

CONSONANCES OF THE ROMANIAN ARMY'S MORAL VALUES

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The pillars of a civilization, the latter's lasting and unyielding basis lies in culture. Each civilization –like the human civilization as a whole – keeps building again and again on this complete, complex and enduring basis we call culture. However, the term culture is neither univocal nor monosemantic. There are almost 300 definitions of the word. From our point of view, all are correct, comprehensive, interesting and pertinent. Because any culture, as a system of values, and culture, as a whole, as a synthesis of the value systems, is universal. It represents the people's universe, their vital space; it is therefore a geopolitical term. Value is duration. Nothing can exist or resist in time without value. There is no duration without value, nor is there value without duration.

Value and interest

Therefore, culture is above all value. More precisely, an ensemble of values. Value is in fact the core of culture. Its gravity centre and reference system lie in values. There is no culture without value and no culture without civilization. Of course, we do not mean the potato culture, even though in the universe of the human existence ontology, material culture has had its necessary, complex and immeasurable role. We speak about value as a thought, a spirit, more exactly, as a product of thinking and spirit together, a monad of culture and civilization, as the Leibnizian meaning of the term, as the first and last entity, indivisible, generating spirituality and universality.

Value is very special for human life, philosophy and spirituality, for the philosophy and vocation of the institutions people created. Man is a product of these institutions, as a social being, spiritual and universal entity, created by the community, depending on the community, defined by the bio-psycho-social

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conditioning of his being and also as the producer and creator of his own living environment. Spirituality is given to man by vocation and as a vocation, his universality is a horizon of the cognitive space, of man's ability and capacity to know the world.

Man is the measure of all things – said Protagoras, over two thousand years ago. *Of all that are because they are and of those that are not because they are not.* Placing the human being in the middle of the human world represents the essence of axiology, seen as a theory or science of value, especially human value, moral value. Metaphorically speaking, value is what it remains after all is gone, following the efficient human action, as its enduring and lasting effect or as a chain of effects. Value is accumulated in time and is confirmed by time. Value gives human consistency to time and space, and humanizes them.

Value needs time and acknowledgement even though it does not wait for the number of years. The value that does not wait for the number of years is not another kind of value, but a more special one. It is an immediate individual value, of the individual man. This statement is the more so relevant in the military environment where the force and vigor of value prevail; they do not wait for the number of years, they even antecede and guide them. The value that does not wait for the number of years can be considered a system of qualities, knowledge and predispositions granting their owner access to performance. Without this system – which also is accumulation and confirmation in time, even if time is relatively short, of knowledge and skills, therefore value – the access to performance, along with achievement of performance and excellence would not be possible.

Performance *per se* is an effect of the effective human action, a recognized and confirmed effect. However, the reason of action is not value but interest. The interest to make a good thing, fulfill a vocation, reach performance. Performance, as an effect of action, is very often value. Value results from performance and excellence. Not from conflict. Not from interest. Only action results from conflict and interest.

The driving engine of human action is always the human interest and not the human value. Human value represents a support, human action represents a *modus vivendi* and a way to go beyond what is, to create, to produce added or utilitarian value. Value is an effect of action, the effect that accumulates, adds to the temple of culture and civilization as a brick for a solid building.

Values are the “bricks” of culture and civilization; they are the outposts of man, spirit and soul, man's life on Earth and in the Universe. They generate vocation, preserve spirituality, result from Blessing, give meaning and expression to Duration. Through values, man achieves his fate and vocation, comes closer to

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perfection and to the *Absolute Idea* Hegel speaks about, that is God. We approach God through value, not interest.

We state this because sometimes we seem unable to respect Value: we confuse it or diminish its value until it triggers off small actions, insignificant for the spiritual construction and cognitive dimension. The petty interest has nothing to do with the detail, that bud that gives off action and life. It is simply a petty interest, about petty goals and objectives. However, most of the times it is these petty interests and things with their meaning for the life of people and communities – when mistaken for the great actions generating values, that create a grey cobweb and vague mist. Such a situation, no matter how confused and dangerous it may be, cannot destroy the great systems of values which underlie the people's culture and civilization. It makes it possible though the recrudescence of non-values, false culture and counterculture. This disturbs the people's life, their representations and even their knowledge, ideals, expectations and actions.

Before passing on to the military moral values, I would like to refer to some elements pertaining to a certain type of axiology that is the axiology - as a theory of moral values - during times of transition, crisis and chaos.

In the 1870's, a period dominated by Hegelianism, there was the need to go back to Kant, his creativity, cognitive constructivism, ethics and values. Two important neo-Kantian schools achieved this: the Marburg School, represented by Cohen, Natorp and Cassirer, and the Baden School, represented by Windelband, Rickert and Lask. Neo-Kantianism wished to develop a critical philosophy, by applying the transcendental method to all the fields of experience focusing on the theory of knowledge on one hand, and on culture on the other hand. The Marburg School proposed to fight against metaphysics starting from Kant's idea of the thing. The Baden School was concerned about the Kantian philosophy about value, in its quality as a necessary and essential condition to achieve any cultural reality.

Friederich Albert Lange (1828-1875) gives a new dimension to the concept of value, through what he would call "an ideal point of view", through the need to complete reality through an ideal world, a man-made world, a man's world, defined by a value without physical existence. The value is an objective accomplished through subjectiveness, giving substance and duration to the ideal world, the world of the thinking and moral man.

Rickert goes beyond psychology through transcendentalism, discovering the transcendental realm of value and, through this, the spiritual domain of historic sciences. The truth is in fact a value unconditionally imposed to man as a duty, as Heidegger stated later. This was what Kant understood by *sollen*, his categorical imperative.

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I made these references to one of the most prolific periods in the philosophy of culture because during that period – one of philosophical transit – this concept and the universal and non-conflictual character of value, its constitutive functions in the development of moral construction systems and processes were laid.

Tanase Sarbu, in his very consistent study *Ethics: moral values and virtues* published by “Matei Teiu Botez” Academic Society Publishing House in Iasi in 2005, stated that “the issue of values and virtues arises whenever we want an answer to the question: How should we be so that the world does not seem so hostile to us?”. The author’s opinion is that the time has come to put an end to our destructive cultural impulses, to the evil impulse, that the change implies stability that is “value associated with the stimulation of creative powers”. The destructive cultural impulses have nothing to do with culture, they are mere expressions of several interests of gaining control of the cultural, non-cultural and counter cultural market. The real culture – founded on values – is not found on the market. It depends on the peoples’ soul and vocation, is their most valuable good, their area and basic structure during hardships.

From pandemic anomy to profound strategic reflection

During periods of great change, the groups and people generally follow the curve of conflict and the certainties and uncertainties tend to reach the maximum, extreme limit. In these periods, values, especially the moral ones, cannot be distinguished clearly; they are contested, denied, humiliated. We try to impose new values which cannot be named values as they have not been confirmed by time or performance or ongoing systems or processes. Voluntarism does not generate values, it only imposes actions. In such situations, non-values occur while the true values seem to have disappeared leaving culture and civilization adrift, without that minimum support ensuring its survival.

However, the waves pass and the ocean remains. The true values are still there where they have always been and nothing can move them, even if some people do not believe in them anymore, or they cannot see them or do not want to see them. It is their problem. In the end, it is not the values, the true support of culture and civilization will disappear, but the ones who do not see or understand them. The existentialists starting with Kierkegaard and Heidegger and continuing with Jaspers, Camus and Sartre, were aware of this alienation of the intellectuals by banishing them from the systems of values and from the fundamental landmarks of culture and civilization. Such a period is very well described in Kafka’s novels *The Process* and *The Castle*.

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The periods of social changes emphasize, at least during a period characterized by unpredictable and chaotic evolutions, the denial of values, bizarre constructions and hurried reconstructions, temporary and often superficial, especially in the extremely sensitive and agitated field of moral values. Good and evil become uncertain, interchangeable and even confused notions; their degree of uncertainty increases, the entropy of systems and processes also increases passions and intolerance, reckless actions multiply, social anomy becomes pandemic, as hurriedness and ignorance do not allow for any kind of reflection and much less for strategic reflection, strategic crevasses and flaws deepen and respect for the human being diminishes dramatically, the cost of life increases while the price of life decreases. There where we need a whole salary to pay for daily expenses, life has almost no price.

The changes and transformations a revolution brings about do not mean the destruction of values, as considered by those who confuse value with interest, price with cost, duration with the ephemeral and life with opportunity. Changes and transformation do not change the world value but change and transform only the way we see, understand, keep and respect them. People who do not respect their values are forever doomed.

Beyond the waves and turmoil caused by changes, revolutions and transformations, the immense value systems remain unchanged. These values are not only traces, relics or ruins, but fundamental landmarks of cultures and civilizations, the foundation of human life, rivers which nurture and reconfigure forever the life of the people and communities, their spiritual and moral universe, the organizational and individual culture, convictions, respect, trust, hope and almost all their essential expectations.

The people's intellectual and behavioral values have two major components or horizons: the ethical and aesthetical horizons.

Ethics is the moral established by philosophers. It is a sort of moral philosophy and moral science at the same time. It elaborates concepts, theories, principles and hypothesis a society's morality is built upon. Ethics is a conceptual knowledge of the historic morality, said Hegel, considering the dialectics between general and particular, supported by a social order and organizational culture and also on the pragmatic horizon of the becoming. There is no becoming outside this system, this process of synthesis. Kirkegaard stated that the particular is hidden to knowledge. This thing results from the way some myths which form and found ethos are reinterpreted. Today we appeal easily, especially when it comes to moral ethics (ethics and morals are not the same thing), to what logic calls *ignoratio elenchi* (ignoring the problem) and/or to all kinds of hasty generalizations.

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The ethics extreme coordinates are the good and the evil. Ethics is at the same time the science of good and of evil. The explanatory concepts of these extremes, between which there is a Euclidian universe of possibilities, are duty, obligation, freedom, will and responsibility. But the ethics and morale of the transition periods are dominated by chaos. Chaos deforms concepts, amplifies or simplifies them, takes them out of their limits and associates fluid and uncertain connotations to them. Sometimes this chaos can be understood only as an escape from principles in order to rediscover the same principles or build new ones. Other times, chaos is simply disorder. Disorder which destroys and builds or rebuilds in the destroyed area.

Aesthetics is not the science of form but that of sensitivity and artistic value. Man has always lived between ethical and artistic values. Without them, he would be nobody in a world he could not identify, know or accept, the same way as the respective world could recognize and accept him in a certain manner and time.

After 1990, the people of our society got rid of prejudices, freed from principles, thrown on the market and stopped in front of hope. Then the roads forked and, in absence of visible and unmistakable landmarks, known or just cognizable, people did not know which way to go. And they got lost. A lot of Romanians – if not all – find clear and distinct landmarks to guide or reorientate their life, behaviour and horizon.

Social anomy, crimes, uncertainty have dangerously increased. Nobody cared about the people's ethic and aesthetic universe. Because in the Romanian society today there is no certain support of becoming. There is fluid, conjunctural support, with configurations where indecency dominates and not decency, arrogance and excess and not moderation, aggressiveness and not conciliation, war and not peace. There is no support of the man in transition, who searches.

The cultures of institutions have been disturbed. Values mix with interests, and the landmarks – given only by the fundamental values of a nation, state and a community – have almost disappeared. People cannot respond to Socrates's fundamental problem of ethics: How should we live? And thus they cannot relate to Seneca's statement: We should live as if we were being watched by the world. Watched by the world, this expression has narrowed its perspective today in the age of television and the globalization of information. In other words, it has become blind.

Hedonism, selfishness, social anomy, toadyism, endemic anomy, frustration and greed are prevalent in our today's society. Some people live in this environment; others are influenced by the pressures and threats of this environment. However, they all are vulnerable. Their resistance to the aggressive borders of inculture and counterculture can only be achieved through genuine

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culture and through the systems of values defining and generating it. But the very genuine is contested, disturbed, rebuilt on principles that do not exist, taken as petty interests of groups and people who are strong only during such periods.

In our opinion, there are only three pillars of resistance against this accelerated aggressiveness towards the values of national culture, the realm of existence and life of the Romanian people: *Academy, Church and Army*.

The Academy emanates science and culture, scientific education and respect towards values, spirituality, intellectuality, universality, performance and excellence.

The Church generates faith, spirituality, spiritual culture, morality, moderation, solidarity and respect, altruism, generosity and kindness.

The Army generates security, organizational culture on stable and lasting supports, culture of an extreme risk profession, power, courage, giving, good measure, devotion, loyalty, patriotism, honor, dignity, honesty, correctness, solidarity, unity, respect, wish to win and to sacrifice one's life.

It is on these pillars that we can reestablish and rebuild, patiently and thoroughly, respect towards the Romanian values in European and Euro-Atlantic context.

The paradoxical support of the Romanian army's moral values

Romania's army has always been a high risk institution because our country has always been on a very active and dangerous strategic fault. Once, Romania's territory was inhabited by sedentary populations which bordered the disturbing foyer as Gerard Chaliand calls in his book *Antologie mondiale de la strategie*, the region between northern Caspian Sea and the Far East of migrating warring populations and which survived these violent migrations. Also, in the Middle Ages and Modern Age, our country's territory belonged either to the strategic security area of the three empires – i.e., Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman – or at the outskirts of these empires with some of its parts – i.e., Transylvania, Banat, Bassarabia, Northern Bukovina. We could say Romania's whole territory was a border strategic security area for the Roman Empire and inter-empire, for the three great empires of the Middle Ages and the Age until 1918 – i.e., Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman.

Romania's independence asked for a special military institution able to face the challenges and defend the country. Such an army had to be established ab initio as our country's ultimate defence outpost, as an ultimate force, in other words as an army of sacrifice and also as a dissuasive force and, at the same time, as a very important institution.

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The winner's and sacrifice spirits are incompatible; however, Romania's army moral configuration could only be like this. It is a configuration in paradox with numerous asymmetrical and even conflictual elements. Moreover, its composition, training and development have been achieved in accordance with the models of Western armies with a totally different philosophy from that of Romania's Army. The Western armies were generally offensive armies aiming at imposing the European powers' interests to other powers, continents or countries, thus, with other goals and strategic objectives than our army's. But Romania could only build and maintain an army of sacrifice and, at the same time, with a winner's mentality. Such an army must be ready to win or die, but cannot leave the battlefield because this battlefield is its very territory.

Unfortunately, most of the Romanian politicians have never fully understood this construction in paradox of the national army. Some believe that our country is too small and insignificant to need an army which anyway cannot defend it against anybody; others considered the army an expensive luxury we should not afford. Some others considered the military an institution we cannot do without (because others cannot do without such a force which from time to time must defend the country against its enemies, as the old regulations stipulated), or considered it a very common institution, not better or worse than all the other institutions.

The 1877 Independence War in and the two World Wars demonstrated a totally different thing than these people thought and are still thinking. Fortunately, the Romanian military institution has always understood its special situation, fate and moral configuration in paradox. The losses of these bloody confrontations throughout the centuries and millenniums as well as the Romanian troops' behaviour in battle have demonstrated their extraordinary effort to solve with their lives sometimes, this paradox, to combine and interweave the two philosophies – that of sacrifice and that of the winner's mentality – in a behaviour that rendered the measure of the Romanian army's moral values. Today's behaviour of the Romanian troops in the theatres of operations breaks again this paradox and honours our institution. Despite their scarce equipment, the Romanian troops achieve their missions in an exemplary way and our allies and partners have nothing but respect for them.

Endogenous, exogenous, national and universal values

The Romanian Military's moral values are unitary, consonant, perennial and very well integrated in great and consistent systems. These systems of values of the Romanian Military provide our institution with a stable and enduring support and, in spite of numerous institutional changes and transformations, some

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justifiable, a very good trend giving it the force and energy necessary to surpass any kind of obstacles.

Our army's behaviour gives the measure of these values. During the 1877 War, the young Romanian army crossed the Danube and, together with the Russian army, did its duty contributing to our country's independence. It was the first battle experience of an army who had been reestablished in its modern form in 1832 and improved after the Unification in 1959.

During the First World War, Romania's Military had to fight on two fronts, the North and the South ones, deploying its divisions from North to South and from South to North in extremely hard conditions and giving in the end the true measure of devotion, courage, sacrifice and winner's spirit at Marasti, Marasesti and Oituz.

Following the ultimatum given by the Soviets in 1940, it had to withdraw its great troops on the Dniester with no fight, which is disreputable for an army. However, our army complied without any complaints and in order, standing unacceptable humiliations.

During the Second World War, Romania's Military had to launch offensive actions, maintain the front with no tanks and antitank devices and then continue, in the Western campaigns, its offensive actions with the same scarce equipment and logistic support. After the war, the army leaders, generals and officers of high value, true heroes of our country, were sent to jail but the army kept on existing and reestablishing its systems of moral values under Soviet pressures and then with national support.

During the Communism period, Romania's Military was taken in the fields and on work sites but continued to train and develop good exercises and applications, consolidating its institutional and individual moral values.

In December 1989, Romania's army was sent to enforce order in the streets but in the end it protected the population, infrastructure and value patrimony, the victory of the revolution and our country's strategic stability. Afterwards, it went on training, modernizing and meeting all the conditions for our integration in NATO and EU. The Military is the first institution in Romania which met the standards for our country's integration in NATO.

The Romanian army's endogenous values depend on its special construction, very solid architecture, dynamic flexibility, its force to adapt to concrete situations and also on its integrality and institutional cohesion. The main values of these institutions are part of the unconditioned devotion to the country and also part of the collective link, of respecting the laws, order, discipline, its ability to assimilate perennial military values, to achieve connections in the field of military axiology and morale. Romania's army is receptive to exogenous values but without renouncing its ancestral values and its spirit of national army able to withstand and act within an international connection, alliance or coalition, in the new conditions of the strategic environment. Romania's army has easily

assimilated NATO and EU values because these Euro-Atlantic and European values integrate perfectly in its spirit, are part of its spirit and morality. This thing stands for an army's moral quality and vocation. A recent document – the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of National Defence – emphasizes the following common values: loyalty to the country and institution; professionalism; spirit of sacrifice; integrity and honour. Loyalty to the country and its life is still called patriotism, integrity is called character and cohesion force, honour is supported by dignity, trust, verticality, knowledge, understanding, creative capability and thorough training as a human being, professional and citizen. These endogenous moral qualities are just a few of the huge range of an outstanding moral architecture. The Romanian troops take pride in their institution. The Romanian army's organizational and institutional culture is one of great consistency which, in spite of all disappointments, pressures and constraints from yesterday and today – including political, moral and budgetary ones – still generates force, stability, balance, vigour, honour, dignity, verticality, winner's spirit, optimism, trust and especially strong character. Napoleon said that between an intelligent officer and one of character he preferred the officer of character. The Romanian troops have proven intelligent, dignified, vertical and of great character despite all the humiliations they had to endure and numerous changes and transformations.

Even if today these qualities seem obsolete and unprofitable, Romania's Military still needs them. For it has always been the institution of verticality, honour, dignity, of the people's capacity and capability to not be overwhelmed by hard times.


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