

## THE PROJECTED VIRUSES AND THE EDUCATION CRISIS

**PhD. Prof. Adrian GORUN**

„Constantin Brâncuși” University from Târgu Jiu, Romania

**PhD. Prof. Horațiu Tiberiu GORUN**

„Constantin Brâncuși” University from Târgu Jiu, Romania

### **Abstract:**

*The cultural crisis is also the cause and the effect of the education crisis. It is a cause, because the devaluation of the cultural universe has led to the devaluation of the educational capital. This is because, in a succession relationship, the loss of substance of the educational capital - based on mainly cultural (or at least predominantly cultural) values, generates medium and long term neurotic forms of the cultural crisis. If the relation between the crisis of culture and the crisis of education is a reciprocal one (it can be said that in this relation the crisis of culture manifests itself as a genetic primordially and the crisis of education as a functional primordially), it is important to know to what extent the projected viruses projected are responsible for the crisis of education.*

**Key words:** *culture, education, meme, virus of the mind, culture crisis, projected viruses.*

\*\* This paper has been presented at 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Humanities and Educational Research held in Istanbul, Turkey on December 8-10, 2017.

The crisis of culture is also the cause and the effect of the crisis of education. It is a cause, because the devaluation of the cultural universe, as explained in the previous chapter, has generated the devaluation of the educational capital. It is an effect because, in a succession relationship, the loss of substance of the educational capital - based on eminently cultural (or at least predominantly cultural) values, generates medium and long term neurotic forms of cultural crisis.

If the relationship between the crisis of culture and the crisis of education is a biunique relationship (it can be said that in this relation the crisis of culture manifests itself as a genetic primordially and the crisis of education as a functional primordially), it is important to know to what extent the projected viruses are responsible for the present-day crisis of education. *Concise specifications about the crisis of education in general, about the identity crisis of education in particular*<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Also see Adrian Gorun, *Contributions to the Reconstruction of the Identity of National Education*, Syntheses, „Academica Brancusi” Publishing House, Targu-Jiu, 2015

As I said in many earlier works, since the 1970s, the school has gradually lost its potential of monopoly on education, the educational market has become a market with perfect competition - being invaded by a plurality of actors. These actors, exclusively formally legitimized - unlike school which was originally traditionally legitimized and only afterwards legitimized legally - are trying through a quasi-general offensive to fill their legitimacy deficit by appealing to artificial forms of charismatic legitimacy. They build their myths from the "savior" area, invent fetishes, and assume their inalienable right to supremacy, taking advantage of the persistent crisis of education.

Many voices state (not without interest) that scholastic education is in crisis today. It should be noted that this is not just a crisis of scholastic education (carried out in schools and universities), but an endemic crisis of education in general. A crisis juxtaposed with the current crisis of culture and exacerbated relativism, a crisis that has a serious impact on the existential matrix almost all over the world today.

The shock of globalization - as a process in which internationalization has reached its maximum - is increasingly felt at the level of Romanian education too. Not only was this shock not absorbed, but it generated forms without substance - through the repeated and exaggerated appeal to imitation. What has made education an unstable, incoherent and heterogeneous field. With many dysfunctions, with lesser authority of epistemic knowledge and too few self-regulation mechanisms. Educational power is worryingly diminishing, the educational potential being in a major deficit.

The current Romanian educational universe is dominated by instability, lack of horizons, entropic tendencies and an accelerated loss of confidence. A term has been attached to education, being considered indispensable: the term *reform*. This is nothing but a projected virus. By spreading and multiplying this virus in the minds of more and more people, contaminating them with the memes of "reform", education has come to be neither conceived nor perceived except *in* and *through* reform, the phrase "reform in education" used since Diogene's time (a cultural virus), transforming itself into "education reform" (the induced metamorphosis of the cultural virus in a projected virus). Semantic differences are major, the eluding of the preposition *in* totally changing the angle of approach, public policies being concerned with the shift from innovation to some sub-domains of education to *the permanent change of education as a whole*, as a system with its own structures and functions.

The use and abuse of the term *reform* - the reproduction and multiplication of the designed virus of the reform - and its attachment to education as a whole has serious operational consequences. Two are the (obvious) consequences we point out here:

- the deficit of credibility of the term "reform", resulting from the loss of content valences;
- the perception of education as being an absolutely unstable domain, permanently subject to rectifying interventions.

So, the current Romanian educational universe has this coordinate, which has become - through reproduction of the designed virus - *immanent*, both from a structural and transversal point of view: *continuous reform*. From an *obsessive invocation*, it tends to become a *potential reality*, just as obsessive. Subject to a brief radiography, *the reform of Romanian education* outlines a picture that leaves no room for many comments.

a) What were the initial stakes?

It is known that any community / society has a *vision* of education, a vision derived from the prototype of desirable man. The change of the Romanian regime (1989) naturally claims a new vision of education, directly reflected in *the educational ideal* of the new society, an ideal in which universal values *coexist* with (and does not suppress) the traditional, national values. The school / university redefines its *mission* according to the educational goals, derived from the educational ideal.

The initial stakes have been circumscribed to a process that increasingly proves both unilateral and inconsistent: the process of compatibilizing Romanian education with education in economically and politically advanced countries. *Compatibilization* becomes a *justifying argument* for the *reform of education*. Compatibilization - a projected virus too - is raised to the status of a panacea.

a) How has compatibilization been achieved?

b) In short:

- ✓ Through imitations, generating *too* many forms without substance and generating the consciousness of inferiority (from the induction of the perception of inferiority, a repetitively induced perception, to the consciousness of inferiority, founded in artificial hierarchies);
- ✓ By taking over the models considered to be superior a priori;
- ✓ Through fragmented experiments, generating - for the most part - devaluations of the educational and social capital;
- ✓ By abandoning the traditional values that gave brilliance and identity to the Romanian education; compatibilization with the "others" has suppressed the compatibilization of education with itself.

c) What was expected?

In a maximum synthesis, it was envisaged:

- ✓ A new quality of education, namely superior attributes for all components, mechanisms and educational spheres, but also for the actors in education;
- ✓ New standards, criteria, indicators and indices in assessing the quality of education;
- ✓ Re-establishment of the school-community functional relationship and school involvement in the local community life ;
- ✓ A reorganization of the curriculum: structuring the content to be taught from a competence-based education perspective; re-accreditation of some forms of "on-the-job" qualification education; interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary educational offer; flexible educational offer, adapted to the labor market (with us, hypothetical and far *too* uncertain); quantifying and capitalizing on the results of attending some formal / non-formal education programs;
- ✓ Few and credible examinations;
- ✓ Educational pluralism; educational alternatives;
- ✓ Convergence and educational cohesion;
- ✓ Decent financing of education and so on
- ✓ d) Where was it wrong?

- ✓ In a brief sentence, we consider that it was wrong to choose and promote educational policies that have eroded the education value system from within. Here are some points:
- ✓ Lack of predictions about the effects caused by fruitful contamination;
- ✓ Identification of changes of any kind with *reform*, of *reform with modernization*, but especially of *modernization* exclusively with *occidentalization* (not every change produces innovation, and the sphere of modernization goes beyond occidentalization: the cases of Japan, South Korea, China, India being notorious);
- ✓ "Centering" of education exclusively on competences at the expense of "centering" on values (informal and formal);
- ✓ Emptying education of its axiological content ; giving up goal values and promoting *close utility*;
- ✓ Changing the framework and content of competition: moving from competition for *individual and professional status* within the organization, to competition between organizations, competition for the multiple contract;
- ✓ Metamorphosis of imperatives in repetitive slogans;
- ✓ Applying "social" programs ,of integration programs, or for positive discrimination, equal opportunities, etc., not based on impact studies (almost all proved to be ineffective);
- ✓ Loss of control over the consequences of change and so on.

f) What has been achieved?

A precise diagnosis can not be fixed without taking into account the items that have articulated the proposed architecture. It has "succeeded" in building an educational universe with *too* few legitimate valences and with *too* many failures, so many that they create the almost quasi-general perception of drifting education. Without indicating the successes and failures by appealing to normative sentences formulated in terms of "superior" - "inferior", "better" - "worse," we present schematically the matrix of the Romanian educational universe today.

### What was aimed at vs. What was achieved

<i>Proposed Objectives</i>	<i>Achieved Objective</i>
1. A new quality of education	1. The involutive shock of quality
2. New criteria, indicators / indices and standards in quality assessment	Quantitative, irrelevant, false-hierarchy generating criteria
3. Re-establishing the relationship school-community and school involvement in the local community life	Apart from taking on financial and patrimonial obligations by the community regarding non-university education, the gap has widened; school has become self-isolated in initiatives and has become the receptacle for altered forms of community spirit
4. A reorganization of the curriculum	More and more atomized educational offer,

	circumscribed to sterile standards imposed by ARACIS and ARACIP, inflexible, increasingly irrelevant, centralized and detached from real life
5. Few and credible exams	Elimination of entry examinations, of the fetish of diplomas, extension of underground education (the private lessons" industry"), decreditibilizing the exams in higher education as a result of massification and financing / student in particular
6. Educational pluralism (educational alternatives)	Explosion of private institutions, generally oriented towards profit. Educational alternatives, with few exceptions, true forms without substance.
7. Convergence and educational cohesion	Institutional convergence. The divergent educational potential in terms of real convergence and nominal convergence in education.
8. Decent education funding	Chronic sub-financing. Use of institutional autonomy as an instrument for perpetuating precarious financing.
9. Instituting merit as the sole criterion for promotion in career	Excessive party politicization of the system; the party card has come to be considered meritorious in promotions to leadership, guidance and control positions; party activism and the transfer of party loyalties are almost sole vehicles in promoting to decision-making positions.
10. Education legitimized through performance	The major identity crisis of the Romanian education, materialized in a crises system: a) the crisis of ideals ; b) the value crisis; c) the crisis of epistemic authority, d) the crisis of confidence; e)the continuity and vision crisis; f) the identity crisis. Continuous devaluation of the educational capital, a process that deepens the identity crisis.

In conclusion, the current Romanian educational universe has absorbed all the problems faced by society in the last quarter of a century. Both prolonged transition and globalization have left their mark upon it. Unfortunately, predominantly in a negative way.

The domain regulations have proved to be too incomplete and too inconsistent, focusing primarily on form aspects and too little on content issues. The frequent changes in legislation have generated instability and uncertainty, which are presented and justified by invoking the ... reform. The poor management of the transition from the centralized system to the "democratization of the system" allowed the occurrence of exaggerated relativism, absolutized nihilism, utilitarian anti-intellectualism, and libertinism generating anomia.

*The projected viruses from education*

The finding regarding the school's monopoly over education is correct, being verifiable through immediate recourse to the present society. A society subject to globalization that restructures the process of knowledge in all its dimensions and aspects: producing knowledge, validating knowledge products, capitalizing on them in ever larger spaces and in more and more limited times. A major contribution to the loss of the school monopoly over education is caused by the projected viruses .

The states act everywhere for "modernizing" education, for adapting it to the demands of the future on the course. Which is normal and represents the unifying vector of educational policies. The differences come from the ways in which the dynamic balance between innovation and tradition is ensured. Where in the desire to "modernize" quickly, the tradition is canceled, it inevitably leads to anomia and to the construction of an artificial educational architecture where imitations play the primordial role. On the contrary, where innovation blends with time-validated traditions, perpetuating the set of values that has established a healthy education over time, the architecture of the educational system is one that makes education a profitable investment in the long run.

Previously we have broadly presented the picture of our national education, a picture well known to school people, parents, pupils, students, various communities, to society as a whole. We can all see the multidimensional crisis of education. The news (both good and bad) is that we are not alone in this situation. With few exceptions - they also target those countries where the political composition of the education value system has not undermined the foundations of culture - education is undergoing a crisis process. But the intensity, depth and magnitude of the crisis differs.

The current crisis of education is the effect of its uprooting, and the uprooting of education *forms* and *re-forms* the uprooted man. The power of motivation through school has fallen alarmingly because the *educational power* has diminished (*the educational power* expresses the extent to which the values on which education is based are shared by the members of the community, who- by transforming them into acts of conscience - act for the preservation and development of the stock of social capital ). As with cultural power, the educational power exerts a certain authority on the community. The educational authority is, however, dependent on the *political component* of the education value system, which *makes the difference between communities / societies, nations*.

In other words, *the differences* are generated by the relationship between cultural viruses and projected viruses : where the projected viruses did not aimed at, or did not succeed in

suppressing the cultural viruses, innovation did not cancel the tradition but completed it (the cultural virus reform in education ). On the contrary, where the projected viruses have destroyed the cultural viruses, innovation has led to the uprooting of education (the projected virus *education reform*).

We have previously stated that, unlike the cultural viruses which evolve so that they are self-perpetuating, the viruses that are projected, once released, copy and channel people's lives to the ends of the viruses, being at the service of their creator.<sup>2</sup> " Virus makers use every opportunity to spread the memes they want to circulate, resorting to the established ways to infect minds: *conditioning(repetition), cognitive dissonance, Trojan Horse*. They justify their approach by invoking the contribution of the projected viruses to increase the quality of education and, as a consequence, contribute to raising the quality of life. Let us not forget, however, that most projected viruses are profit-driven viruses, spreading the memes that their creator considers to be profitable for him.

Why does the political component - public policies - of the education value system acquire imperative valences? Which resorts make it possible to apply policies in education?

Generally speaking, it can be said that these policies are respected and applied because they are legitimate in the eminently public character of the interest and purpose of education. This, however, is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition, because, however much the public interest is appreciated, those focused on educational activities do not sacrifice their individual interest for the sake of the public interest. Something else is needed, and *this is something* behind the strategy of capitalizing on memes spread through educational policies: the "golden handcuffs".

As in the case of companies, in the case of the education system too, the "golden handcuffs " are the way in which, regardless of the situation, people are kept within that field of activity. However, if the "gold" the "handcuffs"" are made of in the case of companies is represented by the financial reward (usually shares) that is given to the employee in return for long-term residency in the company, the "gold" the „ handcuffs" " are made of in the case of education is *another kind of reward*. In education, the financial rewards for pupils, students, teachers are insignificant as compared to other forms of reward that we can designate as *professional reward*.

The "gold" from which " handcuffs"" are made in education is the prestige to which aspire most people engaged in individual training through cultural transmission and social integration. There are thus chains of dependencies - direct or indirect - that have as a result series of complicities in the spreading of the viruses that are projected. By using the "golden handcuffs " strategy, the creators of projected viruses will secure their profit by spreading those memes that in turn creates the illusion that they satisfy professional prestige and improve human condition and quality of life.

Many projected viruses have spread to education based on the "golden handcuffs " strategy, contaminating our minds with a series of memes that covered the interests of the creators of these viruses. And just reminiscent of projected viruses such as *competence-based education, adapting of the educational market to the labor market, dual education, compatibility of Romanian education with European education, ISI articles, peer review for*

---

<sup>2</sup> Brodie, *op.cit*, p 221

*teaching, internationalization of higher education, computer-assisted teaching, etc.* we can understand to what extent these viruses have benefited education or have been in the service of their creators.