

ROMANIAN POLITICAL IMAGINARY AFTER DECEMBER '89 AS DESCRIBED BY *ADEVĂRUL* NEWSPAPER (EARLY '90s)*

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Abstract. This article aims to particularize the relationship between the *text/discourse – thought – power*, highlighting of *truth* and specific marks of the post-Decembrist political imaginary as published by the *Adevărul* Newspaper. The supporting evidence supports itself, capturing the *truth* in the *Adevărul* Newspaper – through landmarks such as: *correspondence* – the truth's relation to the reality of the '90s; *coherence* – the nature of truth is contested across two parallel sequences: truth as *form* and truth as *syllogism*. Consensus emerges as a punctuation of truth's variations, alternating between *objective* and *subjective* perspectives, and verified at the intersection of *truth* and *reality*.

Keywords: *Truth; Discourse; Power; 1990; Adevărul Newspaper*

Introductory Framework

This article takes a threefold applied approach. First, it seeks to specify the relationship between text/discourse, thought, and power by highlighting the representation of truth and distinctive features of the post-Decembrist political imaginary as portrayed by *Adevărul* Newspaper. The supporting evidence supports itself, starting with the initial hypothesis: the capture of truth within *Adevărul* Newspaper through three key elements. First, correspondence: the relation of truth to the reality of the '90s; second, coherence: the idea that truth is challenged, balanced between two parallel sequences – truth as form and truth as syllogism; third, consensus: the way truth's variations alternate between objective and subjective perspectives, culminating when verified at the crossroads of truth and reality. In this research, the triad of text/discourse, thought, and power becomes a framework through which the occurrence of truth in the articles published by *Adevărul* is analysed. Thought is examined in terms of its adaptation and

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transformation within a transitional reference to space, while power explores how the post-Decembrist elite reconfigures the post-revolutionary reality.

The approach involves a *qualitative-quantitative analysis*, which includes consulting, documenting, and analysing the archive of *Adevărul* Newspaper. The entire collection for the year 1990, housed at the Library of the Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest), was reviewed, alongside the issues published immediately after the Romanian Revolution, at the end of December 1989 (*Scînteia Poporului*). The quantitative quantification, issue by issue, aims at quantifying specific textual indicators – *the concept-word truth* – including by tabulating the issue number, date and year of publication, identifying the forms of truth present, the recourse to myth/imaginary, and the number/sum of dedicated entries. The quantitative analysis focuses on examining each issue to quantify specific textual indicators, particularly – *the concept-word truth*. This includes compiling data such as issue number, date, and year of publication, identifying forms of truth presented, references to myth or the imaginary, and the number of dedicated entries. The qualitative analysis delves deeper through commentary, contextualization, evaluation, and interpretation of the data in the table. For the textual discourse analysis, a thematic-referential research methodology is employed, equating *discourse with text and language in use*, thereby defining the reality of the selected period. Attention is also given to the communicator’s intention, and the narrative structure is analysed through a philosophical lens (established in the first chapter) to emphasize the significance of conceptual tools within the texts¹.

The third approach narrows the analysis to the early ‘90s by focusing exclusively on the year 1990. This period holds a dual significance. First, 1990 represents the immediate aftermath of the Romanian Revolution, investing specific meaning to the prefix *post-*. Second, following in the footsteps of Fernand Braudel², we considered 1990 as a measure of long-term processes, despite its brief timeframe, reflecting the broader historical shifts initiated by the Romanian Revolution. According to F. Braudel, *the long term* refers to the flow of extended periods of time, characterized by slow, rhythmic elements that shape the larger framework of historical change, though these changes are gradual and expansive. The *medium term* encompasses the accumulation of evolving socio-economic relations within society. In contrast, the *short term* highlights the significance of immediate events, marked by rapid and often unpredictable consequences, which, while rooted in the rhythms of *the long term*, are best analysed in the context of the medium term. The short duration of history is defined by dynamic events that act as catalysts, producing nearly instantaneous “shocks” within a chain of transformation. F. Braudel also emphasizes the interplay between *event, image, and imaginary*, suggesting that historical change is often visualized through a succession of images, each with uncertain periodicity and lifespan, “some enduring only as long as the representation itself” (a key feature of the functioning of the imaginary!)³.

¹ M. Jorgensen, J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Sage, London, 2002.

² Fernand Braudel, *Gramatica Civilizațiilor [A History of Civilizations]*, translated by Dinu Moarcă, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

1990 – “The Longest Year”

1990 must be seen as a historical turning point, when the system of democracy emerged, within which individual values and rights became a priority, and is considered a *year of grace*. The expression “year of grace” is a metaphor used to emphasize the importance of a year or an event in a laudatory or solemn manner, a significant or remarkable year in historical, cultural or social terms. *Adevărul*⁴ Newspaper will explicitly use the formula in reference to economic reform and the transition to a market economy – “This economy belongs to us. For better or for worse. Since the year of grace 1990”⁵. Mircea Bărbulescu urged the “elimination of the demagogic plural”⁶, in reference to government policies, pointing to “the concentration of resources and their redistribution” – a rudimentary perspective! – a “miracle solution” to save the “bankrupt” Romanian state. The author, however, distances himself from the named analytical angle, considering it tributary to “pessimistic opinions”, without issuing the reasons-argument for placing on the offensive, through an explicit dichotomy – the implementation of democratic values, without a definitive separation from the mechanisms of the past regime.

Returning to the theme of long sequences of Fr. Braudel⁷, the ‘89-Revolution could be classified under the category mentioned. At first glance we would be tempted to place it in the short history, and in relation to the change of political regime, we could validate such categorization. But the Revolution went beyond the status of a mere elite *mutation*⁸, a coalition of diverse social forces, present at the cultural, political, economic and social levels, in constant evolution and transformation. Revolution is no longer a static but a dynamic event, and the outcome is no longer predictable: social change can have unexpected dynamics and traditional forms of governance can be challenged and transformed⁹.

⁴ Mircea Bărbulescu, “Anul de grație 1990” [“The year of grace 1990”], *Adevărul* newspaper, Issue 248/ 16 October 1990, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ The concept of “long history” refers to the extended temporal dimension within historical analysis. F. Braudel argues that short-term events, particularly political and military events, are merely the surface of history, beneath which lie deep and slow-moving structures that govern the evolution of society. These structures include geography, climate, economy, technology, and collective mentalities. The author contends that to truly understand the history of a society, one must focus on these long-term structures and trends. Braudel contextualized concepts such as “geographical time” [referring to the slow evolution of geography] and “social time” [which refers to events and changes that unfold over several decades or even centuries]. Through this approach, Braudel emphasized the importance of slow, deep forces in shaping a society’s history. In contrast, the concept of “short history” refers to rapid events and changes that occur in the short term, such as political events, wars, treaties, or the impact of prominent figures. While these events are significant, they do not fully capture the deeper evolution of society and are shaped by long-term structures and trends. See Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-29; 59-71.

⁸ The concept of “multitude,” representing a diversity of subjectivities and struggles within society, has become central to the vision of social change. See Antonio Negri, *Afterword. On the concept of revolution*, in John Foran [ed.], *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World. Social identities, globalization, and modernity*, Routledge Publishing House, New York, 2008, pp. 252-261.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

Revolutions can also have negative effects¹⁰ on society. Although a revolution may initially appear to be a movement for freedom and justice, its results can be unpredictable and can often lead to autocratic regimes or long-term instability¹¹, emphasizes the importance of maintaining institutions and procedures that allow a peaceful and controlled transition to a new political order.

Along the same lines, an article entitled “The longest year” published in the *Adevărul* Newspaper at the end of 1990¹², brings a new argument into the debate, referring to the age of states in relation to the age of the individual, and the way in which the dictatorial system manipulated society as a whole by changing the national day. After the change of regime, Romania declared December 1st as a national day, and 1990 was decreed the longest year in Romania’s history, with 465 days, calculated from the second-last national day to the last: “Since the last time we celebrated our national day, 465 days have passed. There is no need to recall all the passions and exaltations of this *long year, the longest year* (emphasis added). Let’s just remember that there is a huge gap between the ordered, manufactured, as papier-mâché decorations, delirious celebration of a year ago and the sober, restrained, lucid, authentic celebration of today. The distance from illness to health, be it, for the time being, a germinal health¹³.”

In the intensity of the moment (whether brief or prolonged), truth is renewed.

Referring to the journalism of the moment (and not only!) a news item considered objective has – or should! – two essential qualities: *truthful* and interesting, although all too often the latter takes priority over the truth. If the truth is hijacked to the point of radical transformation, the news becomes fiction, or manipulated/*fake* content, and information is annihilated. Truth is no longer a mathematical formula, but involves translation from one form to another, emphasizing the transition period. In the collective mind, myths are repositioned: the saviour is no longer Nicolae Ceaușescu, but Ion Iliescu, and the scapegoat is no longer the “enemy of the People”, but the “detestable dictator”, by reconfiguring the local political imaginary of good and evil.

Ruxandra Cesăreanu¹⁴ uses an applied analysis of language to inventory the ways in which forms of truth are exposed. The articles published in the *Adevărul* Newspaper between 1989 and 1990 used aggressive and denigrating language¹⁵, aimed at discrediting the members and supporters of the opposition parties, the demonstrators in University Square and, in general, all those who opposed the FSN. They are described as inferior creatures, nothingness, “uncultured creatures”,

¹⁰ John Dunn, “Understanding revolution”, in *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World. Social identities, globalization, and modernity*, edited by John Foran, Routledge Publishing House, New York, 2008, pp. 17-27.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Sergiu Andon, “Cel mai lung an” [The Longest Year], *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 288/ 1 December 1990, p. 1.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Ruxandra Cesăreanu, *Imaginarul violent al românilor [The Violent Imaginary of Romanians]*, Tracus Arte Publishing House, Bucharest, 2016, pp. 119-137.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

“non-values”, “political illiterates” and “ungrammatical”, “primitives”, “pariahs”, “scoundrels”, “roughnecks”, “hooligans”, “thugs”, “robbers”, etc., with various faults (e.g., alcohol and drug addiction). Aggressive language is coupled with images associated with filth and infection. University Square and protesters are associated with litter, filth and disease. It is suggested that protesters would desecrate the holy sites of the ‘89 Revolution and spread infection and immorality. The language is also sexualized and vulgar¹⁶, aimed at denigrating the opposition and the demonstrators. The rallies and protests are described as “erotic beds” and opposition party candidates are insinuatingly referred to as “barbaric faggots”. The articles call for the bestialization of the opposition and protesters¹⁷. They are associated with animals such as snakes, dogs, pigs, wolves, hispers, lice, alligators, etc. The idea of circus and menagerie suggests that the demonstration in University Square is a grotesque and chaotic spectacle intended to amuse the curious.

The text brings into question the use of language similar to that used during the communist era by the *Scântea* Newspaper, indicating that the violent and slanderous tone was maintained or even intensified after the Revolution¹⁸. The aggressive language was used to label intellectuals and the opposition – “paranoid”, “pathetic”, “stupid”, or even “Intelligence Services informers” – moved by the lust for money and power. Opposition personalities and leaders are accused of extremism, anarchy and incitement to murder. Truth seemed to speculate on social tensions, especially between workers and intellectuals, to further undermine the credibility and position of the opposition.

As for the thematic context¹⁹, it will invariably revolve around myths. Political myths can be seen in society even when they are not obvious, including developing structures of collective memory, national identity, ideology, religion or charisma²⁰: “(...) if there is no criterion of truth for researching the past, because the historian does not and must not succeed in achieving the truth, then the past is reconstructed according to the criterion of the “imaginary”, that is to say, according to the “logic of myth”; these “myths” can be accepted or rejected according to purely subjective criteria”²¹, a statement which confirms the relationship that myths develop with and in relation to truth.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ The thematic horizon of the ‘90s will be strongly marked, in terms of events, by the Minerriads as well. For example, journalist Dărie Novăceanu claims that the miners acted like “parliamentarians,” eradicating evil, forming a temporary “super-party” with strong political and social roles – Ruxandra Cășăreanu, *op.cit.*, pp. 277-519.

²⁰ Dăria Coman, *Mitul Salvatorului în strategiile de comunicare în campaniile pentru alegeri prezidențiale în România postdecembristă* [*The Myth of the Savior in Communication Strategies during Presidential Election Campaigns in Post-Decembrist Romania*], PhD thesis, Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, p. 8.

²¹ Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Istoria, adevărul și miturile* [*History, Truth, and Myths*], Editura Enciclopedică, București, Ed. Enciclopedică Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014, pp. 283-284.

Adevărul Newspaper in the Early '90

After 38 years, the newspaper *Adevărul*, banned during the communist regime, was reinstated on Christmas Eve 1989, times of fear and uncertainty. On December 21, 1989, while the events of the Revolution were unfolding in University Square in Bucharest and at the Casa Scînteii, the official headquarters of the Romanian Communist Party, the last issue of the newspaper *Scînteia* was being printed, the one that had reprinted Nicolae Ceaușescu's speech delivered the previous day, but with some excerpts omitted.

When Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu fled (December 22, 1989), the journalists of *Scînteia* became free to express their opinions and decided to launch a new newspaper, *Scînteia Poporului*, later renamed *Adevărul*²², both as a definitive break with the old regime and as a radical change towards a free and impartial journalism.

In the first years after the Revolution, the newspaper *Adevărul* had a controversial attitude and was involved in problematic events and actions, with a subjective and manipulative attitude, disinformation and evident rapprochement with the National Salvation Front (FSN) and complicity in the violent events of the Mineriade of June 1990, and, implicitly, glorification of the saviour Ion Iliescu²³. The newspaper published articles encouraging physical violence against political opposition and demonstrators. During the Mineriade in June 1990, miners who came to Bucharest assaulted and committed acts of violence, and *Adevărul* was accused of instigating such acts²⁴.

Adevărul and the Post-'90s Romanian Political Imaginary

The second issue of *Adevărul*, published just two days after the Revolution, was inaugurated with an article by Elena Zamfirescu, a criticism of the former system/leader, specific to *revolutionary truth*: "We were driven like a herd to bring a new flattery to the great leader, who fed on our sweat and blood. In defiance of the dignity of the people, in his boundless madness, he has set his servants to organize a Great People's Assembly."²⁵

In this context of explicit rebellion, the Revolution is perceived as the *dawn*, *the new-found morning* of the nation – a broad metaphor that captures the essence of the myth of the Revolution as a method of saving and removing the evil from the former system. The same figure of speech also captures the myth of change, the hope that the transformation of the system will give the country

²² Mihai Volnea, Cristian Delcea, "1989-1990. Lungul drum al "Scînteii" către "Adevărul" și revoluția tovarășilor ziariști" [1989-1990. The Long Journey of "Scînteia" to "Adevărul" and the Revolution of Comrade Journalists.], available at https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/1989-1990-lungul-drum-al-scintei-catre-1473657.html#google_vignette, accessed on 13 August 2023.

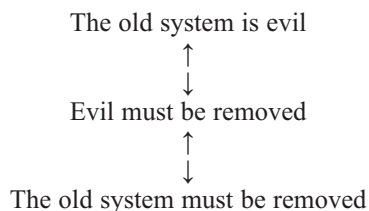
²³ *Idem*, "1990-1991, cei mai negri ani ai Adevărului" [The worst years of *Adevărul* Newspaper], available at <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/1990-1991-cei-mai-negri-ani-ai-adevarului-1475622.html>, accessed on 4 August 2023.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Elena Zamfirescu, "Lungul drum al nopții către zori" [The long night's journey to dawn], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue no. 2, December 24, 1989, Bucharest, p. 1.

back to its people; the transformation into the “good” promoted by the revolutionary doctrine is likened – here – to a dawn, a new beginning. The author also emphasizes the issue of the victims of the “long night’s journey to dawn”²⁶, with an emotional focus on the young revolutionaries, considered heroes, whose death is the driving force behind the call for change: ‘(...) let us not forget all those who – with their lives, their blood, their dedication and their trust – have today lifted the dusty curtain, tarnished by lies, allowing the eternal face of the homeland to appear mighty and bright. [...] Let us fight as long as it takes. And build. Let us build in our own image.’²⁷. The final sentence is profoundly religious, reminiscing demiurgic language.

During communism, religion was considered a subtle and secretive form of Revolution. The article proves and confirms the classical syllogism scheme existing in revolutionary truth:



Paul Dobrescu’s article emphasizes the essence of the truth of democracy, the manifestation of truth-syllogism. The text begins with a truism: “The revolution brought democracy to power”²⁸. The sentence states a widely accepted truism, without providing any new or unexpected information. The ‘89 revolution in Romania was certainly an event that led to major political changes and ultimately to the democracy. Truisms are statements that do not require proof or argument to be accepted because they are already known or confirmed by the majority. The appeal is coupled with a sophism: “The great progressive value of pluralist democracy is that it prevents passivity and alienation”²⁹, the sophism implies a logical fallacy or a manipulation of the argument, which may at first appear convincing but in fact contains a logical inaccuracy or a false inference. In this case, the sentence implies a causal link between pluralist democracy and the prevention of passivity and alienation. However, there is no direct and unique causal connection between these aspects, which makes the argument fall into the trap of sophism.

Pluralist democracy plays a part in preventing passivity and alienation, it is not a unique “great progress value”. There are other social, economic and cultural factors and mechanisms that can influence such matters. Thus, the claim that pluralist democracy has a major progress value based solely on the prevention of passivity and alienation becomes an oversimplification and a false inference.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Paul Dobrescu, “Adevăr și democrație”, in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 5/29 December 1989, p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

The truth of democracy is essentially a manifestation of a primordial truth – pan-truth. The assertion is that: “Truth cannot come into being and, above all, cannot exist unless it is constantly called into question, refreshed, enriched, nuanced, developed with what knowledge proposes as viable”³⁰, explicitly pointing to the relationship between power and knowledge, mediated and maintained by and through truth.

By means of the interrelation of democratic values – multiparty pluralism, freedom and free vote, spirituality, freedom of thought – Paul Dobrescu identifies a social added value of truth and warns that it “is reduced [*the truth* – emphasis added] if it is not shared, assumed by people, social groups and achieved”³¹, a social value that can only be achieved through debate, contestation and application of truth, a syllogism whose premise points out that: *Democracy has its essence in debate*: “For the country’s future today and tomorrow, pluralist democratic structures of governance are the main drive of fulfilment. It is through them, through democratic forms, that civic life will experience a new age, that it will be challenged by the regenerating currents of differing opinions, even opposing opinions”³².

Hence, a second premise derives from the idea that *the debate is conducted within a multi-party system*. A few clarifications are necessary: the exclusivism of the first premise correlates with the expression “the fruitfulness of democratic life depends on each one of us”³³, emphasizing that contradictory opinions are essential for democracy – and this interaction is carried out in the public space through different parties, be they left or right-wing, with their own self-interest. However, the essence of democracy is freedom – freedom of thought, freedom of choice, freedom of movement, freedom of self-determination, which undermines the above syllogism, since if one of its components is false or partially true, the whole reasoning becomes invalid.

Gabriel Rădulescu repositions himself in the sphere of revolutionary truth. The myth of the Revolution and the myth of the revolutionary hero naturally coexist, but this time he is banking on the explicit value of democracy: “At Christmas we got our portion of freedom”³⁴, through a “real hurricane of unleashed ocean – of this revolution”³⁵, together with “the young heroes of these days”³⁶, who “did not even live enough to see Christmas”³⁷, by reference to the myth of the *anti-hero* – “the terrorists sought at all costs to stop the strong souls”³⁸.

The article “Old habits in the name of the new times” will add another face to the revolutionary truth through the myth of the scapegoat – “the horrid

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ Gabriel Rădulescu, “Jertfa, izbânda, tinerețea” [“Sacrifice, victory, youth”], in *Adevărul* newspaper, Free word of the free citizen, Issue 6/30 December 1989, p. 3.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

dictator Ceausescu”³⁹ – using the case of Vasile Moldovan, president of the National Salvation Front Commission in Alba Iulia, ousted for behaviour similar to that of the old regime, but unforgivable in an embryonal democracy: “abusive, recalcitrant, demonstrating a poor understanding of the new horizons we are heading towards, he ignored the ruling, trying to act on his own.”⁴⁰

Hence the need to repudiate and definitively break with the past: “We should not be ashamed before Europe that this century has witnessed the existence of the most horrid tyrant in our history. We must reject the thought that this tyrant was given to the world by us, the Romanian people. He was born and grew up here, but he became a tyrant because he was born a second time, not of his cursed parents, but of the two ideologies in their most abject expression, that of fanatical nationalism and that of fanatical totalitarianism”⁴¹.

The scapegoat is no longer superimposed on a point of origin, but is perceived as a constructed product of an entire ideology: “It was not the people who gave humanity, along with *Miorița*, Eminescu, Enescu, Caragiale, Brâncuși, Iorga and so many other of our geniuses, it was not this people who gave humanity the “Carpathians’ genius”, but the two dogmas of horror that have merged to produce the most abject human garbage”⁴².

Both perspectives overemphasize hyperbolic expressions and hyperbolic terms, both positive and negative, even slang (horrid tyrant, Carpathians’ genius, human garbage), resorting to an imaginary – in the terms of the analysis proposed by Ruxandra Cesereanu – verbally violent. The revolutionary truth is there regardless of the image of the hero and the victim, in its idealized fullness: revolution does not mean immediate change, but acceptance, time, consolidation: “(...) we must make the Revolution, after 45 years of murkiness, because we have defeated in a single day, consolidate. We must restore our values of culture and spirit and renew them with those of before the tragedy, restore our education and science, recover our humanism torn by the scourge, put *truth* (emphasis added) where there has been nothing but lies. Let us return to what we have always been in history”⁴³.

The year of grace, 1990, begins with the punctuation of democratic values. The Revolution will be the one to trigger and promote this form of manifestation of truth-syllogism, by capitalizing morality, with all the subjective accents and biases that will be felt in and from the pages of the publication: “Everything the National Salvation Front has done so far shows its unwavering will to promote democracy in all spheres of social life, to make the problems – whether big or small – of the people the quintessence of its daily action.”⁴⁴

In retrospect, the *nature of the truth* in *Adevărul* is placed under the evidence that “1990 [...] is governed by truth”⁴⁵, itself a statement-product of political interests.

³⁹ D. Ștefan, “Năravuri vechi în numele noului timp” [“Old habits for new times”], in *Adevărul* newspaper, Issue 6/30 December 1989, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Darie Novăceanu, “Invitație la adevăr” [“Call for truth”], in *Adevărul* newspaper, Issue 6/ 30 December 1989, p. 4.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *Adevărul* editorial staff, “The Values of Democracy”, in *Adevărul* newspaper, Issue 8/4 January 1990, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

Henri Wald proposes a text constructed in line with the rigors of a philosophical meditation, as opposed to a construct of news, an approach that this work has also used in the corpus of the introductory chapters, within which the primary argument is philosophical. The article is individualized by its balance between logic, ethics and aesthetics, counterbalancing texts that resort to emotion as a method of influencing public opinion: “Only a balanced philosophical conscience can maintain the unity of humanity’s basic values. It is true that, being unstable, the unity between the logical, the ethical and the aesthetic must always be re-established. Not only abstraction to explain the concrete is needed, but also attitudes that appreciate it and give it human meaning”⁴⁶.

The article raises the question of values and accuses totalitarianism of destroying them and – in the manner of Hannah Arendt – of restricting truth, a symptomatology recognized in and through: “(...) the transformation of man from an end to a means by the various totalitarian regimes, the degradation of human individuality and its dissolution into the anonymity of manipulable masses, the separation of science from conscience”.⁴⁷

The philosophical stake is to reach “the unity between truth, the good and the beautiful, between knowledge and a pragmatic-affective attitude”⁴⁸, becoming the quintessence of the form of manifestation of pan-truth, that is to say, truth-form.

Two articles – both concerned with the forms of manifestation of truth – the truth of democracy, the myth of change and the recourse to established philosophers – were published a few issues apart, emphasizing multipartyism as a central point on the agenda of the National Salvation Front. Selectively and illustratively, we turn to two mirror-image perspectives. The first establishes that: “Pluralism does not only mean the recognition of a plurality of interests; but nevertheless, their adequate representation and the institutional mix of effective participation”⁴⁹.

The second emphasizes that: “Multipartyism implies several political parties or groupings that will mirror the interests of more or less broad categories of citizens. Some political parties have been formed. Other parties are expected to emerge in the coming days.”⁵⁰

The article of C. Varvara, the first to calculate the possible risks of the approach – not in theory but in practice – is particularly emphasized: “One risk is political fragmentation, which could lead to instability. To avoid such a situation, politicians need to think carefully when devising strategies, and citizens need to think deeply before joining one political movement or another”⁵¹.

Both perspectives draw on established philosophers. Thus, “It should not be forgotten that in the definition of man, ever since Aristotle, the advocates of

⁴⁶ Henri Wald, “The Unity of Values”, in *Adevărul* newspaper, Messages for Adevărul section, Issue 11/ 7 January 1990, pp. 1-5.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ Ovidiu Trăsnea, “Pluralismul ca opțiune” [“Pluralism as a choice”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 11/ 7 January 1990, pp. 1-5.

⁵⁰ C. Varvara, “Pluralismul Politic” [“Political Pluralism”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 12/ 9 January 1990, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

genuine democracy have not ceased to emphasize that to be human is to participate in the affairs of the community”⁵² and “Thomas Aquinas formulated the right, indeed the duty, of democratic essence, to resist when human rights are violated”⁵³, keys to the reading however diverted – the first holds that democracy is a deviant form of government, and the other that kings must be subject to priests, giving rise to the monarch’s right to rule.

Two other articles illustrate the revolutionary truth, supported by the myth of change and the myth of the revolutionary hero. In Ioanid Romanescu’s article, as well as in the one signed by the editorial staff, the notion of value is particularized, and is related to a moral framework of acceptance, by outlining the place and importance of values in post-Decembrist society: “It is almost insulting – after so much sacrifice of the very being of the people – to see some skilled hunters of political positions or some intellectuals posing as victims because they have had their sentences and verses truncated. [...] Let’s not denigrate everything. Not star actions, but solidarity. Let us prove, in the name of the sacrificed, that we are held in the esteem of the whole world, that we know how to defend the freedom so hard won”⁵⁴ and “Values are stabilizing points in this process by their fluidity, in constant motion, crossed by all kinds of currents [...] The price of neglecting values in social life can only be random, unarticulated evolution, costly wandering, costly loss of rhythm that is difficult to recover. That is why the promotion of values is a priority of the Revolution, one of the essential premises of its success.”⁵⁵

Ștefan Berceanu’s article marks the transformation implied by the decisive shift from *Scînteia Poporului* to *Adevărul*, premised on a return to philosophy and truth, the latter intended to legitimize and validate the nature of information at the expense of the propagation of lies: “And the new newspaper called itself the herald of *Truth*. Enormous audacity and commitment for those who will direct its line of journalism and for those who will write it, now, after an era of absolute lying and suppression of truth[...] And so, lying has been, for 25-40 years, the evil web that has tried to destroy the soul of the Romanian nation, from the peasant of our lands to scholars and philosophers.”⁵⁶

The importance of truth will be put forth in the press, but also in conscience, individualizing the essence of the pan-concept: “(...) we have escaped and we are free, but here we are, the poison of the lie going beyond the paroxysm of absurdity is and will be our master. We must learn to dare, to think in Truth, and to discover what Truth is, after this terrible age in which it has been utterly crushed. Let us remember that in Greek writing, truth is that *Aletheia*, which our modern interpretations, from Heidegger onwards, “means the “unhidden one” i.e., the one to be released from its concealment.”⁵⁷

⁵² Ovidiu Trăsnea, *art. cit.*

⁵³ C. Varvara, *art. cit.*

⁵⁴ Ioanid Romanescu, “Revoluție și morală” [“Revolution and Ethics”], in *Adevărul* newspaper, *Messages for Adevărul* section, Issue 12/ 9 January 1990, p. 1.

⁵⁵ *Adevărul* editorial staff, “Valorile și Revoluția” [“Values and Revolution”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 14/11 January 1990, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ștefan Berceanu, “O încercare de a ne întoarce la adevăr” [“An attempt to get back to the truth”], *Messages for the Adevărul*, *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 18/ 16 January 1990, Bucharest, p. 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem.*

The part of truth in press is crucial for democracy, for the development of an open and informed society, and for promoting transparency and accountability in government. After the fall of the communist regime in December 1989, freedom of the press and access to information became key elements in the transition to a democratic society. The process involved the search for truth, its correct contextualization and, above all, the individualization of the practice it implies.

Tabularly, we also opted for a temporal layout, concluding that, in terms of relating truth to democracy, the frequency will be high from February until the end of April. Thereafter, the issue turns to demythologization, with the articles focusing on the opposite of truth – *the lie* (end of September 1990), December being proactively devoted in 1991.

A first juxtaposition of truth in democracy concerns freedom of opinion, the primacy of dialogue, and the *desacralization of power*⁵⁸: “We do not turn to democracy just to discuss freely, but we wish to discuss freely in order to be able to ensure the climate of argument, of thoroughness, to decide for ourselves on the work we have to do, to fulfil our lives (...), in order to join the circuit of contemporary civilization, in the great family of free peoples”⁵⁹ or “The struggle of interests – itself, if we stop to think about it, an implicit and explicit manifestation of freedom – brings discussion, affirmations and negations in relation to the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of today.”⁶⁰

There are articles dedicated to the opinions of the political elite of the time, concerning the state of the country in the post-revolutionary context and freedom. Their discourse analysis suggests a set of rhetorical elements and manipulation techniques. Thus, Ion Iliescu makes a discursive appeal to national cohesion, noting that the Romanian Revolution was unprecedented and that the victory was the consequence of a national consensus: “By its spontaneity, by the scale and degree of cohesion of the revolutionary forces, by the strength of their action and the extent of their effects on the structures of the old regime, it stands as a distinct moment in the whole of the profound transformations in Eastern Europe. The victory of the Revolution is the beneficial consequence of a true national consensus whereby all those who adhere to a system of values characterized by dignity, democracy and freedom – workers, intellectuals, young people, peasants, soldiers of whatever nationality – have accepted the risk of the supreme sacrifice, so that through their struggle and sacrifice they can overthrow the dictatorship.”⁶¹

The speech is delivered by Ion Iliescu in his capacity as President of the Provisional Council, in order to validate the measures taken and to convey that the country is on a “new path”. What is emphasized is the contrast between the

⁵⁸ Cornel Popa, “Descaralizarea puterii” [“Desecralizing power”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 35/ 4 February 1990, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁹ Mihai Neagu, “Criteriul valorii” [“Criterion of value”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 37/ 7 February 1990, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Dragomir Horomnea, “Zona nonsensului” [“Nonsense corner”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 45/ 19 February 1990, p. 1.

⁶¹ Ion Iliescu, Corneliu Coposu, I.V. Săndulescu, “Cum arată țara în liberate” [“What the country looks like when it’s free”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 50/ 22 February 1990, pp. 1-5.

old and the new political structures, placing the new pluralist and democratic system in a positive light and promoting the values of dignity, democracy and freedom as the goals of the Revolution and the government.

On the other hand, C. Coposu assesses the current situation, mentioning the difficulties faced, people were confused and tormented, calling for democracy and dialog and urging citizens to actively take part in the democratic process and to respect democratic institutions and procedures: "We are going through a difficult phase of confusion, turmoil and instability. People are disoriented and fearful. Irresponsible actions promoting violence and intimidation, directed from the shadows, especially against our Party, (...), have caused confusion to Romanian public opinion, maintained by daily threats and absurd slander, of the most authentic Stalinist nature. This restless state of tension and fear must end. Both political parties, including the National Salvation Front Party, as well as the Council of National Unity and the Government have categorically pronounced against violence, against dictatorial methods, against repression, and have made a solemn commitment to the restoration of harmony and true democracy."⁶²

C. Coposu would also refer to the history of his own party and the sacrifices of previous generations to underline his commitment to promoting democracy, relying on historical argument as a method of legitimization.

I. V. Săndulescu responds to the criticism and tries to clarify the importance of free elections, arguing that demonstrations are no longer justified once the election date has been set; he insists on the struggle for recovery and for the return to legality after the long period of dictatorship and portrays the Liberal National Party (PNL) as an active and competitive party: "(...) the fact that the election date is already set no longer justifies any kind of street demonstration. The phenomena that go beyond the acceptable limit of peaceful, non-violent demonstrations became a nuisance, which turn into hooligan acts like the one that took place on the 18th of February. As far as PNL is concerned, we declare that we not be involved whatsoever, no connection whatsoever with such demonstrations. On the contrary, we disapprove and condemn such acts"⁶³.

Against the backdrop of the homage to the Revolution and the generations that fought for democracy, people are prompted to calm, honest work and economic recovery, emphasizing the importance of democracy and the need to pass on its values to the younger generations. The tensions in the post-revolution political climate are also the product of difficulties in organization and communication. What is being suggested is an interim period leading to stabilization. Reluctance and distrust in political parties are being overcome through responsibility and awareness of the seriousness of the situation, with a view to improving the social, political and economic climate: "All the latent and unsatisfied demands of the old regime are being brought up to date (...). After more than four decades of dictatorship, political culture is very low and this leads to a lack of understanding of the current Romanian political phenomenon.

⁶² *Ibidem.*

⁶³ *Ibidem.*

Political parties are being challenged without a good knowledge of what a political party means and perhaps by associating the name of party with that of the former communist party”⁶⁴.

A combined approach can be noted in the trilogy of selected speeches, with imperative emphases on the call for unity, appeals to national sentiments and democratic values, doubling specific concerns and exhortations to ensure a stable transition to democracy. The elites of the day used emotionally inflected language and colourful descriptions to win sympathy, empathy and loyalty. Presenting the subject in a positive light, by emphasizing democratic values, commitment to democracy or contribution to the country’s recovery, can build a positive image of the speaker or party and influence public perception. Moreover, emphasizing the disadvantages of the old structures or the atrocities of the dictatorship period provides a new perspective, within which the current solutions seem more appealing, even if no concrete details are given on how they will be implemented. Presenting ideas in a way that seems obvious or logical may influence the audience to accept the conclusions without analysing them in detail. For example, the fact that elections have already been scheduled indicates that demonstrations are no longer necessary. Explicit use of phrases such as “extremist elements” may emphasize the threat that lingers and encourage the audience to support the measures or ideas proposed by the speaker.

Invoking the sacrifice of previous generations or the sacrifice of young revolutionaries to support certain current policies or actions, creates a sense of moral or patriotic obligation. Emphasizing current difficulties or possible risks leads towards accepting measures or ideas at a faster pace, without analysing the details or long-term consequences, in the spirit of urgency. Recourse to the history or values of parties and personalities brings a sense of continuity and stability, of acceptance of the perspectives or measures proposed. Even at the discursive level, the truth is supported by recourse to the myths of revolution and change.

We will focus in this context on the speech of Ion Iliescu – the charismatic leader and embodiment of the saviour myth, the first one in ‘90 (marking the New Year), analysing the historical context, stylistics, rhetoric, target audience, tone and message, but also the manipulation techniques used, through appeal to emotions, repetitions and slogans, dramatic contrast (old regime vs. democracy and participation), manipulation of data and statistics.

Ion Iliescu resorts to an accumulation of powerful terms – “the monstrous apparatus of repression”⁶⁵ or “unparalleled suffering”⁶⁶ – to emphasize the fate of the victims of the communist regime on the one hand and, on the other, to create a sense of unity around the Revolution. By repeating phrases such as “the people’s revolution has won and will remain invincible” or “the removal of all restrictions”⁶⁷, an atmosphere of conviction and certainty is created, which become

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ Ion Iliescu, “Discurs rostit cu prilejul Anului Nou de preşedintele Consiliului Frontului Salvării Naţionale” [“New Year speech by the President of the Council of the National Salvation Front”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 8/ 4 January 1990, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

slogans of acceptance of the message without challenging it: The revolution has been victorious and we must work together to rebuild the country: “The state of facts we inherited from the old regime – in the economy and in social life – is difficult. In the coming period we will have to overcome many hardships in order to rebuild the country’s economy. We will have to work tenaciously, united to ensure that all difficulties are overcome, the national economy is rebuilt and prosperous. Only united will we be able to continue to overcome hardships. This is the appeal that the National Salvation Front is addressing to the whole country, with the conviction that it will have a broad echo in all people”⁶⁸.

Ion Iliescu resorts to contrasting positions in order to emphasize the importance of change and to secure support, classified under the *rule of versus* – bad dictatorship vs. good revolution. It emphasizes the importance of democracy, the elimination of anti-popular laws and economic reforms to ensure national welfare: “A guiding line in everything the National Salvation Front undertakes – must be the promotion of democracy in all spheres of social life, a genuine participation of the masses in decision-making and their control over the ruling factors”⁶⁹.

A central element of the post-Decembrist political imaginary consists in the sacrifices of the revolutionaries, an emotional association between change and the respect paid, a homage interrelated with the need for legitimacy of the new system.

Ion Iliescu resorts to figures, which (this time too – even in a new context!) are considered capable of giving a quantifiable measure of the progress made in various areas, the comparative resort⁷⁰ being specifically targeted: “specific measures have been taken to improve the supply of food, energy and heating to the population. Quantities of electricity and natural gas allocated to the population during this period are 40-45 percent higher than in the corresponding period last year”⁷¹.

In conclusion, the documentation/research of the archive of the newspaper *Adevărul* from the early '90s reveals the relation *text/discourse* – *thought* – *power*, through explicit correlation with the landmarks of *truth* and specific marks of the post-Decembrist political imaginary. A specification should be made: the Revolution itself should not be confused with *revolutionary truth*, both indicating a new *truth-reality* relationship. In this context, the myth of the Revolution generated the myth of change.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ “Wheat, rye 3170 kg/ha compared to 8180; barley 4645 kg/ha compared to 7380; grain maize 1913 kg/ha compared to 16500 ears; sunflower 1301 kg/ha compared to 5635; sugar beet 24700 kg/ha compared to 100000; fall potatoes 14300 kg/ha compared to 81296” – *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ *Idem*, “Discurs rostit cu prilejul Anului Nou de președintele Consiliului Frontului Salvării Naționale” [“New Year speech by the President of the Council of the National Salvation Front”], in *Adevărul* Newspaper, Issue 8/4 January 1990, p. 5.

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