

# Discursive Reason and Understanding in Modern Knowledge Communities

## The Influence of “Networked” Interpretations on the Narrative Reconfiguration of Reality

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### 1. The Power of Network Interpretations. The Imperative Meaning of the Phrase “We Think This Way”

**M**ODERN MAN builds an image of himself through the insistent call for social recognition. Of course, the desire for status has a history behind it, but in no other era has it aroused so much interest in simulacra and simulations.<sup>1</sup> The modern universe is imagocentric and, by virtue of this imagocentrism, the *eikôn* receives more attention than the Idea.<sup>2</sup> Our civilization (*The Society of the Spectacle*<sup>5</sup>) is stimulating in relation to the production of “masks” (*phantasmata*) precisely because it has the possibility to pay them better than ever. The field of scientific research (as part of the cultural field) is marked by the struggle for recognition. It is constituted as an effect of the entry of symbolic capital (the prestige of knowledge as power) into the economic circuit. The process of social recognition of values is deeply disturbed by the complexity and perfectionism of the public projection of the self. In this sense, modern man lives between “appearances.” This observation, trivialized by terminological confusion, offered, in addition to a series of threats (a good opportunity for deep theoretical debates), some applied research opportunities: we became the engaged spectators to the proliferation of the market of generic action strategies with the public.<sup>6</sup> Classical science seems ailing and on the verge of dying: Schools were conquered by trainers of skills and the theory appears boring and almost useless as the preamble to “learning a trade.” How did this contempt arise and, in particular, why did Ideas (in the Platonic sense) become cheap goods?

The possibility of public (mass) communication of forms of knowledge that were no longer action-oriented (or at least claimed to be) allowed common sense to formulate simple interrogations about their practical value. At the moment we do not have a convincing thematic discourse to meet these expectations and I think this is explainable.<sup>7</sup> When someone builds a relationship with the world, they do so by pushing boundaries of understanding of which they are aware or not. The fact that more and more

people today are regular users of technology encourages *volens nolens* a mass contamination—an unprecedented spread of the demand for control. This control is interpreted as evidence of the ability to understand cause-effect relationships. The briefest examination, however, shows the lack of consistency of this pseudo-logical report: an elevator does not go up *because* someone pushed a button. We can, however, have reasonable suspicions about the fact that someone who might benefit from the fact that we believe this will do so. One can see here how the fear that the school might break away from practice (and consequently be overrun by useless abstractions) has something to do with the fear of the papacy regarding the harm that certain books<sup>8</sup> might cause to the soul. It does not take too much field research to find that the social environment is still used as a tool of “reform” of the “man who lost his world”<sup>9</sup> (traumatically lacking in community experience and worried about his report of fundamental discontinuity in relation to nature). Is modern society a model of “democratization” of science and culture or a complex regulator of norms that “puts order” in the field of creative production of science and art?

Until recently, man was pursuing the understanding of the world with the foreseeable intention of increasing their chances of survival. With the advances made by the techniques of mass communication and the increase of the scope of connection at the level of the “global village,” the value of information use is not decided by the common method of adequacy to things.<sup>10</sup> This context is taken over by modern people opportunistically: in the past only the king could change white to black (he had the exclusive authority to interpret the *de facto* events), whereas now, amid the dissolution of the monopolistic schemes of configuring authority, any clown can become (provisionally) king. The accreditation of the *network interpretations* based on which decisions are made thereafter have a relation of circumstance with truth, but an essential and tangible relation with the power.<sup>11</sup> The social organization functions usurpably in relation to a reality that may be inconvenient to its ideological administrators. They eliminate the most relevant evidence through repeated batches of *network interpretations*. The recirculation of *escort narratives* (in the virtual environment) determines the conceptual relocation of the facts and channels the interest of the meaning of their public reading. This narrative reconfiguration of reality that takes place under the pressure of network interpretations solidifies at the level of the collective mind and can become history. In the same order of reasoning, knowledge never prepares resources that allow collective evictions from the circle of politicization.<sup>12</sup> Modern knowledge is politicized, but to understand correctly the meaning of this concept is not enough to interpret it within the horizon of possible ideological manipulations that are sometimes suitable, for example, for public education (financed from the public budget). The act of knowledge in itself is not innocent and there are few exceptions that offer hope that this can change. The scientist does not come into the field of knowledge totally devoid of personal expectations, methodological preferences or hypothetical affinities<sup>13</sup>. To put it more clearly: the social inclusion of the scientist is strongly conditioned by the individual undertaking of common procedures of “objective” accreditation of the instruments with which his scientific thinking operates. The process of understanding that he can prove is performed on the horizon of this organization that essentially marks his work. The orga-

nizational man has consented to the politicization of his critical judgment once he has taken the proper procedures for seeking the truth. Of course, one can object to this finding with the observation that there can be critical takeovers, but it is clear that we should not be deceived—in the end, either Galileo or Tesla (whom I invoke only in the face of notoriety) changed fundamental narratives in their time. In the body of the “sciences” will they change that significantly? Probably not. Organizations function in modern societies as power multipliers. They are interested in any form of research that can strengthen their status. In modern society, the results of scientific research are redistributed selectively and are packaged as network interpretations. The advancement of the leading sciences does not only affect their specific field—they are capable of triggering profound changes throughout society. It is precisely for this reason that the act of knowledge can be regarded as an act of narrative reconfiguration of reality. Scientific theories have, beyond their true value, a potential for the symbolic reform of authority structures. They are of institutional interest because they have confirmed their use value—beyond domain relevance or truth value. Let us not deduce or infer from this that the institutions politicize science itself<sup>14</sup>—this is less interesting in its theoretical explanatory stage—but it systematically deals with the organization (“management”) of the results of scientific research because from here it extracts the “rhizomatic”<sup>15</sup> legitimacy of the functioning mechanisms and, at the limit, the reason of its own existence.

Ancient or more recent history has proven that no science provides “instructions for responsible use.” Not even in our age is there any exception when we look at how science findings are used. However, unlike other historical periods, modernity exhibits greater ambitions. It proposes global ethical hierarchies knowing well that, through the force of the context (the technological advances), it has, more than ever, the means to impose them on a mass scale. The power and scale of the modern institutions allowed for the ritualization of the procedures and engendered generalized uniform mechanisms for qualifying the social action. For any human action, there is an institution that can certify and norm performance indicators.<sup>16</sup> The permanent concern of the “organizational man” to obtain validation on the basis of external evaluations is not without consequences at the level of daily life. As social beings we want (strive) to do *the right thing*.<sup>17</sup> What is the basis of this availability today and how is it that (despite the broad democratic freedoms) this conformity still remains widespread?

We can make some substantive observations, without proposing a definitive answer to this question. As social beings, we are not interested in getting out of the game (well accessorized from a technical point of view) of the valorization of the world within the perspective obtained by connecting to the network.<sup>18</sup> I am not quite sure that, as David Bakan (criticizing English empiricism) believes, we have enough evidence to consider that human individuals should be understood as “part of a thinking community.”<sup>19</sup> The current philosophical effort of contextually anchoring the rationality of interpretations can give the feeling that by the possible process of decentralization of the interpretive authority it would be possible to decide on a functional model of mutual annihilation of prejudices. I do not think that things stand that way, so long as it is perfectly possible for someone to be right and to have an adequate understanding of the world even when few people, or perhaps no one, would be ready to agree with him. I think that,

although more modest in terms of metaphysics, it would be fairer to find that once we join a “community of thought” we are given the opportunity to certify by consensus the normative validity of our actions. But who would need this if our actions were not carried out under the invisible pressure that the constant power of the social institutions exerts?

“I think” draws its social-human relevance from the authority (seconded by fear) of “we think that way.” Ultimately, the fact of thinking (by yourself) does not confer on anyone a form of superiority in itself and an advantage that can be directly exploited in social practice. On the other hand, “we think this way” carries with it the prestige that subtextually “we can”<sup>20</sup> entails. The interpretation of the facts (common, but also of history) takes place within the authoritarian horizon of the “escort discourse” and any understanding of the world becomes possible only from the accreditation of this discourse “on the network.”<sup>21</sup> The new *thinking community* supported by the practice of network interpretations the prison dimension.<sup>22</sup> Despite the fact that we view modernity as an area of freedom, we can easily see that people do not have the practical possibility of living their lives based on choices made by judgments born on the horizon of personal experiences and preferences. The reconfiguration of the image of the world by evacuating the subjective confrontation with daily reality takes place within this community animated by the illusion of relevance through quantity and held together by the fear of making mistakes. An illegitimate form of procedural export from the political space can be identified here. “Thinking communities” are key sources of network culture and this has far more serious consequences than is generally believed.<sup>23</sup> Culture, as a living mirror of social interactions, is a major factor in the narrative reconfiguration of historical reality.<sup>24</sup> Any understanding of reality takes place with the help of this grid, which allows for a particular reading of the facts and allows for their consensual labeling. Social interaction constrains, and this is not good or bad in itself. The products of this dynamic process, however, demand an examination of their impact on the lived life, and in this sense Jurgen Habermas theorizes the communicative action. The reconstruction of social reality through conversation and narration is not a phenomenon specific to modern society. Despite this, “stories about the world” today involve bigger threats than ever: they can be devastating by the extent of the seduction, because now we have all the means to globalize the “sleep of reason.” For this sleep, as it turned out, eventually leads to a lack of freedom.<sup>25</sup>

It is obvious how the decision to do something (or not) most often keeps us away from the field of preferences derived by internalizing an experience that the individual experiences directly. As a man, I do not decide on the calm horizon of reason that feeds on the lived fact. My reason is working with cultural instruments the control of which remains eminently ideological.<sup>26</sup> A “framework philosophy” that I cannot separate from knowledge inevitably marks the judgment on which I am to take action. “In this world of action, my conscience is driven by pragmatic reasons, that is, my attention is essentially determined by what I do, why I did something, or what I plan to do.”<sup>27</sup> The decisions that one can make in our daily life follow the path of conformity in a world where personal history or drama traces the path of free thinking. A discursive archive of acts allows us to imagine the possible field of human actions: as human beings we cannot choose in the absence of the pressure exerted by the dominant social narrative.

The judgment (of taste) is reformulated repeatedly in the increasingly accessible process of *evaluation in the network*.<sup>28</sup>

Social networks have recently undergone considerable analyses. It is unlikely that we can concentrate on them without cutting off the hierarchy of accused topics with direct impact on everyday life. I am convinced that one can now speak of *narrative constructs* with a direct impact on individual freedoms. Stories are instrumented in a symbolic universe of power where individuals initiate and maintain alliances. Any good “story” is politically towed, which is why many analyses worry us about the impact of possible manipulations on democratic procedures. But this is only the visible part of a much larger iceberg. In fact, perhaps more worrying in the immediate perspective should be the influence of *interpretations in the network* on the narrative reconfiguration of reality. People identify at the level of common sense any attempt to ideologically attach to events (when “the king is naked” any child is able to see this), but it is incomparably harder to give up the benefits of consuming “network truth.” The civilization of the show (Llosa) as an expression of failed modernity<sup>29</sup> enters a new stage.

Born in a form of understanding of the reality that precedes the interpretations accessible through individual emotions and experiences, modern man is constrained to accept new challenges: he must question again the meaning of his own freedom, and he must do so especially now, when it is not enough to stretch out one’s hands to clamp one’s chains on their feet. European thinking does not need new historical reasons to question the procedural schemes by which it conducts judgments and legitimizes social actions. If there is a “European way of thinking,” is it time to ask ourselves whereto this will lead historically and what kind of man will assert himself in Europe given the new technological context and the advances in the life sciences?

## 2. The Narrative Foundations of Network Rationality. Procedural Man and the “Social Objectivity” of the Thinking Communities.

**W**ESTERN DEMOCRACIES retain the faith of Max Weber’s encouragement (in *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*), more precisely, the focus of capitalism on procedures. At the level of the collective mind, there still exists the opinion that knowledge is the product of instrumental methodologies well-calibrated conventionally: a consensual form of certification of values (and of truth value in particular) works in everyday practice as a basis for decision-making action. Of course, the modern ways of achieving the consensus have the respectability that the short-term exercise of the dialogue confers. But this is only the consequence of a reflex of our civilization marked by *political correctness* and which matters too little: whoever or anyone seems willing to hear our voice, but we rarely find someone who truly listens to what we have to say.

The European way of thinking imports trans-domainially a template that has proven to be viable in the political space (the model of the democratic decision) and continues

to lend credit to this template by silencing any other counterfactual observations.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, the “European way of thinking” can be regarded as a symbolic good (usable as an exchange value) and simultaneously, a brevity of social procedures. The European way of thinking shows “how we should think” and thereby largely controls “what we should think.” No stylistic exercise of language can change the redoubtable character of this finding: the procedures promise predictable results.

Regardless of the reasons that once stood for Weber’s call, until the unprecedented emergence and development of mass media communication, there was no practical possibility to achieve extended forms of “community objectification” of rationality criteria. Post-modernity (as a space for network identification) has, however, renewed the antechamber of values—the judgment is now extracting its *rational character* by relying (apparently ethically) on the anonymity and lack of convergence of interests guaranteed by the extensive *thinking communities* that social networks configure. The *new objectivity* (possible due to the advancement of technologies for the exposition of private opinion) is based on the crushing force of majorities that at other times could not even dream of it: the networks have given birth to a form of “group science” decoupled abruptly from the traditional forms of knowledge.<sup>31</sup> The first consequence of this fact is paradoxical: modern man, interested in social inclusion and performance, rationally responds to this requirement of objectification by consensus assuming in principle the procedural instrument that he will use later, regardless of his specific concerns and independent of the particular nature of the horizon of knowledge in which his actions would take place. The procedural society is the democratic cell of the organizational man. And whether we like it or not, the time has come to ask ourselves whether or not the European way of thinking has made this cage harder than Rousseau imagined.

The evaluation in polycentric structures of the degree of rationality of the social action could be legitimized hurriedly by the hypothetical democratization of the access to knowledge. Of course, only an unmotivated blindness would allow any contemporary to challenge the unprecedented widening of the access to information. However, it is not very clear how the anarchic storage of such a consistent information archive can be converted into a useful understanding in the order of life. The stupor that superinformation provokes has attracted a cohort of spiritual “masters” on account of whom various specialists and technocrats (opportunistically) make their careers. The claim of relevance of the recipes of the performance increases most often asymptotically with the incompetence of the “master.” As in this mismatch of simulacra the proof of failure is difficult to obtain in a timely manner, an immediate decline of this phenomenon cannot be predicted. One can, however, respond to the bad habits acquired from consensus hunters—objecting to the right to opinion (invoked rather boldly) with the observation that the opinion (if not recognized as a simple judgment of taste) is expected to be based on facts. The practice of consensual substantiation is the cornerstone of the *procedural society*.

It is only in our time that this proceduralist liberalism has made its effects felt. Corporate actors<sup>32</sup> (institutions, businesses, schools) become the relevant agents of human interactions and this changes the nature of the decisions that individuals make in ordinary life situations. Institutions have become the main executive power and once they are born

we can imagine that they receive a kind of autonomy that exceeds even the will and the designs of the one who devised them. I don't think we should deceive ourselves. They are not, for this reason, strangers to group interests or human passions.

To describe bureaucratization, Weber uses a metaphor that speaks of “a casing as strong as the steel of submission.”<sup>33</sup> The advances made in the field of modern mass communication technologies allow us today to introduce a few corrections: it is true, the “new objectivity” has put gloves on the steel fists. But the (consensual) *thinking communities* are no less frightened because there is no one behind them holding a whip. Conforming thinking is the modern expression of the individual's attempt to motivate (before others and before one's conscience) the fear of freedom.<sup>34</sup> The concept of rationality—now re-validated by authorization in the network—is used to fool the canvas of a responsibility that allows the individual to tolerate the old hierarchical social structures concealed under institutional masks. The objectivity of the thinking communities” has, despite the modern aspect, the same equivocal aspect that the notion of “general will” maintains with Rousseau. Without the pretense of diagnosing a phenomenon whose unfolding continues to surprise, we can identify a minimal set of problems the practical interest of which cannot be silenced:

1. The empirical import of the validation practices of the interpretations of the scientific fact in the social context (borrowed from the modern practices of political systems) tends to produce perverse effects. The emergence of presumptive *thinking communities*<sup>35</sup> illustrates this danger symptomatically (finding the truth through democratic mechanisms). We are already in full process of tribalization<sup>36</sup> of the knowledge forms of expression. The ritualization of the “ways of truth” and the conditional sharing of benefits is sufficiently proved by the bureaucratic model of access to academic positions.<sup>37</sup>

2. Network validation of the interpretation of research results in advanced sciences<sup>38</sup> brings scientific ideas in the situation of competing in the ideological framework. The ideas, once entered into the circuit of *the economy of symbolic goods*,<sup>39</sup> acquire an aspect of value certificates (money, as a sign of value). The prestige<sup>40</sup> that the *media intellectuals* enjoy proves how great is the danger of suffocating knowledge with practical value through marketing, advertising talk, and role-play(ing)<sup>41</sup> games.

3. The insistent pouring in into the network of “scientific impressions” formulated in the most accurate specialized language (drafted by *status* authority<sup>42</sup>) ensures the narrative basis of opening some fields of research with an uncertain scope. They are made possible by the coexistence of “mutual admiration companies” about which Pierre Bourdieu asserted that they are “small sects closed in their esotericism, while showing signs of new solidarity between the artist and critic.”<sup>43</sup> The tendency to “invent” objects of scientific research is sufficiently proven by the enormous amount of doctoral theses lacking any usable content that the academic environment faces.

4. The discursive recurrence of “thinking with the public” shows the serious decline of critical thinking efforts and the resuscitation in academia of impact advertising technologies. The public cliché has replaced the content discourse. The insistence of the University to *train* and to *form competences*, respectively, is a responsible part of the process of accentuated identity loss of the new generations<sup>44</sup> that opportunistically adopted the *escort speech*: “political correctness” is a *sine qua non* condition of dialogue, to such an

extent that the concern for the truth remains formal. The entry of knowledge into the era of scholarly exposition is occasioned by the possibility of selling the theory (abstractions that were not confronted with practical evidence of value) on the market of the economy of symbolic goods and make social profit.

5. *The procedural society* is the natural effect of the ancestral effort to preserve the best chances of survival that the individual pursues for himself (and his descendants). As a historical answer, this society is marked by the provisional. If we do not have much to gain by asking ourselves “why did we get here?” it is urgent to look for the best reasons for which some procedures can improve the human condition, while others need to be removed because they endanger the world we live in and want to our children to live in. Debates on the environment and simulations on global economic and social developments for the next 50 years show how imperative is the meditation on the nature and quality of the procedures that will shape a social reality (of the institutions) that we have no real possibility to refuse.

There are, nonetheless, several things that can be of importance in this context. The fact that we live our lives by constantly relating ourselves to the reality of a non-existent will (that of the institutions<sup>45</sup>) is not bad in itself, but rather a negotiated acceptance of the effects of the (post)modern process of tribalization.<sup>46</sup> But the one who thinks we can close the gate of history in the face of evil by claiming that *systems* work in our place and better than us talks in *Grands Recits*. And this danger of the narrative reconfiguration of reality is incomparably greater nowadays because the modern world has all the means to educate/inform its citizens and less and less determination to teach people to think on their own.



## Notes

1. To be seen further in the text, Pierre Bourdieu.
2. The *rhizome* is the new center for the production and public authorization of the truth, that is, the epistemological mechanism of consensus; consensus has become the amniotic fluid in which all the truths and values produced by (rhizomatic) network thinking live. Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F., *Mille Plateaux*, 1980, Minuit, Paris. See also Deleuze, Gilles, *Rhizome*, 1976, Minuit, Paris, p. 25. “A *rhizome* will never cease to be connected to semiotic intertwinings, power organizations, various occurrences that refer to the arts, sciences, social struggles” (my translation). Deleuze insists that *rhizomatic systems* should not be associated as an image with the root of a tree because they have distinctly different functions and characteristics.
3. Baudrillard J., *Simulacre și simulare*, 2008, Idea Design, Cluj, p. 114.
4. The reference is here obviously Platonist (I developed the subject in another work, *The Concept of Eikon with Plato. To Watch and to Master*, 2005, University of Oradea Publishing House).
5. Debord, G. *Societatea spectacolului*, 2001, Editura EST.
6. The “outwardly” oriented man relates “in a technical way” to the world: the illusion of objectivity is maintained by sanctifying the procedures. The epidemic of trainers for anything is just the iconic symptom of the matter. Skills trainers can train anyone— but it’s not very clear what they can teach us. The classical paradigm of the authentic being has been abolished: who still believes today with Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*) that the feeling of



existence is authentic only to the extent that it does not include anything from what others have told me that I have to be?

7. I wouldn't want to seem malicious, but I don't think anyone, no matter how well-intentioned, would dare to explain how we use differential calculus in the physics of an individual who is having some difficulty even when asked to quickly do a simple sequence of arithmetic operations.
8. *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* has undergone additions until the beginning of the last century.
9. David Bakan uses the phrase "epistemological loneliness" to describe how the procedural man (the phrase belongs to me) feels isolation from the world.
10. *Adaequatio rei et intellectus*. If we do not agree, by any chance, with the relocation of the already classic thesis that "social facts are things."
11. Deleuze talks about "flat multiplicities," a-subjective and a-significant. Leaving behind the image of the tree-world that dominated Western thinking seems imminent. Interpretation networks, restructured by the possibilities offered by the new technologies (difficult to anticipate at the moment 1976 when Deleuze wrote the text), are based on a rhizomatic development model. The rhizome does not owe anything to any generative or structural model. It may not even be clear how the rhizome propagates. However, we can say that, in the rhizomatic model, a kind of de-territorialized conjugation of ideas flows takes place. Deleuze, G., *Rhizome*, p.10-11.
12. Michel Foucault remarked, not accidentally at all, the prison character of such a respected institution in the order of knowledge, the school (aligned with the army and the hospital).
13. Like any man, the scientist wants to live and seeks to sleep with a full stomach. The "stomach" of the scientist is often in a state of contempt for dishes from the "rich men's table," but he can never withstand such truffles as scientific prestige, creative pride or academic fame.
14. This stage seems to be left behind, even if, as has been seen, history is sometimes repeated... In any case, the *rhizomatic model* of establishment appears as a form of rebellion against the hierarchical model of State (with its image of Tree) that gave then the scheme for a thinking model (to which it also lends the terminology "philosopher king," "court of reason," "republic of spirits," etc.).
15. Unlike centered (even poly-centered) systems with hierarchical communication and predetermined connections, the rhizome is an a-centered, non-hierarchical, non-significant system, without General, devoid of organizing memory and centrally automated... (according to Deleuze, G., *Rhizome*, p. 18).
16. We constantly receive "marks (grades)" for whatever we decide to do. The fear of negative evaluations usually leads to anticipations and defensive behaviors.
17. Rollo May believes that we can even speak of a "neurotic personality of our time"—"an outward-oriented organizational man pattern" (according to May, R., *Descoperirea fiin ei*, 2013, trans. Victor Popescu, Ed Trei, p. 21).
18. "Prestige and political power are quantified today in the perspective of the scope and the functional quality of the connection to a dynamic network of influencing the values that determine the dynamics of a society." Sorin Borza, "Managementul conectării și sursele ideologice ale puterii," *Sfera Politicii*, 3 (145) / 2010, pages: 7380, at [www.cceol.com](http://www.cceol.com).
19. David Bakan, "Clinical Psychology and Logic," 1956, in *American Psychologist*, p. 656. Of course, this does not in any way exclude the fact that they could be part of a community of interests that defends them by using "thinking with a public" as a means (see for details Borza S., *Modernitatea ratată*, 2015, Eikon, Bucharest).
20. Kierkegaard pointed out with arguments that "truth exists only to the extent that the individual produces it in action." This action responds with priority, nevertheless, to the signals of the *Umwelt*, of the world of biological determinations and starts.

21. There is an old language cliché that the Romanian language has kept precisely because it has never lost its timeliness: to be “in line with the world” is not a project of our time, but its frameworks have undergone spectacular changes.
22. Cialdini, R., *Persuasiune*, 2013, trans. Mihai Pascu, Publica, Bucharest. According to Cialdini, we are inclined to respect a person’s suggestion if we perceive him/her as a credible expert (the principle of authority), if we see him/her as a trusted friend (the principle of sympathy), if we have the feeling that we owe him/her something (the principle of reciprocity) and if what that person says or does overlaps with his own matrix of previous beliefs, that is, it does not contradict what we already think or believe (the principle of consistency). Cialdini also states that we are sometimes tempted to make choices just because we consider them popular (the principle of consensus) and that they will bring us a valuable resource (the principle of rareness).
23. We can, of course, trivialize functional illiteracy or the appetite of some people for the common products of subculture, considering the matter an element of personal choice. But it is not like that at all. I would suggest starting from here the comparative sociological studies that measure the propensity for violence of people who listen to musical pieces that contain verbal violence in relation to the control group of the ordinary population. Without solid statistical evidence I would bet without hesitation that the crime rate among them is significantly higher and the potential for conflict is, among the people in the group, quite high.
24. The common perception of everyday life occurs under the pressure of the “reading grids” that dominate the society at one point. Because this grid has strong ethical connotations it cannot suppress implicit ideological sympathies. Only adherence to a certain ideological “alphabet” makes possible a consensual reading of the immediate.
25. We are called to note the lack of our constraints: but this is not what we are afraid of—we are not free as long as the culture of our freedom is waning in the field of entertainment. “Fun” occupied with its corpulence and sensuality the whole field of freedom of modern man. Otherwise, we should not be worried—the institutions look after our wellbeing and freedom. This obviously is a toxic cliché.
26. “The value of a piece of information varies proportionally to the intensity and extent of the connection it determines. For information acquires value only if it presents an interest and the interest is the result of a political management of information, the connection has become an indispensable accessory of power. Any power remains alive as long as it is capable of producing, managing and ideologically legitimizing public hierarchies and community interests.” Sorin Borza, “Managementul conectării și resursele ideologice ale puterii,” *Sfera Politicii*, 3 (145)/2010, pages: 7380, at [www.ceeol.com](http://www.ceeol.com).
27. Peter Berger, *Construirea socială a realității*, 2010, p. 39.
28. “The degree of public visibility is a primary condition of the ability to propose values. The control of the continuous communication channels becomes the major power stake. The Internet and television have become privileged sources of daily information and, implicitly, the primary factor of influence. The ultraconnected society has become the globalized environment where rivalries of a specific character are manifested.” Sorin Borza, “Managementul conectării și resursele ideologice ale puterii,” *Sfera Politicii*, 3 (145)/2010, pages: 7380, at [www.ceeol.com](http://www.ceeol.com). These considerations are congruent with the better known “*hybris* hypothesis”: pride, confidence in the awards and the recognition received can cause some men (of science) to emotionally judge the results of applied research.
29. Cf. Borza, S., *Modernitatea ratată*, 2015, Eikon, Bucharest.
30. It is not very difficult to find situations in which this model has perpetuated conservative positions in science, maintaining close links with the academic prestige, but having no connection with the truth.

31. In a slightly different context, Helmut Wilke (*Democracy in Zeiten der Konfusion*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2015) blames the separation of democracy from the meritocracy it promised.
32. Coleman, J. S., *Foundations of Social Theory*, 1994, Harvard University Press.
33. In original *Ein stablhartes Gebause der Horigkeit*.
34. Fromm's somewhat abrupt observation goes almost unnoticed today: "The act of disobedience as an act of freedom is the beginning of reason." Fromm, E., *Frica de libertate*, 1998, Teora, Bucharest, p. 37.
35. I would like to avoid being deceived by terminology here: a community of knowledge does not equal a "community of thought."
36. Michel Maffesoli.
37. Criteria met by obtaining scores with highly specialized calculation formulas—a purely quantitative calibration of scientific contributions makes it almost impossible to access the system from outside.
38. Validation within a rhizomatic model (Deleuze). The tendency to standardize epistemological narratives and the emergence of an Ego-Authoritarian without a concrete physiognomy, of a "we think" constructed as a *rhizome*.
39. Bourdieu P., *Economia bunurilor simbolice*, 1986, Meridiane, Bucharest.
40. Studies conducted in different cultures (Michihiro Kandori in Japan and Peyton Young in the USA) have shown that "respecting a norm is also perceived as a way to prove to others something important about one's own person" (Gatens, M., 2001, p. 196) and may have nothing in common with reasons such as financial profit.
41. We can all agree that creative discovery necessarily means a tolerable degree of *deviance*, understood here as a refusal to enlist. However, as Kahnemann points out, "what the media channels choose to relate corresponds to their view of what the general public prefers at one point. It is no accident that totalitarian political regimes exert substantial pressure on independent media sources." Kahnemann, D., *Gândire rapidă, gândire lentă*, 2012, trans. Dan Crăciun, Publica, Bucharest, p. 22.
42. X says, and X is a leading academic personality in the field. X is a resource object and, as such, it becomes interesting socially and politically. We have to deal with the trivial error of authority here, but it easily escapes the gaze of some "dependents" on network membership and implicitly on those better placed in the pyramidal structure. Let's stop using the lecturing position as a sanctuary—a pulpit where, magically, one obtains, in a reactive process, truth and plentifulness. The construction of image (scientific prestige) through the media industries and the construction of social effect of *imago-authority* (popularity) profoundly affect the way we design and carry out the scientific research activities. Academic visibility has become the key to access to funding—the public impact of the themes works (disturbingly) as the first criterion for allocating research resources.
43. Bourdieu, P., *op. cit.*, p. 39.
44. More and more university graduates know how to talk to others about their own person (they have impeccable CVs) but have great difficulty in understanding what they are. Erich Fromm describes this phenomenon well, calling it an *escape from freedom*: "The person who gives up his/her individual self and becomes an automaton, identical to other automata around him/her, no longer has to feel lonely and anxious. But the price he pays is however great, namely, the loss of his self." Fromm, E., *Fuga de libertate*, 2016, trans. Cristina Jinga, Trei, Bucharest, p. 192.
45. Which inevitably masks the human will of an administrator holding the reins of power, at least temporarily.
46. See Maffesoli, M. *Les temps des tribus*, 1988, La Table Ronde, and Maffesoli, M., *La transfiguration politique. La tribalisation du monde moderne*, 1992, Grasset. Michel Maffesoli

shows how “la constitution des microgroupes, des tribus qui ponctuent la spatialite se fait a partir du sentiment d’appartenance, en fonction d’une ethique specifique et *dans le cadre d’un reseau de communication*” (italics ours) [the creation of microgroups, tribes that punctuate spatiality, is done starting from the feeling of belonging, according to a specific ethics and *in the context of a communication network*]. Maffesoli, M. *Les temps des tribus*, 1988, La Table Ronde, pp. 245-246.

### **Abstract**

#### **Discursive Reason and Understanding in Modern Knowledge Communities The Influence of “Networked” Interpretations on the Narrative Reconfiguration of Reality**

The analysis we propose aims at identifying those limitations of the acts of knowledge that have emerged under the pressure of bureaucracy and politicization of institutions that administer public knowledge—the school at all levels, research centers, academies, etc. It seems of first urgency to examine without prejudice some topics such as:

1) knowledge and the institutions that manage it. We note the institutionalization of the forms of the procedural unfolding of knowledge and the standardization of the narratives that express it. This fact has social consequences that are easy to identify: no knowledge (truth) is recognized unless it enters the circuit of the institutions that manage the knowledge networks and alternative narratives (to the standard ones) develop epistemologically relevant effects only when they are allocated relevant expression space (the institutional mechanisms of authoritarian imposition block any attempt at non-conforming discourse).

2) formal narratives of knowledge and their political function prove the entry of the sciences into the circuit of the *economy of symbolic goods*. In social practice, the mutual negotiation between the various forms of public authority and the (compliant) education systems is transparent. Public education puts into circulation metanarratives about science that have an implicit ideological dimension.

### **Keywords**

procedural society, thinking communities, network interpretations, narrative reconfiguration of reality