

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Negativul cotidianului*

#### *(The Original Camera Negative of Our Everyday Reality)*

*Cristina Gavriluță*

‘Alexandru Ioan Cuza’ University Publishing House, Iași, (2017),  
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The book, suggestively entitled ‘The Original Camera Negative of Our Everyday Reality’ made available for the readers by ‘Alexandru Ioan Cuza’ University prestigious publishing house in 2017, is written by Mrs Cristina Gavriluță, Ph.D., full Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, the Department of Sociology and Social Assistance.

The book comprises an *Introduction*, in which the author makes a short but extremely concise and systematized presentation of the book, four major chapters (each chapter contains several subchapters): 1) *Epistemological milestones in the social research*; 2) *Beyond the ‘Air Wall’. Mentalities and cultural landmarks in the social life*; 3) *The Sacred and its social expressions* and 4) *The body within the normality and the deviance registers*, followed by a *Postface*, where the author motivates her approach, and *Bibliographic references*.

The complete reading of this book is presented to the reader as a whole, the chapters and subchapters being ordered in a logical sequence. The approach of the themes is substantiated by the footnotes, which, besides indicating a thorough documentation of the work, are also of a real support for the reader interested in deepening the topics tackled along the 253 pages of the book.

‘The Original Camera Negative of Our Everyday Reality’ is a book written with scientific accuracy and professionalism, and it is a work of real use for all the people who really want to find out and understand the symbols, gestures, actions and beliefs that stand behind the social phenomena or are hidden in *the social network* (page 17).

In the first chapter, *Epistemological milestones in the social research*, she offers us the hermeneutical keys that enable the deciphering of the social symbols and actions, may them obvious or hidden in the current social phenomena. At the same time, the author’s eye, the one of a researcher and hermeneutist par excellence, perceives the uncertainties and even the imperfections present in the scientific and hermeneutical approaches that she promptly and objectively sanctions through clear and meaningful remarks. In

listing the methodological preferences in the social research, the author dwells predominantly upon the narrative techniques, story-telling, observation and interviewing, techniques that facilitate the chance of face-to-face meetings, although the obvious trend is toward a multiple approach in the social research, which does not claim to reveal the absolute and irrefutable truth, but to establish a pertinent dialogue with the less mutilated reality (pages 75-76).

The second chapter of the paper, *Beyond the 'Air Wall'. Mentalities and cultural Landmarks in the social life*, reveals the fact that the most important social phenomena are seconded by those mental data that have the ability to control the social reality, beyond reasoning, norms and rules, in an unseen and subtle way, 'as an air wall'. Inspired by the readings of some consecrated writers, the author proclaims here the belief that the achievement of some remarkable results in the relationship between the Church and the society lies in the twinned understanding of the Church and the society, both having the moral requirement to fulfill themselves in an organic reciprocity (pages 78-80). The tradition-modernity binomial conceals, in the opinion of the distinguished author, a subtle presence of the collective mentalities; modernity and tradition are two hypostases of the social becoming, therefore they should not be regarded in a dichotomous relationship (pages 112-113).

The third chapter of the book, *The Sacred and its social expressions*, is dedicated to the topics dealing with the nature of the Sacred in a desacralized or secularised world. The phenomenon of globalisation, terrorism and social practices with respect to the unconventional reality prove the survival of some reminiscences of raw data that justify the social behaviours related to superstitions or magical-religious rituals. The entire chapter is dominated, one can say, by the author's preoccupation to decipher and understand the social world and, implicitly, the social actions in their intimate existence, in their sacredness, exploring the indissoluble connection between the seen and unseen, between mystery and revelation.

The fourth chapter of the book: *The body within the register of normality and deviance*, decodes a series of social phenomena meant to give a meaning to the forms of domination and subjection of the body. The collective mentality, as the author remarks, can be read in the actions, attitudes, and behaviours of the individuals for whom the body becomes the tool for exteriorizing what one thinks and feels. Concurrently, this research paper manages to explain the abuses that the social world experiences through the irresponsible exploitation of God's Creation (human trafficking, cloning, euthanasia, etc., page 212). Displaying a deep respect for the Christian values, the distinguished author agrees with the Sacred as being able to respond to the anxieties related to man's transfiguration through science, bringing hope in the permanent revival of the human values, of man both as a unique being and as the subject of love and interpersonal compassion.

After a very careful reading of each chapter and subchapter, one can find that the work is addressed not only to the specialists who are interested in studying in depth the social reality, but also to the nonprofessional people, who

can use this book as a source of information regarding the border themes, located in the semi-obscurity areas of the social reality, such as: terrorism, the relationship between tradition and modernity, the phenomenon of globalisation, the identity and human trafficking, themes that belong, according to the author, to the current public agenda.

The present book is more than a review of some themes, theories, and research that marked the professional career of the author; it denotes a relentless spirit in the search for and promotion of major, interdisciplinary themes, paving the way for new research themes; the book is for each reader a subtle way of clarification and surprising revelations in the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary areas. The author gives testimony as a specialist in the sociological field, stating that the actions are important in the context of understanding the social reality, but these actions are not everything. What is not seen in this world, the negative (or the original camera negative), is the key to the profound understanding of reality. This unseen face of the world is expressed in “marginal, obscure, insignificant social actions without any statistical relevance, that become of an overwhelming importance” (page 17), because the purpose of any sociologist, anthropologist or researcher is to know the reason of actions, experiences and social events, which, in the author’s opinion, is equivalent to the effort of penetrating the reality, beyond what is obvious, manifest, objective.

The necessity and up-to-datedness of such a book is doubtless in the field of sociology, but especially in the academic world, as it answers the questions as well as the challenges or the new situations of the contemporary society and remains a landmark for other approaches in the socio-anthropological world, as well as a promoter of the scientific meta-analysis.

In conclusion, one can say that the volume suggested for reading withdraws any potential limitations in the research of the social reality, and therefore it opens as an information guide that advocates a true paradigm shift “in searching for meaning and hidden semantics, by exploring the symbolic dimension of some social phenomena” (pages 46-47), but also by the new ways of approaching and understanding the social reality within the framework of interpreting it through the Negative of Our Everyday Reality.

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