102-104), of the two worlds of global politics, aspects which pertain to the framework delineated by the political dimension of globalization. Meaning two interactive worlds, in which the political and social change knows an alert pace. The question which arises is the following: is political globalization, which refers to the abandonment of the idea that the nation-state is the primary unit within the international relations, a necessary consequence of the economic globalization? A first step towards a possible answer is the idea that the interconnection among the various phenomena specific to globalization, particularly the one between the economic and political dimensions, proves an erosion of the status of primary political unit of the nation-state. The challenges of globalization force the modern nation-state to develop mechanisms specific to maintaining, if not sovereignty, then at least the national identity and culture, especially as "it is unlikely that a global culture would appear or that the national identities would suffer modifications following their inclusion into some wider communication structures" (Held, 2000, p. 155).

For now, we remain within the terms of the two worlds of the world political system: an etatocentric world, within which the national actors play the primary part, and a multicentric world, made of various and relatively equal, actors (Rosenau, 1990, pp. 97-100). The interdependencies between these two worlds generate each other within the political globalization process. In the political dimension, globalization finds an "obstacle" in the creations of modernity; such a creation is the nation-state. In this context, it may be claimed that the interconnection between the etatocentric world and the multicentric one structures an international system essentially noncentric. The new global politics truly indicates that the sovereignty of the nation-state (a fundamental principle of the new world order) is today in a precarious situation. And this because the political globalization questions the political identity of the nation-state, seen as an entity capable of answering the challenges specific to the contemporary era. On the other hand, we have to accept that there has never been an absolute

sovereignty at the level of the nation-states (Holton, 1997, p. 84). Thus, the principle of sovereignty, as it has been understood in the political theory of the last three centuries, is affected, because the world economy, international organizations, regional or global institutions, international laws and the military alliances are now operating, more and more clearly, towards reducing the part played by the nation-state in the international arena. All of these represent realities which undermine the autonomy of the political and administrative apparatus located at the level of the nation-state (Held, 1991, pp. 127-135). The explanations concerning the social dimension of the globalization process start from the concept which constitutes the fundamental presumption of the understanding of the new trajectories of social change: i.e., the concept of society.

Thus, what may be ascertained is that most traditional sociology papers focus their attention on what it was called “modern society” and which basically supposed three main characteristics. Society, in the modern sense of the term, was considered to be cohesive, according to the idea of cohesion intrinsic to any social group, postulated and then developed by psycho-sociology at the beginning of the 20th century. Secondly, the notion of society suggested the sense of a totality, a unity, and, at the same time, the uniqueness of a social group. And not least, for the social theorists of modernity, society represents an integrated and, at the same time, integrating social system. Under these terms, society became practically undistinguished from the nation-state, concept which had animated the nationalist movements at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the following one.

The necessity to reconfigure the notion of “society” occurred at a moment when it was ascertained that, in a world where the transnational relations, the economic, social, political, and cultural networks, activities and interconnections transcend the national boundaries, it becomes ever more difficult to understand the “local or national destinies”, without referring to the global forces. Under these terms, the centrality of such notions as society, social group, ethnicity, nation-state, territorial boundaries, sovereignty, which entire generations of social and political theorists conceptualized and supported, now becomes marginal. Therefore, but also because of the ever present “fear” of change, the opponents of the globalization process accuse that its fundamental presumptions would lead to institutional destabilization and social chaos. It is true, the phenomena specific to the social-historical process of globalization succeed rapidly, sometimes even alarmingly, but this does not mean they cannot be explained and understood.

Under completely different terms than those of modernity, the present social globalization tries to rebuild the world as “a single place” (McGrew, 1992, p. 63), which also supposes a reorientation of the sociological project towards a new concept, the one of “global society”. Taking into account the social dimension of globalization from a postmodern perspective, Zygmunt Bauman notes that “together with the restriction of the idea of sovereignty of the nation-state, the traditional model of society loses its significance as a relevant reference framework” (Bauman, 1992, p. 57). Returning to the fundamental notion that such discourses stem from, the one of “society”, it must be noted that this one is understood by the contemporary authors as a fragmented and pervious social space, precisely because of the globalization process. Among the authors who took into consideration the implications specific to the cultural dimension of globalization, from the perspective of postmodernism, the most known one is Roland Robertson. The cultural paradigm of postmodernism inseparably relates to the idea of fragmentation, meaning a “dissemination of the whole into a sum of fragments which fiercely oppose the establishment of a coherent significance” (Constantinescu, 1999, p. 32). It is true, globalization advances more rapidly in those contexts in which social relations are mediated by symbols: the economic, social, or political field. If we accept such an argument, then the process of globalization may be conceived as a fundamental aspect of the progressive “culturalization” of social

life. Although it is obvious that the cultural space, as an arena separated from the one of the economic, social, or political, has not yet become a completely globalized one, it may be stated that it has manifested a greater globalization tendency than the others, and this is easily noticeable in the case of religion. This because the great universal religions have generally been threatened to be overshadowed by the modernization of society and the appearance of capitalism. Indeed, the development of the liberal democracy and of the capitalist economic system supposes replacing the religious values by other values, holding the same universality.

But the recent phases of acceleration of the globalization process do not refer to the triumph or sovereign dominance of any of these, on the contrary, to their dissipation. And this because a global culture is rather chaotic than orderly. However, we must underline the fact that the absolute globalization of the cultural sphere implies the appearance of a circle of common values, tastes and opportunities, but hyper-differentiated, accessible to each individual, in the absence of any constraint. Moreover, a globalized culture must allow a permanent flow of ideas, information, and values mediated by the mobile individuals, symbols, or electronic simulation. From this point of view, Appadurai Arjun's argument (Appadurai, 1990, p. 298), relating to the global cultural economy, identifies certain fields in which such developments take place.

These are recognized and considered "images", as they are global representations of the social world, performed at a mental level, from the perspective of the transfer of the cultural objects from one community to the other. This "flow" involves: ethnical images (the distribution of the mobile individuals, belonging to the various communities and ethnicities); technical images (the technological distribution); financial images (the distribution of capital); mediatic images (the distribution of information); ideatic images (the distribution of political ideas and values, such as liberty, democracy, human rights, etc.); sacred images (the distribution of religious ideas and values). Precisely for this reason, of the transfer of ideas and knowledge, values, worldwide, it may be stated that the phenomena associated with post-modernity are characterized by ambivalence, holding both progressive, and repressive features. In this context, cultural identity continues to represent a problem, because of the appearance of the social, political, and cultural "co-modification", fragmentation, and transformation, results of the progress of the consumption society. All these dimensions described above may articulate, in general terms, the path followed by the new social changes, which occurred together with the social-historical process of globalization. It may be noticed that, intersecting the economic, political, social, and cultural boundaries, the process of globalization is associated both with deterritorialization, and with the reterritorialization of space on each coordinate. Since the economic, political, social, and cultural activities are spreading farther and farther worldwide, they do not stay, to a significant extent, organized strictly in conformity with a territorial principle (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perraton, 2004, p. 52).

On the contrary, they may be rooted in various places, but may also be segregated, at the same time, from the territorial element. Under the conditions of globalization, the economic, political, social or cultural space, local, national, or even continental, may be reconfigured so as to no longer necessarily coincide with the legal and territorial boundaries set. For a better explanation of the mechanisms of this process, we shall analyze the main issues brought forth by the phenomenon of globalization, on each of the four fundamental coordinates that we have conceptualized above.

The analytical conceptualization framework concerning globalization is drafted in its main constitutive elements. This analytical framework is to be completed by an analysis concerning the four coordinates mentioned: economic, political, social, and cultural. A phenomenon of utmost complexity, such as globalization, cannot be, theoretically, completely exhausted, remaining opened to further research.

The multicausal logic described by Anthony Giddens represents an excellent intellectual instrument in the analysis of globalization. This multicausal logic may at its turn be thought in another philosophical horizon concerning dialectics. The consideration of the opposing concepts, contradictory in a first instance, gives us a perspective as close as possible on the entire phenomenon called globalization.

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**Romania in the Process of Democratic Consolidation.
The Impact of the Electoral System**

Marcela Monica Stoica¹

Abstract: After the fall of communism and the transition to a democratic regime and after more than 6 years from accession to European Union, Romania recorded a decline of democratic consolidation process according to the latest reports of Freedom House called „Nations in Transition”. The present paper aims to analyze the relation between the change of the electoral system in Romania and the decreased quality of democratic governance. The data used for this paper were collected from Freedom House reports („Nations in Transition”- 2007 -2010) and the methods of investigation are case study and comparative analysis of the data. The paper reveals that, despite the fact that Romania changed the electoral system, the legislators were elected in single-unit constituencies on the basis of a mixed electoral system, no progress has been made in process of democratic consolidation. Moreover, the score of the electoral process caused the degradation of Romania's rating. As a conclusion, the Romania's EU accession and the change of the electoral system are not sufficient premises for completing the process of democratic consolidation in Romania.

Keywords: electoral process; democracy; uninominal voting system; Freedom House

1. Introduction

After the fall of communism in Central and East Europe, the concept of democracy came strongly on the political scene, because appears the need to justify democracy as the best form of organizing the political life.

To accomplish this task of defining democracy we'll use Tilly' s work, one of the most prolific theorist of democracy, who says that there are four major types of definitions: constitutional, noun, procedural and process-oriented (Tilly, 2007, p. 21).

In our paper, we will focus on procedural approach. Thus, according to the procedural approach, a regime is qualified as democratic or not after a series of government practices. Most followers of this approach are looking to elections and are interested if the competitive racing performed between as many citizens as possible, produced, as usual, changes in the policies and the governmental staff. This procedure is done only when elections produce significant changes in government.

Among the procedural indicators of democracy are referendum, recount, petitions and polls. Taking into account the criterion of elections, we can define a democracy that fulfills all the above criteria as an electoral democracy (Tilly, 2007, p. 22).

In an attempt to find a country as electoral democracy or not, Freedom House has identified a number of procedural elements:(1) a multiparty system and open competition; (2) universal suffrage for all

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citizens (except citizens of certain countries that criticize the right to vote because they have serious criminal history); (3) regular general elections, held under maximum security without massive fraud that lead to unrepresentative results for the population; (4) public access for political parties to voters through media campaigns and open electoral campaigns (Tilly, 2007, p. 22).

2. Some Characteristics of a Functional Democracy

The largest theoretical confrontations occur when democracy must be quantified, or in other words, to measure the performance of democracy as a political system. Political theory approaches abound on the elements that should be considered when it is tried to measure the functionality of a democracy.

For example, Sartori refers to Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl who believe that in order to measure the effectiveness of a democracy must be taken into account the difference between the concepts, democratic procedures and operating principles (Sartori, 2002, p. 21). At a conceptual level, the most important feature of a functional democracy is the existence of general categories of people who can control and can make governments responsible for their political decisions. So, concepts as leaders, public space, citizens as electors, elections are very specific to democracy as a political system.

In a democracy, leaders must be people who are in specialized positions from which to derive their legitimacy character in relation to the masses of citizens they represent at the political levels (Schmitter, Lynn Karl, 1991, p. 76).

What distinguishes democracy from other forms of political organization is the way these leaders come to power and how they exercise their mandate given by citizens. So they come to power through free elections and exercise their mandate on the principles of transparency and free competition, can be replaced in the next term if people they represent want it.

Public space is the place where are built and implemented rules and institutions of democracy. What is specific to this public space is the dialogue, plurality of views, tolerance of divergent views and the ability to compromise (Schmitter, Lynn Karl, 1991, p. 77).

Elections are the most clearly political competition to highlight the factions within a democracy. The mere presence of elections is an indication that we stand in a democracy.

The concept of citizenship is central in the analysis made by Schmitter and Lynn Karl because only the presence of this concept makes a political system to be democratic or not (Schmitter, Lynn Karl, 1991, p. 77). Citizenship itself is a product of contemporary democracies because, over time, most political restrictions were imposed to citizenship (by gender, social class, income, religion, race, etc). In contemporary democracies there is no restriction on the rights of a citizen, so this concept is an intrinsic notion of democracy.

The democratic procedures are considered by the two authors as indispensable for the persistence of democracy as a political regime but the mere existence of people who vote (electors) are not sufficient to perpetuate democracy from one election to another. The democratic procedures to which the two make references are the same used by Robert Dahl: elected representatives, free fair and regular elections, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, freedom of association and the right of eligibility (Dahl, 1989, p. 19).

Other political theories measure the degree of a functional democracy in relation with the existence of a well-structured party system, a system able to perform effectively their democratic functions

(Sartori, 1999, p. 148). The party system stability in a democracy is another element to quantify the degree to which that democracy works.

Any comparison between western democracies and the recent Central Europe and Eastern Europe democracies must take into account the party system variable. Thus, the major difference resulting from such a comparison is that western democracies have highly cohesive party systems to perform their duties and allow democratic rotation of power from one election to another.

In contrast, recent democracies of central and eastern Europe have fragile political systems, consisting of traditional parties (those that existed in the interwar period and were outlawed by the communists) and new parties (which claim to represent interests of certain social groups who need political representation in order to promote their rights and interests). These party systems are characterized by political instability, the inconsistency of decision-making and lack of social legitimacy. For these reasons, some of them disappear from a parliamentary mandate to another or fail to effectively promote their electoral platform so as to meet the threshold and to remain part of the legislation.

Also, another element of a functional democracy is the quality of political parliamentary élites that are the product of electoral system. Thus, the question that arises and we are trying to answer, taking into account the constraints of an article, is whether the change the electoral system in Romania leads to more efficient élites that contribute in improving the quality of democracy and its consolidation.

To sum up, we can say that there is a direct proportional relationship between the functioning of a party system and an electoral system in a democracy and the efficiency of that democracy and of democratic consolidation.

From the multitude of elements that measure the degree of functionality of a democracy we will stop, below, at the electoral process.

3. The Relation between the Electoral System and the Democratic Consolidation. The Case of Romania

For technical reasons, we divided the present study in two parts: in the first part we made a comparative analysis of the perceptions of the political parliamentary élites on the change of the electoral system in Romania and in the second part, based on the reports of Freedom House, “Nations in Transit” (NIT), we analyze the variable “Electoral Process”, for Romania, from 2007 to 2010.

3.1 The Perceptions of the Political Parliamentary Elites on the Change of the Electoral System in Romania and Its Effects on the Democratic Consolidation. A Comparative Approach

As we have shown, the aim of this paper is to analyze how the change of electoral system influences the functioning and the consolidation of a democracy starting from the fact that, in 2008, Romania went through a process of electoral change.

In terms of social representations, the “uninominal” vote system was invested in the Romanian society, with a central quality: it is a much more direct link established between electors and elected, reducing the distance between them. Its introduction was seen as a panacea to the crisis of social representativeness of the political class. This social perception was based on the belief that individual choice will lead to an increased quality of Romanian Parliament’s elected members and to their

responsibility to voters, and the great stake was that changing the electoral system could generate a better democracy.

The sociological investigation made in the Romanian Parliament, at the Chamber of Deputies, at two different times showed the opposite: vote *per se* does not alter the structure of parliamentary élites, does not produce better élites and thus does not increase the quality of democracy. The purpose of sociological survey was to measure the perceptions of the parliamentary élites upon some certain issues and, especially, on the electoral process, on the „uninominal” vote, and the way it was expected to enhance the quality of democracy and its effects in the consolidating of democracy.

These results are part from a greater research that took place at the Chamber of Deputies in two different chronological and political moments¹. The first chronological moment was in October 2008 and the second was in November 2009. The political moments are given by the presence of two different types of electoral systems. In the first research, the political élites analyzed belonged to a parliament elected by a proportional representation system (PR) on closed lists, and in the second, the elections took place by „uninominal” system. The methods of investigation are case study and comparative analysis of the data based on the research. This is why in our questionnaires we projected the design of questions able to produce information about what élites believe and what are their perceptions.

X1. After the election from 2008, what do you think about the direction the country is going to? A comparison between élites perceptions (2004 - 2008 and 2008-2012)

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
Good	<u>60</u>	<u>52</u>	↘
Wrong	25	45	↗
I do not know	12	2	↘
I do not answer	3	1	↘
Total	100	100	

X2. Do you think the uninominal system will have a decisive influence on the direction the country is going to? A comparison between élites perceptions (2004 - 2008 and 2008-2012)

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
Yes	<u>51</u>	48	↘
No	46	<u>52</u>	↗
I do not know	2	0	↘
I do not answer	1	0	↘
Total	100%	100%	

¹Two questionnaires were applied to the population of deputies, belonging to the legislature 2004 -2008 and 2008 - 2012, and two types of groupings were built. The first grouping included 57 deputies and the second one 62. For the two groupings we used a simple, ransom and crossed procedure on layers.

As we can see, X1 and X2 tables show that in both legislatures, the old and the new élites there are two hard cores of members of parliament (46% and 52%) who not considered that changing of the voting system will decisively influence the direction the country goes (Table X2). In other words, although they were chosen based on different systems, perceptions about the impact of electoral system on the direction of development of the country are similar. These results raise a major question: what was the real motivation under which Romania has made the transition from one system to another?

V1. Which of the following statements you agree?

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
The uninominal system promotes better deputies	54%	<u>77%</u>	↗
The uninominal system promotes worse deputies	<u>46%</u>	23%	↘

The answers are logic because every governance considers itself to be better than the previous one. The problem that we identify in this situation is: if the value of the current élites is higher than the other élites, why persists the general opinion that the country is going in the wrong direction? The economic crisis could be responsible for the direction taken by a state, or the political class and its ability in management problems facing Romania?

V2. Which of the following statements you agree?

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
The uninominal system promotes only candidates with a lot of money for the campaign	<u>44%</u>	31%	↘
The uninominal system promotes only candidates with high visibility (well known by the people)	56%	<u>69%</u>	↗

The success formula in order to become member of the Legislative is not the electoral system but a combination between financial resources (intensively used during campaign) and high public visibility.

V3. Which of the following statements you agree?

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
The uninominal system brings advantages for the candidates of the political parties	<u>93%</u>	83%	↘
The uninominal system offers equal opportunities for all	7%	<u>17%</u>	↗

Belonging to a political party is the best way to have access in Parliament, so the idea that the uninominal system promotes independent candidates is infirmed. As a remark, the figures are significant.

V4. Which of the following statements you agree?

	2004- 2008	2008 - 2012	
In the uninominal system the citizens' interests are better represented	60%	<u>66%</u>	↗

In the uninominal system the citizens' interests are represented in the same way like in PR system	<u>40%</u>	34%	↘
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The members of both the legislatures consider that citizens' interests do not depend on the electoral system.

V5. Which of the following statements you agree?

	Yes	No	Parliamentary élites
In the next Parliament* there will be more transparency	<u>53%</u>	40%	2004- 2008
In the present Parliament* exists more transparency	<u>58%</u>	40%	2008 - 2012
*Its about the legislature 2008 – 2012			

The political transparency is not a chapter that should stay under incidence of the voting system, but a value guaranteed by law and all parliaments of a democratic state (regardless of the electoral procedure on which is constituted) should respect and implement it. The deputies who replied to this question betrayed the political values on which they build their careers.

V6. Which of the following statements you agree?

	Yes	No	Parliamentary élites
In the next Parliament*, members will give the country better laws	<u>46%</u>	44%	2004- 2008
In the present Parliament* members give the country better laws	31%	<u>60%</u>	2008 - 2012
*Its about the legislature 2008 – 2012			

Table V6 reaffirms the idea that the parliamentary élites resulting from the “uninominal” vote are less responsible about mission that has drawn in the Constitution - that of legislative process and of pass laws. Since they believe that they will not legislate better, then, consequently, that other political bodies are responsible for political decisions in Romania. What kind of democracy could be in Romania, if the parliamentarians themselves consider to have a role of consultation and decorative.

V7. Which of the following statements you agree?

	Yes	No	Parliamentary élites
Using the uninominal system, people will have more trust in Parliament	46%	49%	2004- 2008
Using the uninominal system, people has more trust in Parliament	42%	50%	2008 - 2012

Parliamentary political élites perceptions of the degree of trust that citizens have in the institution of Parliament remain unchanged from a legislature to another and from a system of vote to another. Any other element than the system of vote – political behavior, values expressed, laws passed, etc, will affect the confidence of citizens in Parliament

3.2 The Freedom House Reports on Romania and the Evaluation of the Electoral Process

To quantify the functionality of the Romanian democracy, taking into account the variable “Electoral Process” we used the annual reviews conducted by Freedom House, entitled “Nations in Transit”.¹ We believe that the variables used in Freedom House's annual surveys (including the electoral process) cover the economic, social, legal and political democracy. “Nations in Transit” is a comparative and multidimensional study about the reforms made by former communist countries from Europe and Eurasia².

This study keeps track of reforms made by 29 states and the data are collected from the first day of January of the year and ending with the last day of December of the same year. Methodology for achieving these studies is: Freedom House has built a grid of analysis that allows experts in each country monitored to fill easily the available information, taking into account seven broad categories. These categories are: electoral process, civil society, independent media, democratic governance, judicial independence, corruption and democracy. Each state which is subject to Freedom House analysis has a number of accredited experts that collect data, analyze them and send them forth as the annual study released by the organization.

Data collection is done through a process of close monitoring of all political, social, economic and legal events that happens during a year in each of these 29 states. Numerical scores is given for each indicator which are numbers from one to seven, one being the best score and seven being the worst and representing the lowest democratic progress being made by a state³. Since 2008, Romania adopted a new system of vote; the analysis of Romania's democratization process is made according to data

¹http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?search=Nations+in+transitions&submit_search=Search&page=287 Accessed 10 February 2011. Freedom House was created in 1941 by several personalities, including Eleanor Roosevelt. Freedom House has offices in Washington D. C. and New York and offices in Bucharest, Budapest, Kiev, Warsaw and Belgrade.

² Since 1980, published an annual review of these indicators.

³ The ratings reflect the consensus of Freedom House, its academic advisers, and the author(s) of this report. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s). The Democracy Score is an average of ratings for the categories tracked in a given year. “Nations in Transit” is an independent study whose methodology has its origins in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its indicators are standards of democratic transatlantic governance.

from Freedom House and will consider the last four reports using the variable “Electoral Process” in a comparative analysis: 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 (see table no.1).

Freedom House report for 2007 placed Romania among the states politically unstable. Indicators which show that Romania recorded a major decline compared to 2006 are: justice, national government, civil society and independent media.

In 2007, Romania held its first European Parliament elections and two referenda, one for the impeachment of the president and another for the change of the voting system. All ballots were surrounded by important legal battles for influence, but once the rules of the game had been settled by the Constitutional Court, which played a major referee role in 2007, no irregularities were reported on voting days. At the “Electoral Process”, Romania recorded, in 2007, in comparison with 2006, a flat score value of 2.75.

Table 1. Romania Coverage under Freedom House

NIT Ratings	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Democracy Score	3.39	3.29	3.36	3.36	3.46
National Democratic Governance	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.75	4.00
Electoral Process	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.75
Civil Society	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50
Independent Media	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	4.00
Local Democratic Governance	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00
Corruption	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

In the analysis for 2008, Romania has revealed two negative indicators: corruption and judicial independence, gaining note 4.00. In comparison with the others indicators, the only thing better rated is “Electoral Process” at 2.75, the same value like in 2007. Regarding the indicator “Democracy”, Romania has not made any progress compared to 2007, the score being 3.36.

In Romania, a new electoral system was tested in local and legislative elections in 2008. The introduction of single unit constituencies brought about some gerrymandering, but otherwise elections were held without major incidents. Although the results were close, there were no attempts to manipulate the election outcomes, and a new government coalition was formed with relative ease. (NIT, 2010, p. 410) The only category in the 2008 report where Romania has made progress is the “Electoral Process”. According to report in 2008, the situation has improved very little and the electoral process rating improves from 2.75 to 2.50. The new electoral system produced a notable development, and local institutions have spent funds on a discretionary basis (NIT, 2010, p. 411).

Thus, data for 2008 Freedom House report, does not show any improvement of the process of democratic consolidation as a result of changing the electoral system. According to Freedom House, democracy score shows a half- consolidated democracy Romania and the country still ranks tenth in the 29 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Eurasia that were monitored by Freedom House in 2008. Romania is in the same category with Croatia (3.71), Serbia (3.79), Montenegro (3.79), Albania (3.82) and Macedonia (3.86). The best score of the 29 countries, have Slovenia and Estonia, both gaining 1.93, and are classified as top of democracies. Six other countries

have managed to reach into this category: Latvia (2.18), Czech Republic (2.18), Poland (2.25), Hungary (2.29), Lithuania (2.29) and Slovakia (2, 46).

Following analysis of the seven indicators, Freedom House shows that the rating obtained by Romania, in 2009, fell, and the Romanian state has made no progress in any of these points. According to the report for 2010, Romania's rating in terms of "Democratic Governance" has deteriorated from 3.75 to 4.00. "Electoral Process" recorded a rating down from 2.50 to 2.75, because of fraud, manipulation, subjective media coverage and poor election management (NIT, 2010, p. 417). "Along with a record low voter turnout, there was serious evidence of fraud and manipulation in numerous polls. The Permanent Electoral Authority (AEP), a newly created independent institution which overviews the electoral process proved ineffective (NIT, 2010, p. 421).

4. Conclusions

Democracy cannot be addressed in the absence of real social relations. It is the product of a set of conditions, values and principles without which it can be analyzed and understood, such as: nature of social-political system (in this respect democracy, the most general sense, is a form of political organization, being, directly or indirectly, connected to political power), the material life and spiritual development, the ability of political forces to determine the democratic development of society, the consciousness and political culture.

We consider that the degree of the functionality of the Romanian democracy is closely linked to the political elite, the values and principles that it promotes and how these élites take the political decisions in this country. Thus, until we do not have European political élites by values and standards of governance, professionalized and responsible, Romanian democracy will not exceed the standard of half-consolidated and will continue to record very low grades indicators of democratization. In this respect, the series of reports Freedom House, "Nations in Transit", strengthen the main results provided by our research.

The idea that Romanian democracy is not working, is reiterated by the fact that the party system in Romania is not consolidated, political parties are characterized by political "migration" according to the name of the successful parliamentary elections, promoting the most visible figures in terms of media and financial power, political fluctuation period (a term presented in Parliament, and the next election no longer meet the threshold).

Starting from the idea that political parties are the main source of recruitment of political élites, we conclude that an atomized party system can only produce dysfunctional élites, interested only in political survival and in promoting their own interests. The lack of ideological affiliations and values and the lack of democratic political culture make the Romanian political élites a product of the electoral system, a negative indicator of the functioning of a democracy. Given all these factors, it appears that Romanian democracy has its own functioning coordination and is in a process of change led, on one hand, by the conditions and social values from inside and, on the other hand, by the recommendations and conditions imposed by the European Union.

The analysis that we performed on the functionality of a democracy indicators shows that, despite the electoral changes and conditions imposed by the EU, the Romanian democracy does not end the democratic consolidation process and only works at half of the potential of Western democracy. These conclusions are demonstrated by indicators that Romania experienced setbacks in the last three years: freedom of the press, the degree of activism of civil society, repeated violations of rights and liberties,

electoral fraud and corruption. All these elements make the Romanian democracy to remain at the bottom of the table made for European Union member states.

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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Grotesque as Aesthetic Identity: from Medieval Illumination to Contemporary Art

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Abstract: This paper's aim is offering a subjective vision on the grotesque as form of identity for human individuals ranging from at least Middle Ages until contemporary artistic manifestations. A traditional history of art becomes impossible when discovering a synchronous existence of a variety of art events that cannot be placed in parallel discursive lines, without grasping links and ramifications born from obvious similarities between formulas and procedures otherwise separated by long distances and time periods. The aesthetic category that seems best to transcribe the need of simultaneous and irrational perception of mundane reality is the *grotesque* – being, in my opinion, a good strategy for highlighting multiple purpose trends present in the environment as important factors of human identity configuration which, in a mechanistic way, dominated by reason, are often lost sight of. A historicist approach to the grotesque, however subjective, offers nothing else but a history of the meanings given to the word grotesque, term which designates a perpetual value of reality, stratified only in the physical and conceptual artifacts it has been associated with. Nonetheless it is useful as a micro-theory of the chaos which surrounds us and determines opposed dialectical positions such as order, hierarchy, and harmony.

Keywords: syncretism; symbolism; tattoo; graffiti

Introduction

When discussing the art of the 20th century and especially when considering the artistic achievements of the beginning of the 21st century, diachronic perspective tends to become irrelevant and those who analyze the phenomenon have to review both the method and the concepts prevalent on art. A traditional history of art becomes impossible when discovering a synchronous existence of an extraordinary variety of art events that cannot be placed in parallel discursive lines, without grasping the links and ramifications born from the obvious similarities between formulas and procedures otherwise separated by long distances and time periods.

The connection point, the node that combines all these possible dispositions of artistic creativity remains naturally the human being, but what is clear now is the need for research on what remains fundamentally the same, unchanged in human beings, (regardless of historical eras that we can stratify) in an attempt to explain the recurrence of events and practices with artistic or aesthetic value that a pure discursivity could fit but in the ineffable category of coincidence.

Thus, research on art is and will be, inevitably, research about humanity, about how it relates to self, others and the environment, be it animal, vegetal or inanimate and, more and more outstanding, technological and virtual. Anthropology, sociology, psychology, theology, philosophy, but also science and technology become frames of reference which have to intersect simultaneously with

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artistic research to obtain an environment with multiple significance, particularly necessary for surfacing different meaning trends that lead to understanding artistic creativity as a defining element for human being, a source for both the phenomenon of individuation as a species and for configuring a complex personality.

Analyzing a phenomenon that seems to occur strongly in contemporary art, syncretism, we may conclude that, in fact, it has accompanied human being from the earliest stages of existence as a species, but the reason why the awareness of its existence has become inevitable today is, in part, humanity entering the electronic phase of globalization following the great geographical discoveries of the fifteenth century. The difference between the two eras of configuring a new global model is given by the special perception of space that the technological advance makes possible. In the geographical phase, we are dealing with the physical completion of the space, while communication technology, from telegraph to the internet, ultimately, means its elusion.

The illusion of space actually means cancellation of perspective, of spatial depth, of discursiveness and thereby upholding the simultaneity in apprehending the environment, but this simultaneity becomes relevant only in so far as the ordering tendency of reason goes into the background, giving way to irrational to assume reality. Notating the Irrational's manifestations was almost always the art's task, the only proper to transcribe, by its secondary character and lower status among the means of knowledge that classical Greek philosophy has established for it, this hidden part of the human being, unworthy of any constructive or orderly – or in plainer words “serious” – research of the surrounding world.

One of the aesthetic categories that seem best to transcribe the need of simultaneous and irrational perception of mundane reality is the Grotesque – being, in my opinion, a good strategy for highlighting multiple purpose trends present in the environment as important factors of human identity configuration which, in a mechanistic way, dominated by reason, are often lost sight of in English or French. The abstract must be written in English.

If we take the dictionary definition of *Grotesque*¹ we find out that it means:

- a. (adj.) of an exaggerated, funny, unnatural comic, strange, bizarre;
- b. (n. n.) 1. An aesthetic category reflecting reality, contrary to the sublime, in fantastic, bizarre, monstrous shapes; 2. Type of ornamentation of Roman origin, reintroduced during the Renaissance, consisting of a fantastic decoration, painted or carved, composed of vegetal geometric motifs, (bizarre) animals and characters combined with arabesques.
- c. (typo.) Sans serif typeface resulted from combining arcs and line segments.
- d. n. fem. (theatre) sort of comedy. (Fr. *Grotesque*, It. *Grottesco*)

¹ Definition compiled by myself from several definitions of “GROTÉSC” found on the internet at <http://dexonline.ro/definitie/grotesc>, downloaded on 27.06.2012.



Figure 1. Domus Aurea, Decorations Called “Grotteschi”

We see that we are dealing with an aesthetic category reflecting reality, but that the forms in which this reflection occurs are bizarre, fantastic and monstrous and the human reaction will be to reject them, given their character labeled as being ridiculous, strange, bizarre and unnatural.

Such an acceptance of the term may seem true when referring to the ornamentation of Domus Aurea, which, once discovered during the Italian Renaissance through the archaeological excavations around 1480, was a rich source of inspiration for artists such as Raphael (Vatican Loggia). However, when talking about fonts known as *Grotesque* we are dealing with an entirely different matter.

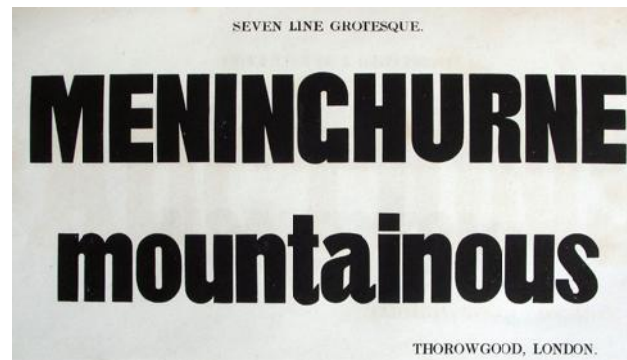


Figure 2. William Thorowgood's Seven Line Grotesque Sample

The typeface contains a series of seemingly obedient characters, a kind of letters resulting only from combining arcs with line segments, *sans-serif*, the first font called *Grotesque* being invented in 1832 by William Thorowgood, who added a set of lower-case letters¹ to the typeface invented by William Caslon composed only of capital letters.

¹ Majoor, Martin (2007). Inclined to Be Dull. *Eye Magazine, Spring*. <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/inclined-to-be-dull>, downloaded on June 29th 2012.



Figure 3. The *Book of Kells* Manuscript, folio 34r, the *Chi Rho* Monogram



Figure 4. The Crosby-Schryen Codex, Egypt, 3rd Century

Their bizarre is not visible to those who live in the 21st century when a variety of typefaces results as a sign of plurality and relativism. The irrelevance of a unique point of view, of a single possible position in the perception of the surrounding reality or of oneself is now obvious. In the 19th century though, when they were first put into use, they were particularly intriguing by their uniform visual appearance, equal and lacking any ornamentation. Still, they are remote from the exotic decorations in Nero's house with which they share the same name.

Denying the totally arbitrary assigning of only one term for many incompatible realities, I looked for a linkage in history. The term makes its appearance once again in the description of medieval manuscript art, and the one making the link is one of the first important theorists of grotesque – Jonathan Ruskin. (Ruskin, 1863)

As we can discover when reading the third volume of his *Modern Painters*, Ruskin sees in this aesthetic category the way art can be released from under the rule of the Renaissance unique point of view, and the medieval illumination as an insufficiently explored art form which would deserve a reassessment and a reintroduction in artistic creation. He distinguishes by *illumination* that action of making writing, simple writing, beautiful to the eye, by investing it with the great chord of perfect color, blue, purple, scarlet, white, and gold, and in that chord of color, permitting the continual play of the fancy of the writer in every species of grotesque imagination, carefully excluding shadow; the distinctive difference between illumination and painting proper, being, that illumination admits no shadows, but only gradations of pure color. (Ruskin, 1863, p. 103)

Searching at any cost for a similarity between the illuminated manuscripts of the early Middle Ages, also known as the Dark Ages, and the nineteenth century font called Grotesque, we see that it is possible only in the text body, with relatively equal characters in size and evenly distributed on the written surface in the first forms of manuscript, dating from late antiquity, with no spaces between words and little, or no, punctuation.

This similarity is not possible in the highly decorated initials that Ruskin considers when speaking of illumination, though the connection was made and is particularly obvious between these initials and the heteroclitite Roman decorations from whose discovery the term originates. At this time we can accept an attempt to define the grotesque as it appears to Jonathan Ruskin, a definition useful to justify the understanding of this aesthetic category as relevant for a contemporaneity apprehensible in its simultaneity. On page 97, the author describes the concept we are interested in like this:

A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in a bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character.¹

But this get-together of symbols, specific to grotesque in Ruskin's understanding, is nothing more than *symbolism* to McLuhan, (McLuhan, 1962, p. 267) and indeed, by the definition he gives a collocation, a parataxis of components representing insight by careful established ratios, but without a point of view or lineal connection or sequential order (McLuhan, 1962, p. 267) makes his opinion – that symbolism becomes “a kind of witty jazz” (McLuhan, 1962, p. 267) a “consummation of Ruskin's aspirations for the grotesque” (McLuhan, 1962, p. 267) – seem justified.

The term used by McLuhan to define symbolism, “parataxis”, is often used by theorists of culture to describe certain works of art in which a series of scenes or elements are displayed next to each other without any particular order or hierarchy. Examples can be found in Dadaist collages or in Rauschenberg's works and even in a wide range of music videos. The world we live in today is essentially symbolic, although the relationship between signifier and signified is far from being stable and unequivocal. However I subscribe McLuhan's opinion about the shock Ruskin would have had (McLuhan, 1962, p. 267) at contact with our contemporary art.



Figure 5. Hannah Höch – *Das schöne Mädchen/* The Beautiful Girl (1919-1920), private collection, Berlin



Figure 6. Robert Rauschenberg – *Monogram* (1955-1959) Moderna Museet, Stockholm

What is the connection between illumination, the fonts we have mentioned earlier, tattoos, implants and familiar names (though not in such an enumeration) such as: Hayao Miyazaki, Quentin Tarantino, Stelarc, Marilyn Manson, Francis Bacon, Frida Kahlo, Julio Cortesar and many others? None, at a first glance. However it seems that it exists and can be recognized without being very analytical on the creation of each of them, at the formal level that the creativity of each of those listed above is

¹ Ibidem, p. 97.

exploiting, *Grotesque* being even now what brings people closer and what allows us all to perceive them in simultaneity. It is the artistic space they all assume or to whom they are assimilated, of whom each of them speaks in animation, film, body art performance, music videos, painting, literature, etc.

About *grotesque* as a form of painterly expression in Roman antiquity, we can get a very good picture from the very accurate description made by Vitruvius¹, although his displeasure and disapproval towards this type of much appreciated art at the time he wrote *De Architectura* are very obvious: inasmuch as monsters are painted in the present day rather than objects whose prototype are to be observed in nature. For columns reeds are substituted; for pediments the stalks, leaves, and tendrils of plants; candelabra are made to support the representations of small buildings, from whose summits many stalks appear to spring with absurd figures thereon. Not less so are those stalks with figures rising from them, some with human heads, and others with the heads of beasts; because similar forms never did, do, nor can exist in nature. These new fashions have so much prevailed, that for want of competent judges, true art is little esteemed. How is it possible for a reed to support a roof, or a candelabrum to bear a house with the ornaments on its roof, or a small and pliant stalk to carry a sitting figure; or, that half figures and flowers at the same time should spring out of roots and stalks? And yet the public, so far from discouraging these falsehoods, are delighted with them, not for a moment considering whether such things could exist. Hence the minds of the multitude, misled by improper judges, do not discern that which is founded on reason and the rules of propriety. No pictures should be tolerated but those established on the basis of truth; and although admirably painted, they should be immediately discarded, if they transgress the rules of propriety and perspicuity as respects the subject²

For Raphael, as we have already had occasion to remark, that disapproval of grotesque did not matter, but we must not forget that Leon Battista Alberti's thesis on painting and perspective had since 1435 a strong influence on the epoch, and at least *De Re Aedificatoria*, which appeared in print in 1485 (the first treatise on architecture appeared in the Italian Renaissance, the first printed book on the subject) is based to a large extent on the above-mentioned work of Vitruvius, whose printing also followed in 1486. These works will contribute greatly to the formation of the official trend in Renaissance art, carrying along, over time, the disapproval for art forms that are not reflecting the comprehensible rational truth, disapproval that has been perpetuated until the nineteenth century.

¹ Pollio, Marcus Vitruvius (2012). *De Architectura, book VII, chapter 5*, translated into English by Bill Thayer, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Vitruvius/7*.html, recovered from the internet on May 19th, 2012.

² Ibidem.



Figure 7. Examples of Grotesque Decorations in Italian Art of the *Cinquecento*

Although disavowed in official circles, an art that is inconsistent with classical principles is carried out throughout the period of the Italian *Cinquecento*, where the grotesque becomes the defining aesthetic criterion. Imposed to art criticism by Eugenio Battisti,¹ the term *Anti-Renaissance – l’antirinascimento* – tends to revalue the entire complex of astrological and cosmological imagery, and having a magical-esoteric and allegorical-symbolical content of the Italian 16th century art, long silenced by art historians, but of which we know today that are a part of culture, mental universe and artistic production of nearly all great artists of the Renaissance. The eccentric and transgressive aspects of petulant, monstrous and misshapen that characterized the Italian Cinquecento were in an open polemic with the idea of order and balance of classicism, not explaining the inclusion of Anti-Renaissance under the umbrella of mannerism but quite the contrary. Baroque will assume this particular manner of expression as a way of life, although it formally substitutes, at least at an explicit level, ambivalence to the semantic polyvalence that characterized the Anti-Renaissance grotesque. The pictorial metaphor comes to counterbalance the persuasion of the uniform text, striving against the “world of visual perspective [...] of unified and homogeneous space”. (McLuhan, 1962, p. 136) This is evident in the visual simultaneity in the paintings of Rubens, in the symbolic ambivalence of light in Caravaggio, in the theatrical and the implausible aspect of Rembrandt’s *Night Watch*. Neoclassicism will bring the grotesque to light again under the same formal definition we find in Roman antiquity, that of mural decoration, but in this case we may ask whether this is not made with the intent to control, to neutralize, since a true outburst, cult and with great interest for the historical situation, will only occur in Romanticism. Academism and Realism will try each in its own way to restrain the unconscious compulsion of the human spirit, but Impressionists, out of an almost scientific desire to free the

¹ Battisti, Eugenio (1982). *Antirenașterea, cu un apendice de manuscrise inedite/ Antirenaissance, with an Special Manuscript Appendix*, translated by George Lăzărescu, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1982 after the original Italian edition published as *L’antirinascimento, con una appendice di manoscritti inediti*, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, Milano, 1962.

perception from habits that are not favourable to them, will release again this “monster” of simultaneity which will not be slowed throughout the twentieth century.



Figure 8. Andrea Mantegna, (1431 – 1506), Grotesque selfportrait 1465-1474, Camera degli sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua



Figure 9. Giorgio Andreoli, Gubbio 1525: plate decorated with “grotteschi” at Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza

As an alternative to discursiveness, to the unique point of view, to the uniformity, to the segmentation and homogeneity, grotesque exalts simultaneity, lack of perspective, mosaic, and individual. Reason loses its strength to penetrate a world of sensory simultaneity. The text loses its hegemony as a way of ordering human spirituality, making room for picture, sound and tactility in a struggle to take possession of the world which seems to convene as a perpetual state to those who no longer feel, from within it, the clear and overwhelming pressure of an authority. For some, this struggle, this confrontation becomes the only possible authority.



Figure 10. Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, oil on board, each 95 x 73.5 cm, Tate Gallery, London, 1944

Is it the world today in concordance with what Ruskin wanted for art? The works of Francis Bacon are grotesque, and, by examining his manner, one can retrieve that state of formal indeterminacy existing in medieval illumination.

Even at a conceptual level, the analysis of his work can reveal similarities with manuscript decoration art: there light is what transpires in the letter character; here the expression is the one taking control over image determining internal turmoil to formal expressions. And yet, I think that is not what Ruskin meant when proposing “full acceptance of the grotesque” as “an infinite good to mankind”. (Ruskin, 1863, p. 103)

Although prophetic, I do not think he was aware of the extent his prophecies will reach.



Figure 11. Francis Bacon *Painting* (1946)

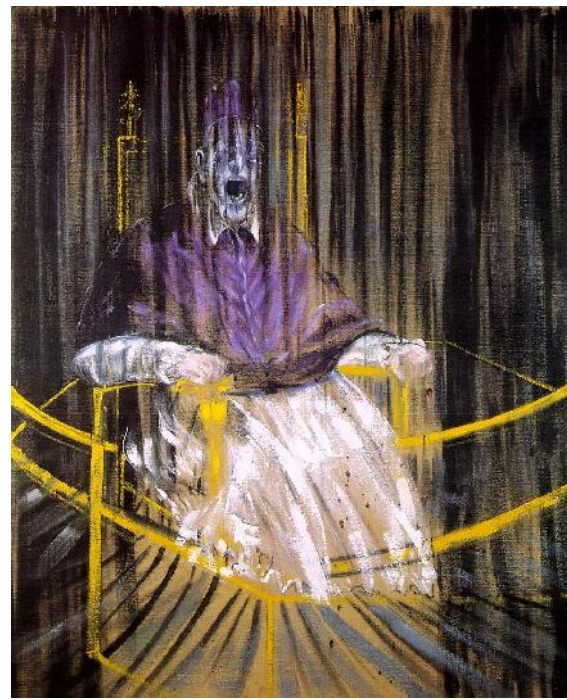


Figure 12. Francis Bacon „Study after Velazquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X” 1953, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa

An example of contemporary artistic expression is, in any case, the tattoo. As a body art form, it actually appeared in the early human stages of his individualization as a species, recovered by history. Originally associated with magic, meant for leaders, it becomes in time a form of disavowed individualization, reserved to disfavored categories of society, various criminals and prostitutes. Our century brings tattoo back into focus, after the twentieth century had made irrelevant the ordering limit of the official type of thinking and taking possession of reality. Television shows today highlight us the extent of this phenomenon in countries like the United States where democracy is a profession of faith.

But why talk of tattoos as a form of grotesque? Is this a form of art that meets the “criterion” of simultaneity? Yes, and I think it does it in many ways! More than that, it can even be seen as a particular type of response to Ruskin's desire to resurrect illumination. Illumination on the human body or human body regarded as illumination. An argument in this respect can be given by analysis of an ancient British population, the *Picts*, so called precisely because they had a custom to cover their

body with drawings¹ also found on a series of symbolic and ritual stones decorated in bas-relief. The similarity of these drawings, especially the ones in the second period, decorated with Christian and pagan symbols combined and the illumination on the *Book of Kells* is not random, even as decorations in this Gospel are not very far as origins from the decorations of Roman mosaics or Coptic art. The letter's *body* becomes once again that of the human being and the light, so important for those who developed the art of medieval manuscript in the dark ages, represents the light of the unconscious revealed by colorful drawings that adorn the skin. The simultaneity of being and art that dresses it cannot be circumvented. The visual is combined here with the tactile, a bodily sensation to which the intervention, painful to some extent, produced over the skin of the tattooed, is very important, even crucial for the individual's self-perception from that moment on. Tattoo represents an act of self-transformation, an assumption of a new corporeality, transcendence and transgression of the body limits, the spirit brought outward, visibly fixed with the help of the needle and the pigment, an obvious act of emancipation of the individual. At least at first glance.



Figure 13. Pictish Monument at Aberlemno, Class II, IX th century, Aberlemno kirkyard, Angus, Scotland

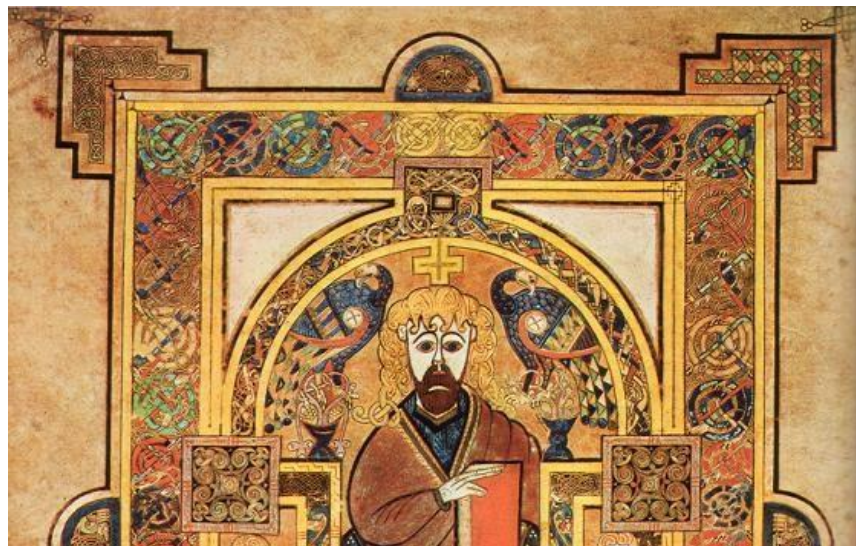


Figure 14. *The Book of Kells*, folio 32 v, *Hristos pe tron*, VIIIth century, upper side detail where resemblances with Aberlemno Class II can be observed

Those who find tattoo as a specific way of affirmation of individuality, of the nonconformity, are themselves tributary to a type of conformism. Tattoo, contrary to the desire to assert their freedom by which these people are propelled, does nothing else than designates them as targets! They become visible; can be easily sorted, catalogued, labeled! Freedom is an illusion! Trying to counteract a certain authority, a particular set of conventions, the constraints of a certain system, by changing the body appearance they fall in another constraint, following a different set of rules, but still rules. Accepting a certain assumption of reality at the expense of another, they adopt a perspective, a point of view; they

¹ “The most civilized of all these nations are they who inhabit Kent, which is entirely a maritime district, nor do they differ much from the Gallic customs. Most of the inland inhabitants do not sow corn, but live on milk and flesh, and are clad with skins. All the Britains, indeed, dye themselves with woad, which occasions a bluish color, and thereby have a more terrible appearance in fight. They wear their hair long, and have every part of their body shaved except their head and upper lip.” C. Julius Caesar, *Caesar's Gallic War*, book V, chapter 14, translated by W. A. McDevitte and W. S. Bohn, 1st Edition, New York. Harper & Brothers, 1869, <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi0448.phi001.perseus-eng1:5.14>, recovered from the internet on May 14th 2012.

make a choice, encoding their existence in a way to which they will remain tributary. Even when the outer appearance no longer sustains their insights on existence, the desire to return to the original shape will move them back into a space of the constraint that they initially wanted to evade.

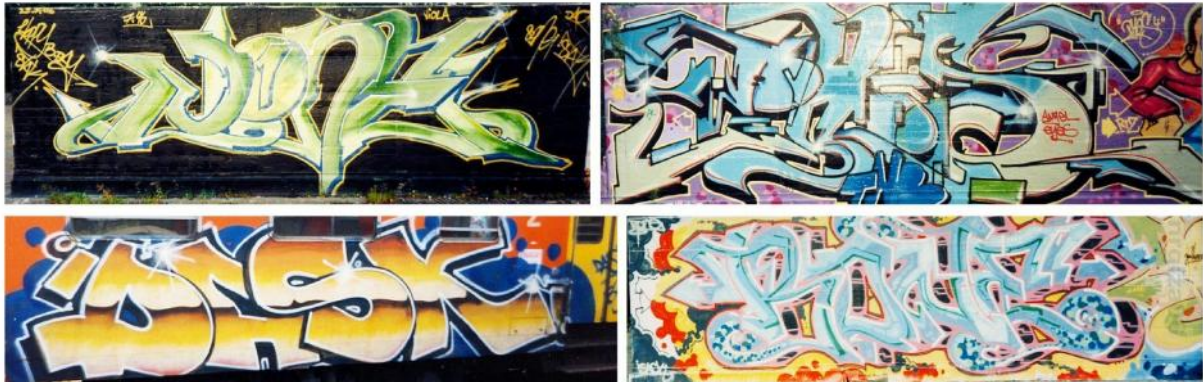


Figure 15. Examples of graffiti, relevant for the identity importance of formal aspect of used characters

Graffiti can also be perceived and understood by analogy with medieval illumination. The resemblance is more obvious than in the case of tattoo because of the dual function graffiti fulfils. Both as text letter and as the underground artist's personal brand, *graffiti* is seen by those who have analyzed this phenomenon as a form of re-taking possession of an area that the word “public” no longer defines credible:

The graffiti writer's goal is a stylization inseparable from the body, a stylization which, in its impenetrable "wildness," could surpass even linguistic reference and serve purely as a mark of presence, the concrete evidence of an individual existence and the reclamation of the environment through the label of the personal. (Stewart, 1988, p. 165)

In medieval manuscript a standardized writing – a text less interesting in shape than in the content of ideas it conveys – coexists along with those decorated initials whose utmost importance is relevant at the level of aesthetic shape, of how interaction with senses reveals its symbolic potential. In our century this is replicated in terms of undesirable “decorations” that *graffiti writers* join with ordered and standardized urban space, out of the need to add a symbolic supra-text to the official text of social conventions whose authority they do not recognize. Or rather, in the pages of medieval manuscripts, are recovered through illumination those meaning tendencies, the symbolic dimensioning sent underground by the dominant discourse of the time, the Christian discourse not being able to annihilate but only to reduce at the level of underground murmur the voice of pagan beliefs in the assimilated people.



Figure 16. Graffiti in Barcelona, a significant example of the grotesque that characterizes this type of art

For those who would consider this relation between illumination, tattoo and graffiti, a forced interpretation, a speculation without any scientific basis, a widening of the above argument on the Saxon people called Picts could be necessary.

Those who inserted the illuminated characters in medieval manuscripts are Irish monks, representatives of a Celtic or Insular Christianity, and their vision is recognizable both at the level of the carved stelae, of the goldsmiths' work and at the level of the decoration of manuscripts that we have in mind. Although the Irish are a Celtic population different from Picts, the latter seem to have maintained “wide connections and parallels” (Foster, 1996, p. 17) with neighbouring groups. Because the naturalistic representations of noble Picts carved on monumental stones come from the time of their conversion to Christianity there is no physical evidence that this population would have practised tattooing.

As some authors maintain:

The practice (of tattooing)¹ became popular and continued to spread within the military until it was banned in the third century by the Christian Emperor Constantine who maintained that it violated God's handiwork.

Centuries later the Anglo-Saxons continued to practice this ancient form of decoration as members of the nobility bore tattoos that, most commonly, displayed pledges of devotion to loved ones or had religious significance. [...] From the eighth through the tenth centuries, western tattooing was again banned by the Church as a form of devilry and because it disfigured the body created in God's image. (Sanders, Angus, 2008, p. 13)

What cannot be overlooked is that the name that designates men and women represented on stelae without any obvious depictions of tattoos is derived from the Latin word “picti” which initially appears in a panegyric written by Eumenius in 297² and is considered to refer to “painted or tattooed people” in Latin “pictus” meaning “painted”, then confirmed in *Cronica de origine antiquorum*

¹ My addition to the original text.

² Arntzenius, Henricus Joannes; Arntzenius, Joannes (the Younger.); de La Baune, Jacques; Schwarz, Christian Gottlieb (1828). *Panegyrici Veteres Ex Editionibus Chr. G. Schwarzii Et Arntzeniorum Cum Notis Et Interpretatione* [reprinted from La Baune's Edition]/ *The Story of Chr. G. and Schwarzii Arntzeniorum and Macbeth. Interpretations, the old edition. Usum Delphini, Variis Lectionibus, Notis Variorum, Recensu Editionum Et Codicum Et Indicibus Locupletissimis Accurate Recensiti/ Dolphins, the Code*. London, p. 1291.

Pictorum (a medieval source probably dating from the thirteenth century, then compiled together with other documents in the manuscript Poppleton, in the fourteenth century) where we find the following statement:

„Picti propria lingua nomen habent a picto corpore; eo quod, aculeis ferreis cum atramento, variarum figurarum stingmate annotantur” which translated would read: “The Picts take their name in their own tongue from their painted bodies; this is because, using sharp iron tools and ink, they are marked by tattoos of various shapes.”¹

We can now accept a link between tattoos and sculptures in bas-relief, between the latter and the manuscript illumination in the Dark Ages, the formal link is easily recognized in the present interlaced decorations, both in the manuscript of Kells, the one in Durow or the one in Lindisfarne, interlacement found both in Roman mosaics or fabrics of the Copts, but also in Pictish monuments from Aberlemno, pertaining to class II, which give the name of so-called *Celtic knots*, decorative motif strongly speculated in contemporary tattoos.



Figure 17. Relevant Images for the Interlaced Decorative Model Used in the Illuminations of the Book of Kells

If the world's most tattooed man Lucky Diamond Rich can no longer provide a relevant image for the similarity between tattoos and illumination, it certainly is a great example of personified grotesque, like the woman designated as having the most piercings, Elaine Davidson.

¹ “The Picts take their name in their own tongue from their painted bodies; this is because, using sharp iron tools and ink, they are marked by tattoos of various shapes.” recovered from Daily Campello Art News, art critic and American artist F. Lennox Campello’s blog



Figure 18. Lucky Diamond Rich, the World's Most Tattooed Man



Figure 19. Elaine Davidson, the woman designated as having the most piercings

And if even now the term grotesque does not appear as characteristic of those dealing with changing their body appearance today, it should be noted that the term grotesque in architecture refers to stone carved figures similar by their bizarre and monstrous appearance to those of the gargoyles with which they share the roofs of Gothic cathedrals, but different in lacking the utility as drain-spouts that only the latter have. Where is the connection to body modification art? The images speak for themselves advocating mental association between the two art forms and from the formal similarities, obvious at the sensory level, the meaning tendencies seem to sprout bearing witness to the power of subconscious accumulation which reverberates through the body limit transgressed in the process of asserting a shocking personality.



Figure 20. Grotesque human figure, resulting from body modification techniques including tattoo, body piercing and transdermal implants



Figure 21 Carved grotesque figure, on the cathedral Notre-Dame in Paris

What is the purpose of making an analogy between a specific form of medieval artistic expression and forms of art of Antiquity, Anti-Renaissance and Contemporaneity? Is there a constructive consequence of such an approach?

In the way we used it, the purpose of this analogy is to discourage the discussions on the artistic phenomenon crisis, a crisis obvious only in a discursive perception of art, resulting from the analysis of a single evolutionary line, of only one manifested level of reality, ignoring its other dimensions.

If we can give a definition of art, if we can circumscribe this phenomenon by counting, sorting and categorizing some of its effects which, for various reasons, are closest to us, then it becomes obvious that what lies outside these limits, subsumed to the non-artistic, will bring what we accept as artistic, through formal proliferation, through the abundance of manifestation, in a state of tension, overstraining the categorical limitation and, by this isolation, closer to death.

The extensive use of the term illumination in the analysis of grotesque may seem absurd to those who cannot see as obvious the resemblances between artistic creations of the different periods pointed in this exposition, but let us not forget that one characteristic of the grotesque is absurdity, an absurdity which can be assumed as a working method when breaking-out from under the influence of linear and discursive reason is intended. As the ever larger phenomenon of globalization produces in the human being the feeling of an inability to assume a single guideline of existence the attempt of a simultaneous, integrative perception of art, one coming from within, becomes more and more relevant.

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