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TOWARDS A CULTURE OF INNOVATION. HOW COULD THE INNOVATIVE SPIRIT BE CULTIVATED IN THE ROMANIAN UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT?

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Abstract

This paper proposes a cognitive-pragmatic scenario for stimulating the innovative spirit at the level of the academic community. The stake of this essay on applied philosophy and educational management is the configuration of the exploring directions of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario and testing them through a personal agenda for the creative development. In this way, the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit could be evaluated and adapted by any interested member of the Romanian university environment: professor, student, master student, doctoral student or postdoctoral student.

Keywords: cognitive-pragmatic scenario; personal creative development agenda; dialogical-creative thinking; personalized transdisciplinary connectivity; multidimensional self; polyphonic thinking.

I. Introduction

The delay in the processes of modernization and democratization in Romania is found in the institutional inefficiency and mentality deficiencies in the field of education. Regarding the situation of education and training in Romania, a recent Report of the European Commission mentioned: "Public spending on education is low in EU comparison, while the sector's investment needs are high. Any major reform is likely to require additional funding linked to stronger equity and efficiency mechanisms. Better support for teachers (...) can help improve quality and equity" (European Commission, 2019, p.18-19). But, better support for teachers and students means, in addition to investments in the education system, the *assumption at the level of members of the academic community of a cognitive reform focused on cultivating creative thinking and innovative spirit*. The modernization of the Romanian university environment is inconceivable in the absence of an institutional reform, but also of a moral and behavioral recovery of teachers and students alike. Consequently, I propose a *cognitive-pragmatic scenario* for cultivating the innovative spirit by stimulating *dialogical-creative thinking* and coagulating *innovative cultural models*. Conceived in the horizon of applied philosophy and educational management, the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit was elaborated through a reflexive approach at the confluence of mind philosophy, discursive pragmatics, and cognitive cultural studies.

II. A cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit

Developed in recent decades on the background of the cooperation of logic, linguistics, anthropology, developmental psychology, neurosciences, cognitive pragmatics is presented today as an interdisciplinary field concerned with researching the cognitive processes involved in the acts of intentional communication and initiating of social activities. Cognitive pragmatics focuses on researching the associative and inferential processes that intervene in the flow of communication and action in order to find „meaning-in-context" (Bara, 2010; Schmid, 2012). In turn, the phrase „cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating

the innovative spirit" advanced in this essay refers to a *program of using cognitive pragmatics to optimize a field of activity*, in our case the use of cognitive pragmatics for cultivating the innovative spirit in the Romanian university environment. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to launch a research hypothesis (s) and an appropriate and operational conceptual apparatus (Carpinschi, 1997, 2002).

II. 1. The exploratory directions of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario or the circuit of ideas, motivations and projects

As I announced, I start from the idea that, in correlation with the improvement of sectorial public policies on the education system, the modernization of the Romanian university environment implies the assumption at the level of members of the academic community of a cognitive reform focused on cultivating creative thinking and innovative spirit. Such a reform can be prefigured with the help of a cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit by stimulating dialogical-creative thinking. To this end I will design, on the one hand, the *exploratory directions* of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario -- *the dialogical-creative thinking, operational networks, innovative cultural models* -- and on the other hand, I will propose a *personal agenda for the creative development*. The exploratory directions configure the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating innovative spirit and provide its content. In turn, the personal agenda for creative development is the person's program through which this one processes the exploratory directions of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario, adapting them at the same time to the profile of his own personality. According to cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit, the dialogical-creative thinking is the *ideational center* of an academic community, and the cultural models already formed over time make up together the *cultural framework* of the respective community. The emergence of an innovation culture in an academic community involves the stimulation of dialogical-creative thinking, its assimilation into existing cultural models and, gradually, the coagulation of innovative cultural models. Stimulating dialogical-creative thinking and coagulating innovative cultural models become possible by activating some *operational networks*. The acts and procedures concentrated in the nodes of these networks -- *the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback* -- link the dialogical-creative thinking and the innovative cultural models through a circuit of ideas, motivations and projects.

In the following, I will present the way of elaborating the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit. I start from the idea that the *interaction of the three exploratory directions of the scenario* - the dialogical-creative thinking, operational networks and innovative cultural models - places the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating innovative spirit at the *confluence of mind philosophy with discursive pragmatics and cognitive cultural studies*. As a metatheory of the cognitive sciences, the philosophy of mind provides the reflexive framework for the cognitive-pragmatic scenario. Discursive pragmatics transposes with the help of the operational networks the dialogical-creative thinking into the social practice and innovative behaviors. Cognitive cultural studies, in turn, highlight the connection between mental activity and socio-cultural life, thus connecting the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit with the socio-cultural phenomena and innovative cultural models. As complementary areas of research, the philosophy of mind, discursive pragmatics, and cognitive cultural studies open a *transdisciplinary perspective* and ensure *epistemological consistency*, thus revealing the *paradigmatic potential* of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit.

II. 2. Dialogical-creative thinking on the horizon of philosophy of mind

Rejecting Cartesian philosophical dualism - *res cogitans versus res extensa* - I subscribe to the position of the American philosopher John R. Searle, according to whom,

„the consciousness in the brain is not a separate entity or property: it is only the state of the brain" (Searle, 2013, p. 221). There is only the brain system described and explained, on the one hand, at the level of *unconscious neural activity* and, on the other hand, at another level of description, that of the *conscious brain activity*. At the level of unconscious neural activities, contemporary neurosciences provide anatomical-physiological descriptions of the processes of mental causality. At the level of conscious brain activity, there where mental causality quasi-miraculously transforms into processes of intentionality, motivation and responsibility, cognitive psychology provides scientific descriptions and experimental-analytical explanations of human behaviors. As a branch of philosophy, the philosophy of mind is the reflexive framework from the perspective of which the theme of the nature and finality of the mental acts and states of consciousness are problematized. Together, neuro-cerebral activity and states of consciousness gives consistency and meaning to understanding the status and the rol of philosophy of mind. Neuro-cerebral activity supports the diversity of experiential states of consciousness. Researching this interactive process involves capitalizing on the acquisitions of neurobiology, computer science, cognitive psychology in terms of philosophical reflection and cognitive therapies. Regarding the synthesis of all these aspects, „the central hypothesis of cognitive science is that thinking can be best understood in terms of the representational structures of the mind and of the computational procedures that operate with these structures. (...). Most cognitive science works claim that the mind contains mental representations analogous to computerized data structures" (Thagard, 2014). According to the computational theory of the mind, the computation understood as information processing appears as the explanatory link, the link between causes and effects, between sensory-perceptual stimuli and the behavioral result. Information and computation logically relate data structures and put in place action programs, so that the philosophy of mind and, in particular, the dialogical-creative thinking could be perceived as a *critical-valorising reflection of the computational theory of mental processes*.

But what do I mean by *dialogical-creative thinking*? Living cognitive, affective, volitional experiences in different contexts, assessing situations and finding solutions through practicing both the inner dialogue but also of the interpersonal one encourages the emergence and development of dialogical-creative thinking. We could say that dialogical-creative thinking is the *ideational expression* of what Hubert Hermans called the „dialogical self" (Hermans, 2001). In others words, dialogical-creative thinking is a *creative thinking modeled through the dialogue sustained by the dialogical self*. The dialogical self combines the internal dialogue sustained trough metacognition with the interpersonal dialogue maintained through his contacts in the public and in the private space. By monitoring their own knowledges and reflections, metacognition generates a process of self-exploration and cultivation of the mind. Exploring consciousness through the dialogical self allows the deepening of self-knowledge and the configuration of one's own personality profile. On the other hand, the encounter of the self with the other triggers the interpersonal dialogue that allows a better orientation of the person in the world. By meeting the other, the self has the opportunity not only to know the neighbor, but also to test his own capacity for understanding, recognition and collaboration. Monitoring the reflexive experiences through awareness of mental states in different cultural environments and situational contexts allows exploring self-awareness and increasing self-confidence. Through the experience of meeting, collaborating and living together in multiethnic, multicultural, multireligious environments, the dialogical self can verify the authenticity and depth of one's own choices, states and experiences. Thus, dialogical-creative thinking becomes a *vector of mental causation* and also a true *modus operandi* of intercultural dialogue. But dialogical-creative thinking will become the ideational center of an academic community when it will really succeed in coagulating the innovative cultural models in that community with the help of efficient

operational networks.

II. 3. Operational networks and discursive pragmatics or the dialogical-creative thinking in action

If for the localization of the dialogical-creative thinking I resorted to mind philosophy, for the configuration of the operational networks I appeal to the discursive pragmatics. The transposition of dialogical-creative thinking into intentional acts of communication and innovative behaviors involves the intervention of discursive pragmatics. Theoretical and practical approach from the communication perspective, discursive pragmatics investigates the connection of thought with language and action, analyzes discursive skills in concrete situations, evaluates the content and meaning of verbal acts in the flow of communicative interactions. Imposed in the interdisciplinary field of communication sciences and discourse analysis through its capacity for linguistic-semantic agglutination and communicative potential, discursive pragmatics proves to be a useful way to establish a „platform for the pragmatic study of discourse" (Zienkowski, 2011, p.1). To be comprehensive and effective, such a platform must include the multiple dimensions of communication. Starting from the researches of Kepa Korta and John Perry on pragmatics, I think that we can refer to the following dimensions: *factual* dimension (who is the speaker, who forms the audience, when and where the communication takes place, what communicative tools are used, etc.); *intentional* dimension (language used; immediate intentions and means used by the speaker; distant intentions, in other words, what he intends to achieve in practice through what is said); the dimension concerning the *content of communication* (opinions and beliefs of the speaker and those with whom he speaks or those involved); *institutional* dimension (the social, political, cultural, religious institutions involved or targeted in the acts of communication) (Korta & Perry, 2015). The role of the communicative platform in our cognitive-pragmatic scenario is played by the operational networks which through their nodes -- the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback -- concentrate specific acts and procedures: cognitive-communicatives, institutional-executives, retroactive-evaluatives. Operational networks manage to behave as a communication platform that maintains the circuit of ideas, motivations, projects between dialogical-creative thinking and innovative cultural models existing in the community. Operational networks in the academic community thus help us to make dialogical-creative thinking responsible.

Operational networks take over, process and transpose the anticipatory representations of dialogical-creative thinking into innovative cultural models. The nodes of the operational network projected in this cognitive-pragmatic scenario - the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback - play specific roles in the flow of interpersonal and inter-institutional relations focused on cultivating the innovative spirit. Psycho-social mechanisms of innovation through communication, the communicative interactions encourage and disseminate dialogical-creative thinking in the community. At the same time, the transposition of dialogical-creative thinking into innovative cultural models it also depends on the institutional impact. To say that the proper functioning of institutions and the efficiency of cultural management leaves a strong imprint on the way of thinking and the level of civilization in a community is a truism. Of course, the permanent challenge for the university environment in any country is the continuous improvement of educational policies and institutional management. In correlation with the communicative interaction and the institutional impact, the evaluative feedback functions as an *inverse connection* in the circuit of information, projects and decisions that takes place between the nodes of the operational network. The coagulation of innovative cultural models in an academic community depends to a considerable extent on the depth and honesty of the evaluative feedback regarding the freedom of communicative interactions, the quality of educational policies and university management. Thus, through the interaction of the nodes of the operational networks,

communication manifests itself as a specific form of power: communication power (Castells, 2009). In conclusion, the different forms of communication power in society are exercised through the dynamics of operational networks. According to cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating innovative spirit, the *communicative power of operational networks in an academic community is manifested by the power of its communicative nodes: the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback*.

II. 4. A cognitive approach to culture. From anticipations and motivations to the innovative cultural models

In the last decades, it could be observed a significant change in the evolution of cultural studies. These passed from the traditional approaches, mainly monographic -- archaeological, historical, ethnological, anthropological, linguistic, psychological, sociological, political, etc. -- to the interdisciplinary cultural researche, computer modeling and intercultural management. In this context, it has become increasingly important the focusing attention on the social foundations of thought and action from the perspective of social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and on the role of mental models in understanding cultural phenomena (D'Andrade, 1995). In other words, to answer, for example, a question like the one posed by David Kronenfeld, „how we know the meaning and significance of what we do and say?" (Kronenfeld, 2018), we need a cognitive and social understanding of culture, because cultural knowledge is an interdisciplinary and pragmatic research of the coagulation of cultural models in the context of the diversity of ways of thinking and the dynamics of socio-human relations. Starting from the idea that „the locus of culture is the mind of individuals" (Bennardo, 2018), a series of researchers consider, in their turn, that a mental model assumed by members of a community, transmitted in a social setting and having a constraining force social is a cultural model (Holland & Quinn, 1987; D'Andrade, 1995; Bennardo & De Munck, 2014). Cultural models are, in essence, mental models, interpretive models of cultural structures in their diversity and social dynamics. The close connection between socio-cultural life and mental activity makes us understand socio-cultural life through mental activity and mental activity through socio-cultural life or, in Bradd Shore's words, it is about „culture in mind" (Shore, 1996). The cognitive approach to culture thus has contributed in different social contexts to the configuration of different thought patterns and thus to the coagulation of various cultural patterns. This is also the case with *innovative cultural models*.

But what are innovative cultural models and how do they appear? I think that *anticipation* and *motivation* play an important role in understanding the emergence of innovative cultural models. As for the anticipatory representations, these are considered -- according to philosophy of mind and cognitive psycho-sociology -- a manifestation of the anticipatory nature of the human mind. The human mind is an anticipatory device that operates with anticipatory representations. Thus, in the preface to a posthumous re-edition of Robert Rosen's book, *Anticipatory Systems*, we can read the following: „Life is anticipatory (...). The truth is that the future represents as powerful a causal force on current behavior as the past does, for all living things. And information (...) is actually an integral feature of life, itself -- even at the most fundamental level: that of system organisation" (Rosen, 2012, xi). Mental activity - shows, in their turn, C. Castelfranchi, G. Pezzulo, M. Miceli - is present when the brain is able to produce, in an endogenous manner, an internal representation of the world by simulating a perception capable of anticipate the onset of a future stimulus, or is able to anticipate a possible effect of a cause, or a possible action in a foreshadowed context. Intelligence consists not only in the manifestation of complex adaptive behaviors, but also in the ability to solve new problems by representing them with the help of „images", „schematics", or mental models capable of simulating events and actions and thus anticipating possible solutions (Castelfranchi, 2005; Pezzulo & Castelfranchi, 2009; Miceli &

Castelfranchi, 2015). Through learning based on observations and anticipatory representations, the informations, skills and knowledges are accumulated in the flow of dialogical-creative thinking and the practice of innovative cultural models. This is achieved through empirical accumulations, successive estimates and the calculation of probabilities. In fact, since the early 1960s the French philosopher and futurist Bertrand de Jouvenel argued what he called „futuribles", a dynamic theory about „possible futures" depending on the conjectures and actions. The design of scenarios about possible futures also aimed at educating the new generations after the Second World War by cultivating anticipatory representations and reasonable motivations (Jouvenel, 1963).

The question that arises now is the following: how innovative cultural models could be stimulated? An useful method for stimulating innovative cultural models is to research the motivations behind human intentions and behaviors. A full understanding of human intentions and behaviors suposes understanding the reasons why people do what they do (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992). Behind every intentional act is a motivation focused on the interests and needs. Of course, the range of human interests and needs is particularly varied. We constantly running between personal and collective interests and needs, material and spiritual, economic, political, cultural, educational, etc. For example, the need for interpersonal security against the background of the *Coronavirus* pandemic motivates the dialogical-creative thinking to generate innovative cultural models and appropriate therapeutic scenarios in various fields but correlated at the same time: public health, economy, politics, culture, education. The greater the motivation for stimulating innovative cultural models aiming interpersonal security, the stronger awareness of securitizing behaviors. But, seen from a deeper cognitive-pragmatic perspective, intentions and motivations become operational through „the collective mental programming of the human mind that distinguishes one group of people from another. This programming influences patterns of thinking that are reflected in the meaning that people give to different aspects of life and that crystallize in the institutions of a society" (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Collective mental programming provides a comprehensive understanding of mental representations, including both cognitive and sociological dimensions. From what has been said, it follows that the integration of intentions and motivations in the framework of innovative cultural models implies the presence of a cognitive anthropology capable of constructing and interpreting thinking schemas starting from the diversity of human intentions and motivations.

But, once the presentation of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario is finished, the problem of testing it appears. Of course, testing the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit implies its application in extensive empirical researches in different Romanian academic communities. Because conducting such researches is beyond the scope of this reflexive essay, I will limit myself to a *thought experiment* through which I will research the ways to assimilate the cognitive-pragmatic scenario with the help of a *personal agenda for creative development*. To paraphrase Bertram Yeats (Yeates, 2004, p.150), I would say that the thought experiment is a process of intellectual deliberation that anticipates the unfolding of things in a specific problematic area. In the thought experiment proposed in this essay, the stake is to *test the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit with the help of a personal creative development agenda* that could be assumed by any member of the Romanian university environment interested in cultivating the innovative spirit.

III. The cognitive-pragmatic scenario and cultivating the innovative spirit in the Romanian university environment. A thought experiment

One of the most important ideas advanced by Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter in their famous book, *Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* is that

not the revolution, but the transition is critical for the development of a democratic state. It suffers those countries where the consequences of the past are strong and the democratization is flawed and non-transparent (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986). Thirty years after the collapse of the communist regime, Romania fits perfectly into this diagnosis.

III. 1. The university environment and the Romanian society. Functions and dysfunctions

Against the background of legislative weaknesses, institutional dysfunctions and organizational incompetence, the disease of the Romanian university system started in the 1990s when a lot of private and state universities were established without a real base and purpose, pursuing only group interests. Taking advantage of the political situation and academic corruption, many politicians and potentates felt the need to cover their low professional and cultural level with university diplomas obtained easily or even through fraud. Thus, a true university inflation started, doubled by an acute labor crisis and a shortage of vocational schools. We have thousands of young graduates of law, philosophy and social-political sciences „trained" at a lot of pseudo-universities and a lack of craftsmen in useful fields. But, for a quick evaluation of the Romanian university environment, I appeal to some cultural dimensions evaluated by *Hofstede Insights* in Romania and to the personal observations accumulated over time. Thus, with a very high share, 90 out of 100, the Hofstede indicator of *Distance from Power* highlights the very large distance between citizen and power, frequently found and in the Romanian university environment. Despite the principle of university autonomy, the more or less hidden realities from many departments, faculties and universities in Romania are often significantly different from the norms and values formally stipulated in official university documents. There are multiple disparities in society and in the university environment, as well as numerous pressures exerted trough the power and influence relations against the background of internal weaknesses and vulnerabilities. In these circumstances, the transfer of responsibility and the centralization of the university authority seem for some members of the academic body more comfortable solutions than assuming the responsibility, and the most appreciated rectors, deans, heads of departments are those of the benevolent autocrat type. In addition to this characterization, the very low score, 30 out of 100, on the indicator *Individualism* shows that Romania is considered a collectivist society with a predominantly rural, traditional and ritualic cultural model. Despite some exceptional situations and individual professional performances, I do not think that currently the university environment could be considered significantly different from the traditional Romanian cultural model. Such a hierarchical, rigid and hyper-obedient university model cannot encourage the autonomy and freedom of the individual, it cannot stimulate critical and creative thinking. Not coincidentally, the reflexive approach and the mental tools proposed in this essay on applied philosophy and educational management aim at cultivating dialogical-creative thinking and encouraging the innovative spirit in the Romanian academic community.

Regarding *Avoidance of Uncertainty*, the indicator which evaluates the ability of a culture to counteract the ambiguous or uncertain situations through viable beliefs and institutions, this one places Romania, with a score of 90 out of 100, among the countries with insufficient self-confidence and a great need for certainties. In a complementary way the *Long Term Orientation*, the indicator which measures predictive-programmatic capacity, estimates with the score of 52 out of 100 that the policy of the Romanian authorities is characterized by a short-term orientation. The deficient educational policies of the last thirty years show us that the Romanian education system is no exception. Beyond the unsatisfactory quality of many universities, the lack of correlation of current bachelor's and master's programs with the real needs of the labor market is another cause of low educational efficiency. Negative indicators regarding the avoidance of uncertainty and long-term

orientation reflect, in fact, the low level of the research and development sector in Romania which ranks last in the European Union. An immediate explanation is related to the level of funding in this sector and, at the same, to the low share of full-time researchers in the performance sectors. The low value of public spending on research and development sector indicates a weak concern for the country's prospects concerning competitiveness and innovation (Starea Natiunii, 2017). Concluding, the historical delay in the process of modernization and democratization of Romania is manifested today trough the *institutional inefficiency* and the *mentality deficiencies* that society and the authorities face. This is also the conclusion of an interdisciplinary research on the *deficiencies of mentality and institutional delay in modern Romania*, in which I participated at the beginning of 2000 (Carpinschi, 2002). In the absence of a major country project and an intra-European systemic vision transposed into well-thought-out programs and actions by genuine professionals and an honest political class, the Romanian university system can be, to a large extent, perceived as a closed system, structured autarchically, vulnerable to transactions and interest games.

In these difficult circumstances, I support the idea that in correlation with the improvement of sectorial public policies on the education system -- budgetary-financial, judiciary, managerial, administrative, etc. -- the modernization of the Romanian university environment implies *assuming at the level of members of the academic community of a cognitive reform focused on cultivating creative thinking and innovative spirit*. Amid the *Coronavirus* pandemic and its aftermath, the cognitive reform is becoming a major challenge for all of us. And because, indeed, „there is a system în this madness" (Wursten, 2020), we need a systemic antidote able to counteract this madness of the irrationality. Such an antidote could be the activation in the academic communities of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for the cultivation of the innovative spirit presented in this essay. I think that the nodes of the operational network of this cognitive-pragmatic scenario -- the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback -- implemented with determination in the flow of interpersonal relationships could stimulate dialogical-creative thinking and innovative cultural models. The problem that concerns me further is the assimilation of this cognitive-pragmatic scenario in the academic environment. For this purpose, I developed a personal creative development agenda.

III. 2. From the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating innovative spirit to the personal agenda for creative development

In the world of multiple connections in which we live, the assimilation of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit with the help of a personal agenda of creative development is favored of the growing presence of the culture of connectivity (van Dijck, 2013; James & Steger, 2016). In the culture of connectivity, the scientific researches, philosophical reflections, cultural activities are carried out by connecting research areas in different ways: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary. The canonical definition of these situations in the research methodology and practice is the following: *multidisciplinarity* brings together different disciplinary perspectives, each keeping its own point of view on the problem treated. *Interdisciplinarity* combines two or more disciplines in a new level of integration that leads to the recognition that each discipline can affect the results of the other. *Transdisciplinarity* occurs when two or more disciplines transcend each other to form a new holistic approach. The result is completely different due to the emergence of a new perspective through the integration of disciplines (Mittelstrass, 2000; Nicolesco, 2002; Wickson, Carew, & Russell, 2006). Pluri, inter and transdisciplinarity are defined, therefore, as specific cognitive modalities based on reality research through the prism of the natural, transpersonal attitude of an external observer in relation to the object to be researched. Regarding *transdisciplinary connectivity*, from a canonical perspective this is considered an overdiscipline composed by integrating academic

disciplines.

In a complementary manner to the previous understanding of transdisciplinary connectivity, I present a *phenomenological experience that brings a change of perspective*. Unlike the *referential* perspective of an objective observer placed outside the considered phenomenon, the perspective assumed trough this phenomenological experience is a *self-referential* one because it targets the experiential states of the observer's consciousness in the horizon in which the phenomenon appears. I resorted to the phenomenological experience because phenomenology as the study of phenomena - of things as they appear in our consciousness or of the ways in which we experience them - *investigates things as personal lived experiences.* Being a *reflexive method of in-depth knowledge of things by exploring the experiential states lived in consciousness, phenomenology can penetrate the process by which the personal agenda for creative development assimilates the cognitive-pragmatic scenario*. Therefore, by researching personal experience in assimilating the cognitive-pragmatic scenario, we can reach a deeper understanding of both the cognitive-pragmatic scenario and the personal agenda for creative development. Regarding transdisciplinary connectivity, I start from the idea that in the world of global connectivity transdisciplinary connectivity is not just an overdiscipline composed by integrating academic disciplines. Arriving here, I advance the following hypothesis: the *daily experience of global connectivity helps us to personalize transdisciplinary connectivity by transferring it from the institutional-academic register to the horizon of our own consciousness with the help of the personal agenda for creative development*. In the world of global connectivity and transdisciplinary connections in which we live, the personal agenda for creative development is the *phenomenological thought experiment through which we personalize transdisciplinary connectivity*. Becoming a real turntable of the personal agenda for creative development, personalized transdisciplinary connectivity opens multiple perspectives and connections useful in stimulating dialogical-creative thinking and cultivating the innovative spirit. The *phenomenology of transdisciplinary connectivity* thus proves to be the *method* by which the *personal agenda for creative development can assimilate and adapt the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit*. But let's take a closer look at *how personalized transdisciplinary connectivity works*. What devices and mechanisms does transdisciplinary personalized connectivity use to stimulate dialogical-creative thinking and innovative spirit?

III. 3. Personal agenda for creative development or personalized transdisciplinary connectivity. **Mental devices and mechanisms**

Living the experience of global connectivity, I advance the following hypothesis: *personalized transdisciplinary connectivity opens new horizons to dialogical-creative thinking and innovative spirit through certain mental devices and mechanisms*. When I say mental devices and mechanisms, I mean *exploring the multidimensional self* and *listening to the inner voices of polyphonic thinking*. Exploring the dimensions of the self - *ancestral-biogenetic, cultural-archetypal, psycho-social, moral, cognitive-transcendental* - and listening to the inner voices of polyphonic thinking - *common knowledge, scientific research, philosophical reflection, artistic sensitivity, spiritual revelation, judicious ideological choice* - are the mental devices and mechanisms that make personalized transdisciplinary connectivity a useful tool for the personal creative development agenda. The experiences of the multidimensional self and the inner voices of polyphonic thinking enrich the personal agenda of creative development and, at the same time, increase the capacity for assimilating the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit.

For exploration of the self, I use Jung's theory of self as a „superconcept of the psychological ego" (Jung 2003, 2005). Image of conscious personality, the ego is not the „total phenomenon of personality". The personality in its entirety feels the need for a deeper and more consistent central entity, therefore, it feels the need for a self-referential landmark

with a connective role. This is the self, „a dimension that does not replace the one designated so far by the concept of ego, but rather embraces it as a superconcept" (Jung 2005, 14). As a complex system of features capable of giving identity and consistency to the manifest ego, the self watches over the organization of the field of consciousness and man's relations with the other, with the world, the universe, the sacred, the divinity. But the self can function as a connective „superconcept" of the manifest ego only as a multidimensional self that embraces and deepens the ego from various perspectives. The evolution of cognitive sciences in recent decades shows us that the one-dimensional model of the self has gradually replaced by the multidimensional model (Leary & Tangney, 2012). The self appears, at a closer look, not as a homogeneous and unitary entity, but as a set of referential dimensions, a *connector* of mental acts and states of consciousness.

Starting from the dimensions and functions of the self, I further propose the sketch of a *conceptual model of the multidimensional self*. Deep pair of visible ego (manifest), the multidimensional self of each of us is the operational center able to integrate and organize the knowledges and feelings of the manifest ego from various perspectives. Thus, through deciphering genetic inheritance and genealogical lineages, we can perceive the bio-informational continuity of the *ancestral-biogenetic self*. By perceiving the ancestral self - an informational-genetic self - we can become aware of the genetic heritage and genealogical lineages through which each of us came to participate in the transgenerational continuity of the human species. The ancestral-biogenetic self appears, from this systemic-connectionist perspective on life and cognition, as the „embodied mind" transmitted in a genetic-generational way. But we are not just bio-genetic beings. In the deep layers of the ancestral self, at some point, the spiritual roots of the cultural-archetypal self appear. Anchored in the rich world of the collective unconscious, the deep self discovers the „primordial images" of the universal Demiurge, of the heavenly Father, of Mother Geea, of the House, of the Fraternal Relationship, of the Hero, of the Martyr, of the Enemy, etc. By becoming aware of these spiritual archetypes stored in ancient myths, the *cultural-archetypal self* nourishes the imagination of the ego, thus enriching its reflexive horizon. Awareness of human conditionings and connections, accommodation with the norms and tensions of social life is achieved through the psychosocial dimension of the self. The *psycho-social self* is the one that succeeds through intentional acts and self-corrective adjustments a series of psycho-social processes: interactive mediation, intersubjectivity, self-esteem, self-regulation and self-corrective behavior, etc.

Against the background of the coagulation of the psycho-social self through the cultural norms and institutions the *moral self* gradually appears, an axiological referential that regulates and integrates the conduct of the ego according to the moral principles and values. Perceived not as a „categorical imperative" with claims of fundamentalist legitimation and global expansion, the moral self could be assumed as the principle of mutual respect for human dignity and, thus, as a guarantor of (inter) personal security. And, the time comes for the critical analysis of the process of knowledge by penetrating beyond the surface of things and the contingency of phenomena. But in order to penetrate beyond the surface of things and the contingency of phenomena, the visible (manifest) ego of common knowledge needs a special reflexive instance capable of reconstructing things and phenomena from reality in the transcendental horizon of intentional consciousness that gives meaning. This is the *cognitive-transcendental* or *phenomenological self* that raises the issue of the foundations of knowledge and action.

In summary, the multiple experiences in various registers - ancestral-biogenetic, cultural-archetypal, psycho-social, moral, cognitive-transcendental - give to the multidimensional self *reflexive consistency, exploratory power, connective capacity*. The multidimensional self-consciousness thus appears as the inner doubling of the manifestations

of the ego in its various interactions: cognitive, communicative, natural, social, political, symbolic, cultural, religious, etc. But, this connective phenomenology of the multidimensional self is completed by listening to the inner voices of polyphonic thinking. I start from the idea that the *chances of stimulating dialogical-creative thinking and encouraging innovative cultural models increase when the multidimensional self finds itself, listening to the inner voices of its polyphonic thinking*.

But what is polyphonic thinking ? Being a mental construct, the metaphor-concept „polyphonic thinking" associates the terms „polyphony" and „thinking" to suggest that the *themes, tones, intonations, cadences of our thoughts might be perceived as inner voices of mind*. Just as the polyphonic music harmoniously combines several voices and melodic lines in an opera that retains its individuality, by analogy, the *polyphonic thinking harmoniously combines the inner voices of its thoughts*. As an ideatic expression of the multidimensional self in its relations with other, with the world, the universe, sacredness, divinity, the polyphonic thinking is a complex personal experience felt through a series of experiential states. Listening to the inner voices of these experiential states we live the *integrative experience of existential diversity in the sound spectrum of polyphonic thinking*. When the inner voices of *common knowledge, scientific research, philosophical reflection, artistic sensibility, spiritual revelation, ideological choice* combine on the harmonious background of polyphonic thinking, the personal and interpersonal experiences are enriched and the chances of cultivating dialogical-creative thinking and innovative spirit increase. Looking at things from this perspective, polyphonic thinking appears to us as the *internalized phonic expression of personalized transdisciplinary connectivity endowed with innovative potential*.

But how is polyphonic thinking structured over time ? Every inner voice of thought is the expression of some existential experiences that respond to certain major human needs and aspirations. Thus, we hear a first voice when, in the flow of life, we live the experience of *common knowledge*. This experience helps us to live by solving with immediate, empirical means the current needs and problems of human coexistence. The „voice" of common knowledge sets the tone for polyphonic thinking. In resonance with the basic tone of common knowledge, by experiencing the deep, systematized rational knowledge, the „voice" of *scientific research* begins to be heard. In harmony with the tones of scientific research but coming down with a semitone, begins to hear the more grave „voice" of wisdom which, through *philosophical reflexivity* reveals the limits of common knowledge, errors of scientific research, deviations of human behavior. And also in the flow of life, against the sonor background of common knowledge, the voices of our aesthetically transfigured emotions and feelings begin to be heard. This is the *artistic sensitivity*, that experiential state that sensitizes and educates us the potential of poetic expression and good taste through the specific means of literature, music, choreography, visual arts, cinema. But, also in the flow of life, against the background of common knowledge, the „voice" of *spiritual revelation* is heard, that existential experience through which we feel, intuit, believe and entrust ourselves to Someone beyond us. This Someone that transcends us is felt as an existential support in our spiritual experiences. And, also in the flow of life, against the background of common knowledge, the „voices" of *ideological options* begin to be heard louder and louder, expressing political attitudes and preferences. Together, these voices that make up the *spectrum of polyphonic thinking* personalize transdisciplinary connectivity. The spectrum of polyphonic thinking appears thus as a *personalized model of connective-transdisciplinary organization of dialogical-creative thinking.* Concluding, the polyphonic thinking is the *personalized phonic representation of the experiential states of the reflexive self in searching of the innovative spirit*.

III. 4. Personal agenda for creative development and cultivating the innovative spirit in the Romanian university environment

The chain of hypotheses and concepts presented so far leads us to the configuration of a personal agenda for the creative development. As I stated at the beginning of this essay, the personal creative development agenda is a mental instrument with the help of which a person can assimilate the exploratory directions of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario, adapting them, at the same time, to the profile of his own personality. Each member of the academic community can set up his own creative development agenda. Therefore, I propose a personal agenda of creative development inspired by the hypotheses and exploratory directions of the cognitive-pragmatic scenario presented in this essay. According to this personal agenda, I should consider performing the following operations: 1) *cultivating the dialogical-creative thinking* trough the personalized transdisciplinary connectivity based on exploring the multidimensional self and valorising the polyphonic thinking; 2) *increasing the efficiency of the nodes of the operational networks* in the academic community -- the communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback -- by cultivating dialogical-creative thinking; 3) *encouraging the innovative cultural models* in academic community by increasing the efficiency of the nodes of the operational network. As can be seen, the exploratory directions -- dialogical-creative thinking, operational networks, innovative cultural models -- give life and meaning to the cognitive-pragmatic scenario for cultivating the innovative spirit with the help of the personal agenda of creative development.

But the personal creative development agenda is connected to the social and cultural environment in which the person lives and works. Practically, the *existence of a culture of innovation in the Romanian university environment depends on the quality of dialogical-creative thinking of professors and students and on the efficiency of their connection to the European and extra-European educational and cultural spaces*. In this context, I must refer to the need to improve the connection of professors and students in Romania to the education and training programs launched by the Commission of the European Union (European Commission, n.d.). From the practice of the last 30 years I could see how in the process of implementing the *Tempus1, Tempus 2, Erasmus Programs*, in a series of faculties and departments signs of superficiality and formalism appeared along the way. Unfortunately, the training internships in European universities it turns for some rather into a tourist or even commercial activity. Through the operations mentioned above -- cultivating dialogical-creative thinking, improving communicative interactions, institutional impact, evaluative feedback, stimulating innovative cultural models -- *personal creative development agenda aims to prepare professors and students for effective integrative participation in the European Education Area*. Looking at things from an ecosystemic perspective, Thanassis Rikakis and collaborators offer an interesting suggestion. These authors consider that industry, academia, government, civil society and socio-ecological together configure what they call “Helix Quintuple transdisciplinary knowledge ecosystems”. This Helix Quintuple of transdisciplinary knowledge ecosystems should meet the knowledge needs of the 21st century. The power, openness and interdependence of these knowledge ecosystems can enhance creativity and increase the efficiency of actions (Rikakis, Kelliher, Swearer, Nicewonger, & Holt, 2019). It is very true that in today's Romania the complexity of experiments with Quintuple Helix can prove extremely difficult. However, I believe that these experiments should be initiated with courage because otherwise the Romanian society would remain one composed of consumers and less of producers.

IV. Instead of conclusions

At the end of this essay, I should make an important mention. The experiences of the multidimensional self and of polyphonic thinking do not transform us into omniscient beings. These experiences develop mental moods and skills greater or lesser from person to person. Neither the thoughts of the multidimensional self, nor the inner voices of polyphonic thinking

are in hierarchical relations nor in relations of substitution. Each of these reflexive experiences has its own specificity and purpose, contributing together, through personalized transdisciplinary connectivity, to the shaping of the multidimensional self and the configuration of the experiential spectrum of polyphonic thinking. These reflexive experiences can stimulate dialogical-creative thinking and encourage innovative cultural models among members of an academic community. The mind of a professor or a student has the chance to become more comprehensive and innovative when it dialogues with the multidimensional self and listens to the inner voices of polyphonic thinking. The reflexive experiences of the multidimensional self lived in the spectrum of polyphonic thinking open to a member of the university environment the horizons of an enriched self and, thus, the possibility of cultivating dialogical-creative thinking and innovative spirit. By living the reflexive experiences that make up the spectrum of his polyphonic thinking, the multidimensional self opens the gates of the innovative spirit.

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