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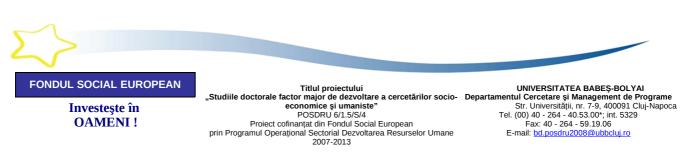E-mail: bd.posdru2008@ubbcluj.ro

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The historical timelines offer a great load of evidence for majority groups threatening minorities. Assimilation, segregation or genocide happened at a grater scale and much more often than pluralism. The first three dissolved, marginalized or eliminated others, in order for "us" to flourish. The last one, though it was a commendable attempt to promote equality among all, seems in the post-modern era, and regarded with a pessimistic critical eye, to have failed. Social tensions between groups, the lottery of crafting one's identity and the uncertainty of finding a place to belong to are premises of the hazard of everything ending, one way or another. The social imagination, as a refuge of coping in the world, is fueled by dynamic ideoscapes and mediascapes (Appadurai, 1996), which create, intentionally or not, social tensions. Hall and his colleagues sustain that all moral struggles against external threats become tinged with apocalyptic significance (Hall et al., 2000). Individuals and groups may not be able to cope with social tensions that pierce their lives, and hazardous reactions may lament in the fear of the definitive end. The end of the world is everybody's concern.

The present thesis addresses apocalyptic narratives developed in the Romanian cyberhate. The world is feared to come to an end. Mass media channels have begun to suggest and even foresee the end of the world as we know it. News paper headlines like "White people in UK cities 'likely to be a minority in 20 years'"(The Daily Mail, 2007), "Minority group numbers set to rise to 20 per cent"(Keely, 2010), "The Bulgarians could be minority in their own country by 2050"(Realitatea, 2010), "Study: White people will be minority in the US by 2050" (Antena 3, 2009) – just to name a few – only add to the worrying view over our times. Information technologies, globalization and the fear of group extinction are intertwined in the social and psychological phenomenon of cyberhate - violence against, separation of, defamation, disappointment or hostility toward others based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation expressed on the Internet (Franklin, 2010). In the cyberhate setting, I research extreme nationalistic speech as fostering and developing dystopian narratives, in which the Romanian and European identities are constructed and felt as disappearing, as experiencing the highest threat, never before encountered throughout the history. Once central and dominant, the white Christian world is now described as loosing its centrality and its prerogatives, as transforming into a cultural and numeric minority.

Chapter 1 Conceptualizing cyberhate

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical contributions that help in understanding apocalyptic fears and anxieties and the way they work in a new social research field, the cyberspace. I work with the agenda setting theory, with conceptual developments on cyberconflicts, with sociological conceptualizations of globalization and its effects, of ethnicity and whiteness, and with social psychological approaches to identity, belonging and emotions. Throughout my analysis, I consistently remember to place the theories into cyberspace and to explore how they might function differently than the off-line social reality. These theories prove valuable in exploring whose world appears and is felt to be threatened to come to an end and in exploring how the story of the end of the world developed on the monitor emotionally touch the audiences.

The mere concept of cyberhate implies knowledge from various fields in order to decipher it. Cyber- is derived from cybernetic, which has a Greek origin in κυβερνητικός (ciberniticos) = skilled in steering and governing. The translation to the electronic environment denotes the ability to control and determine the processes in that specific medium. Hate, on the other side, is a clear

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and all too human emotion, which has been compared to love[1]. In this specific context that I discuss, hate is a cultural, social and political dimension of human interaction. It is not only a feeling, an emotion or a sentiment – it is a symbol of the way humans interact in particular circumstances, and it fosters extremist ideologies.

Theories of new media

Using De Fleur Ball-Rokeach's analytical scheme, media effects on individuals can be understood as cognitive (e.g. agenda setting), affective (e.g. anxiety) and behavioural (e.g. de/activation) (1982, in Karatzogianni, 2006). The way media delivers information to its audiences has the potential of setting an agenda – a list of topics of interest – that can determine anxious reactions, and these anxious emotions have the potential to be translated into (negative) behaviour. Manuel Castells, Marshall McLuhan and Douglas Kellner have extensively theorized the new civilisational dimension of the digital age. McLuhan theorized that digital technologies should be understood to the extent that they shape the society. His famous word-play "the media is the mass-age" versus the "the media is the message" (Gardner, 2009) beautifully summarizes how information in the digital age has reached mass-consumption levels and, at the same time, media delivers the message while or after "mass-aging" it – or shaping it in accordance to interests and goals.

Karatzogianni's research on how new media can be used for conflict has shown that the internet is an appropriate environment for sociopolitical and ethnoreligious conflicts (Karatzogianni, 2006, 2009). One of her arguments is that informational societies characterized by globalizing trends have also led to the globalization of conflict.

My interest in this thesis is what happens when the virtuality in the digital age offers the opportunity for identity anxieties to coagulate and express in specific forms. White individuals use the digital media not only to strengthen and practise their identity, but also to develop anxious narratives regarding their identity in the larger globalization trends. As Fortier puts it, the way internet and digital technologies are used illustrate that multiculturalism is irreversible, and "we are going to be a global village eventually, and who knows in another hundred years' time what sort of a mix there'll be" (Bodmer, in Fortier, 2008, np).

Theories of globalization

Inda and Rosaldo define globalization as the intensification of global interconnectedness, suggesting a world full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction and exchange (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002). They propose the concept of de/territorialisation to analyze the complex effects of globalization, which suggests that culture and space/territory are no longer interdependent, that cultural processes and cultural products transcend localities and dislocate items and actors.

In order to more easily study and understand the processes of globalization, Arjun Appadurai proposes a conceptual schema of five items: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes (Appadurai, 1996; 2002). In the present thesis, I work with ethnoscapes and mediascapes. The ethnoscape is the universe or dimension of global cultural processes that reunites tourists with locals, natives with immigrants, guest workers with local

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[1] "Article 84. That there are not so many species of Hatred as of Love: But although Hatred is directly opposed to Love, it is not distinguished into so many species, because we do not notice the difference between the evils from which we are separated in volition so much as that between the goods to which we are joined." (Descartes, 1989)

employers, refugees and exiles with temporary homes. Appadurai asserts these moving and flowing groups of people affect political and administrative decisions, as well as identity processes and collective memories, friendships, kinships, work relations and leisure, far more than it might be guessed. The mediascape reunites all the channels of information flow, be it determined and controlled by media empires, be it sent in cyberspace by hobby journalists that write on their blogs. This flowing dimension shapes the imaginary, delivers processed ideas, elicits new ones, in a never ending process, and can determine how the world is seen or lived.

My work is based on the premise that the post-modern world is rhizomic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, in Appadurai, 1996; idem, in Karatzogianni, 2006). Hierarchical forms of interaction between actors are disassembled or replaced by networks without cores. These networks entail rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other (Appadurai, 1996; 2002). The globalization has broken its promises for an international community (Appadurai, 2002), for a global village (McLuhan, 1962) or for multiculturalism, and whiteness is the social identity that summarizes the dominating perspective of the west over the rest.

Theories of identities

Although the present research is on East European processes, the discussion on whiteness proves to be of acknowledgeable relevance, as Garner makes a case for whiteness – an American concept stemmed from the historical Black slavery – as a racial and ethnic dimension of the European scene, since, he states, culture is as important in racialising the others as the colour of the skin (Garner, 2006). The European white race is not denominating a unitary group, and Europeans can be racialised according to their ethnic origins. The term xeno-racism (Sivanandan, 2001, in Garner, 2006) denotes processes through which national identities in Europe are reinforced through considering other ethnicities and nationalities as non-white or less white, which creates a hierarchy of shades of whiteness. Racial nationalism has been a relevant cultural dimension in Central and East Europe even before the mid twentieth century holocaust. Politics of social hygiene and eugenics have been of interest in this area during the 19th century in the research projects of the anthropological school of Vienna (Turda and Weindling, 2007).

But why do social critics, as Appadurai, worry as much about the failure of globalization? Globalization and its supporters omitted that the national idea and the nation-state are structured on a somehow hard-wired belief that the nation has an ethnic genius (Appadurai, 2006), and in the collective psyche, this identity genius is easily translated into a sacred cosmology of the nation, on which bases national ethnic groups are incited to choose the insiders and differentiate, most often through negative labels, the outsiders. This leads to the issue of majority-minority relations, which, in the liberal democracies of the globalization, are tinged with uncertainty and reciprocal suspicion. "Fear of Small Numbers. An Essay on the Geography of Anger" (Appadurai, 2006) sustains that the social uncertainties created by the global flows or scapes penetrate the breaches in the nation-states, by means of census uncertainty – the national majority can never really know, in a globalized context, how many people of a certain sort exist; and by means of unclear definitions of identities – a multicultural approach to a community suggests that the common cultural traits should be acknowledged and appreciated, even though it creates uncertainty in the process of inclusion and exclusion. In a globalized society, the inclusion of some does not imply anymore the exclusion of others, as social identities overlap.

Social uncertainties make way, then, to emotional reactions and to feeling the world, rather than thinking and reasoning with the world. TenHouten proposed a neurocognitive sociology of emotions as a three-level analysis combining the biological and the evolutionary dimensions, the mental and the psychological dimensions, and the social and the cultural dimensions (TenHouten, 2007). Anger and fear are most often discussed together, in contrast. Both of them are reactions to problematic social contexts, but their outcomes are different. While anger is a positive affective reaction, fear is negative. An angry individual or group directs their anger specifically against the source of the problem with the intent of eliminating it. Fear, on the other hand, is a negative affective reaction, as it develops an effort to escape or move away from the dangerous situation. Hatred, according to TenHouten, is the most intense desire to destroy (2007). It is a tertiary emotion, as it can last for a long time – as long as a lifetime – and is a complex array of other simpler emotions. It may combine, for instance, anger as action toward destruction – which makes hate a positive affective experience – and fear, as a desire for aversion, for flight – a negative affective experience. Hatred is, thus, ambivalent. According to Freud, the lack of expression of hate can lead to its intensification and generalization – the son that hates his father without expressing his hate, will also hate his brother in law or will eventually hate all men (Turner, 2007). At the same time, overt expressions of hate have the potential to translate into expressions of love.

Chapter 2 Social and historical roots of cyberhate in Romania

In chapter 2, I follow the national idea throughout two centuries of Romanian history, in order to understand the origins of extreme nationalism that today expresses on-line. As well, insights in internet usage in Romania prove relevant in understanding that Romanian cyberhate is a growing phenomenon that has a consistent audience, as nationalist ideas are spread in the Romanian public opinion. Historical accounts and sociological theories on nationalism come together and address another question: what is specific to Romanian cyberhate and what is inspired by the global white supremacism on-line? Understanding ethnicity as "a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients" (Yinger, 1976, in Yinger, 1985) lies at the core of inter-ethnic relations in Eastern Europe. Balkan nationalisms – the expression of desire for national identity or the process of reinforcing a national identity – upset the prevailing balance of power (Bhikhu Parekh, in Sfikas, 1999) and is associated with a marked discomfort (Said, in Sfikas, 1999) in the western world. The dynamic flows of the globalization and the advances in ICTs, drawing on the heritage of the Second World War, have turned nationalism, in the view of the western world, into an outmoded form of political behavior (Sfikas, 1999). The societies of the globalization era grow diverse, as they host migration flows, and political discourses have promoted tolerance and protection of the human rights, to accommodate diversity. In this sense, a nationalistic discourse in the Balkan area and in Eastern Europe is accused as extreme and unnecessary, thus obsolete. But it could be understood that nationalism is endemic to the Balkans. A historical uncertainty of belonging could entail a longing for identity that surpasses generations and political regimes. Romania has had a torn history, its present regions being historical reasons of dispute between imperial powers, which did not allow for a local identity to establish until recently, although this establishment is still questionable. In this sense, nationalism may be the last resort for the peoples of the Balkans, and for Romania, to deal with the historical challenges that characterize this region. The last two centuries of Romanian history can broadly be understood as a period of

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emergent national identity and unification into a state reinforced through racial nationalism (1800s to 1918-1920, 1920s to 1940s) and a period when ethnicity and nationalism were heavily affected by communism (1940s to 1989, 1989 to the present day), throughout which the national idea has been a question of genetic belonging (ancestors of the same ethnicity), of cultural construction (common language and national symbols) and solidarity through self declaration (Lazăr, 2000).

Since my research begins with the discourses of the New Right, it is worth considering that today's right wing extremism in Romania draws heavily on the Legionnaire Movement. Its leaders and representatives, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Horia Sima, Marshal Ion Antonescu, Ion Moța and Vasile Marin, are central symbols of the extreme nationalism after 1989. Accounting for the extent to which extreme nationalism spreads today in Romania is not an easy task, as, in some researchers' view, it is difficult to actually count each organization and to establish affiliations and connexions among them (Andreescu, 2003), but at the same time, in the 21st century the most prominent organization that draws on the Legionnaire Movement is the New Right.

Studies on the public perception of the Roma or Gypsy minority in Romania reveal a pattern of majority view over minorities consistent with the political ideology and public intellectual discourse of nationalism. The Roma issue in Romania has, throughout the history, been a problematic aspect of the multi-ethnic and multicultural Romanian space. The fact that these attitudes are still prone to extremist values – as an IRES study published in 2011 on attitudes toward minorities in Romania and the ethnobarometer developed since 1999 show - is consistent with the constant re-emergence of nationalist discourse in Romania.

Research questions

Based on these theoretical frames and concepts, I pursue several goals in researching apocalyptic narratives in cyberhate:

To identify what is specific to Romanian cyberhate and what is inspired by the global white supremacism.

To explore whose world is felt and appears to be threatened to come to an end.

To assess how the apocalypse is narrated: will the end be an armed conflict, a reversed ethnic demography, a cultural melting pot ?

To assess the affective dimension of cyber-apocalypses: can the stories of the end of the world emotionally touch the viewer ?

Chapter 3 Methodologies for assessing apocalyptic narratives in cyberhate

Chapter 3 presents the methodological challenges and decisions that have guided this doctoral project. I develop on the content analysis, on the new social research field, the internet, and on practical and ethical aspects of my research.

Even though, as Daniels (2009, 195-206) makes it clear, sociologists have avoided the Internet as a research field for a long time, cyberhate is a consistent social problem that needs to be approached thoroughly and systematically. The research on cyberhate developed here is based on qualitative content analysis on on-line texts and visual items. Up-to-date research software has been highly useful in collecting, storing and analysing the data, and in using qualitative data in a rich and powerful understanding of cyberhate speech and its social imaginary dimension that publicizes the approach of the apocalypse.

Content analysis is defined as a valid method for making inferences from text to other different conditions or properties of the source of the text (Krippendorff, in Chelcea, 2004, ch. 11),

which means that by acquiring knowledge on the on-line content, further knowledge on the conveyors of the on-line content could be obtained. As cyberhate content is supported by off-line structures, the content analysis approach to the Romanian cyberhate contributes to understanding and monitoring how extreme nationalist organizations in Romania make use of the new media.

The New Right blog is on-line and active since June 2008. Since then, over 2000 posts have been published. I manually selected articles from January 2010 to March 2011 – half of the blog's life. A preliminary sample of 450 posts was selected and saved in an electronic archive, in the form of portable documents (*.pdf). When necessary – for practical reasons, e.g. the resolution of the embedded file was too small – I also downloaded and saved images (*.jpg or *.gif). The practical analysis of data was facilitated by the MaxQDA programme, very useful as a management tool in storing and categorizing files, applying codes, filtering codes and data, and generating graphic descriptions of the analysis. Reading and coding each article determined several case-drops based on their level of irrelevance to the research objectives, and the final sample was N=290.

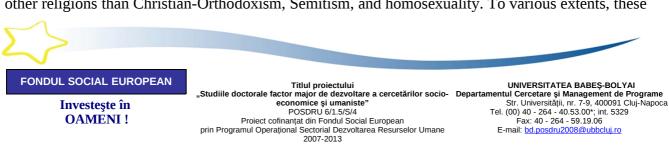### Chapter 4 Stories on the New Rright blog

In order to better understand Romanian cyberhate, in chapter 4 I analyze the New Right blog (blog.nouadreapta.org) through a qualitative content analysis, by looking at the ethnosymbols it utilizes and at the apocalyptic narratives that refer to Europe and Romania. Extreme threat to a national idea or identity is not a new issue in extreme nationalist speech, but my exploratory study aims at identifying precisely what scenarios are narrated by the New Right and what the current or new topic in describing extreme threat is.

<u>The New Right symbolism</u>

Ethnosymbolism underlines the continuity between pre-modern and modern forms of social cohesion, without overlooking the changes brought about by modernity. At the core of the ethnosymbolic approach lies the idea of a dominant ethnos (Smith, 1991, in Leoussi, 2007), around which, throughout the history, other ethnic groups have gathered and formed communities, later reunited on the same territory, under the same national name and organized into the same state. In Apadurai's line of thought, the ethnosymbolic approach recognizes the ethnic primordia (2006), which is at stake in the context of global flows of information, norms and values. This proves exceptionally relevant for the ethnic and national dynamics of Eastern Europe, where national groups are ethnically various and diverse, and the questions of ethnic dominance have been negotiated throughout the history.

The symbolism of the New Right blog is constructed on European, Romanian and white supremacist intertwined symbols, which illustrates the core national idea that the blog advocates and the belonging to a global movement of strengthening and supporting the white race and the European culture and descent of peoples over the world. This is consistent with the historical discourse of extreme nationalism in Romania, which sustained the formation of Greater Romania as an independent entity embedded in a European setting from which it would be different by refusing modern influences and Semitic politics, and to which it would be similar by practicing and preserving a Christian identity and a white lineage, refusing the Roma population.

Following the evolution of the national idea to set a general scheme of the extreme nationalist usual topics, it was reinforcing to identify the same topics in the New Right blog. The historical extreme nationalism in Romania rejected modernity, western influences, ethnic rights, other religions than Christian-Orthodoxism, Semitism, and homosexuality. To various extents, these

factors were considered a threat to Romania and to the Romanian national idea, and this perception is present today on the New Right blog. But different topics emerged as well, during data collection and data analysis. I structured my data description and analysis around the Romanian and the European identities, on one hand, and according to the communication flows: messages conveyed by the New Right and audience reactions to these messages.

The New Right apocalyptic stories
The apocalypse of Europe:
1. The demographic decline of white people has a basic meaning for the New Right: a fertility rate which is below the minimum necessary for a population to be able to reproduce itself, which is directly related to a constantly aging population. This fact is not spontaneous, they say, but it is supported by political manoeuvres and stressed by economical crises. What is interesting in this narrative is the type of political manoeuvres that are denounced as threatening the white population: the New Right promotes the idea that the European Union project, along with a well thought global order, sustains homosexuality and destroys the traditional nuclear family, united by law and by the Christian God. Laws for formal alliances between individuals, disregarding their gender, and replacing the importance of a religious union, unbalances the value of the traditional family and promotes a social structure which is not propitious for the birth of children. The still remaining traditional families and couples decide not to have children because of economical challenges, which would not allow for their children to be raised with a minimum necessary insured. Plus, the feminist trend determines women to value career and success more than family, a husband and children, and they decide to have a child later each year. The blog is tinged with paranoia towards a global conspiracy which aims at replacing any source of food, nutrients, and medicines valuable in sustaining life with artificial chemicals that accumulate in the human organism and poison it. A global bio-politics of demographic control is designed first against the white population, only second against the rest of the world. The demographic decline of white people is politically determined, enhanced by economical challenges and by the proliferation of modern values like feminism and affirmative action, and coordinated by a dark malevolent power.

2. The spiritual and religious death of Europe: Europeans are subjected to losing their religion and growing atheist, or converting to various other religions, as a result of a failed European Union project. The de-Christianization is narrated as a planned process, entailed by the coordinated action of the institutions of the European Union, which prove to the New Right to be faulty. This results in the loss of the Christian identity, a core element of the European culture and identity that spans centuries of history. Even though Europe has marked cultures and histories with its Christian missionary campaigns throughout the globe, the old continent faces today a heavy loss of the Christian practice. This proves to be more than the secularization entailed by the modern era, as there is more than the separation of political power and religious power. There is a decrease of faith and a spiritual numbness that Europeans experience.

3. The cultural transformation of Europe: Eurabia: In the views of the New Right, a political conspiracy at the European level has programmed the Islamization of Europe, which is an immense offense to the European identity, culturally and historically defined as different from and contrasting to the Islamic Orient (Said, 1978). A virtual new state, Eurabia, is announced as the death of the formerly strong and central culture of the Europeans. This future state is determined by several factors: the de-Cristianization of Europeans, the permissive political setting, the demographic dynamics of Muslims in Europe and the Jihadist ideology. As the Europeans experience a spiritual

void, the Muslim philosophy and religion could easily answer to the lack of spirituality, be it by gaining converts, be it by expanding through its own numbers and practice. A politically planned expansion of mosques will take over former Christian towns and cities across Europe, and the landscape will definitely change under the different cultural symbols. European politicians subscribe to this process, as they expect supporters and sympathizers among the Muslim migrants to whom they approve the exercise of their own culture and religion on European grounds. The Christian and European identity is betrayed by the search and avarice for votes and political power. Europe is extremely feeble in the face of a Jihadist ideology, against which it has no spiritual or political power. Muslims have the discipline and structure of practicing their own culture even on foreign (European) grounds, while Europeans slowly forget their own cultural and religious practices. The orchestrated effort of Islamization is completed by the demographics of the Muslim population. The birth rates of Muslim women are twice or thrice higher than the birth rate of white women, which is consistent with the first topic of the apocalyptic narrative, the demographic decline of whites.

4. By 2050, Europe will be no more: The apocalyptic threats to Europe, as told above, are loaded with symbolism and affective content. Emotional reactions to the scenarios are intensely negative, and expressions of hatred are frequently associated with the discourse of Islamization and discrimination against Christians, while expressions of concern occur in relation to the issue of demographic decline. The somehow soft discourse on these two issues – discrimination against whites and emotional reactions – is shadowed by a strong acknowledgment that the apocalypse will happen, and approximations of the chronological end are made, along with models of extinction. Roughly, approximations gravitate around 2030, 2040 or 2050 for the demographic decline to end in either the disappearance of white peoples, either in turning them into minorities.

The apocalypse of Romania:

1. The Hungarization of Romania: The Hungarization of Romania appears to be the highest threat to the Romanian identity. It is a process heavily determined by political manoeuvres and it co-occurs quite frequently with the certainty of the efficiency of the process. The most important dimension of the political conspiracy is the fact that the Hungarian minority in Romania is represented by a political party which has, since 1989, always been in the ruling combination of powers. As a result, the New Right denounces a political conspiracy between the Hungarian party and the Romanian parties that maintain the power through ethnic and national bargain. For instance, the New Right accuses the present leading party, the Liberal Democratic Party of Romania, to preserve its power through an alliance with the Democrat Union of the Hungarians in Romania, which, in return, manipulate the politics in Romania in order to obtain territorial autonomy in the counties with the highest density of Hungarians[2], and, eventually, for the entire Romanian province of Transylvania. A higher goal of re-attaching Transylvania to Hungary is indirectly pursued. Frequent accusations of the president or Romania or of ministers are present throughout the blog, and, statistically, the Hungarization of Romania is the most frequent topic that the New Right addresses. The New Right accuses the constant pressure that Hungarians pose to the Romanian political system, in order to obtain their autonomy, and reports on an orchestrated action at the European level in this sense are present on the blog. The vice-president of the European Parliament is the leader of the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania, which symbolizes, for the New Right, a success of the Hungarians in approaching their autonomy goals. To the exasperation of the

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[2]Harghita and Covasna are in the middle of Romania and are inhabited by a 75% Hungarian majority.

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New Right, Hungarians in Romania have recently been allowed to apply for citizenship to Hungary. Illustrative of the Romanian apocalypse brought by the Hungarization are several maps that the New Right published on their blog. A model represents the middle of Romania as being Hungarized and the other one represents Romania without Transylvania.

2. A different country: Rromania: The second ethnic threat to the Romanian identity is Gypsification. While the Hungarization of Romania is a political and symbolic process that impedes on Romanian values and symbols, the Gypsification process is a question of numbers, sustained by political manoeuvres, which leads to discrimination against Romanians. A symbolic question of the resemblance of the names of the two ethnicities, Romanian and Romani or Roma, is very much denounced by the New Right. Suspecting a conspiracy between Gypsy elites and the political powers, the New Right imagines that Romania will disappear off the map and a new country will replace it: Rromania. This is a word play, as Roma in the Romani language is supposedly written with a double R, Rroma, and the resemblance to Romanian gives way to a new name, Rromania, the country of Gypsy.

Audience reactions to the apocalyptic stories

The audience is not just a piece in the restructuring of the world through the voice of the New Right. Since individuals and institutions use their voice as agency and change the world in new narratives that might be parallel to the social reality, the New Right succeeded in recreating a world that is ending, as a result of several ethnic, religious and demographic processes that unbalance the world as we know it. Their success is illustrated by the fact that the audience, the on-line reader, decided to respond to it and to signal that the message has been received. In this stance, the voice of the New Right becomes a dialogic event, which can symbolically alter the world. The question of voice and discourse, though, transformed the listener/reader into a piece of the puzzle that the discourse manipulates, which, in a critical view, voids the audience of power and will, and thus of agency. The description of the comments to the New Right blog invalidates this view and shows that the audience has its own agency, as their voice not only acknowledges the New Right speech and the apocalyptic stories, but also develops them, explains them, tries to resolve them and searches for solutions. All these discourses are loaded with will and, thus, agency. The world is not re-shaped only by the New Right bloggers, but also by their audience. In this sense, there is a partnership between the two elements of the communication process – the teller and the listener, or the writer and the reader. The recounts of the apocalypse originate on-line, as New Right bloggers write their ideas and spread other consistent stories through the internet and their computers. On the other symbolic side of their screens, there is an audience interested in their discourse that is able to receive the stories and develop them to the point of counter-reaction.

Chapter 5 The New Right cyberhate strategies

Chapter 5 analyses the data described in chapter 4, and shows that the Romanian cyberhate uses textual, visual, emotional and interactional strategies through which the world is constructed as ending and through which certain emotions – anxiety, anger, hate – receive normative and ideological value. These strategies also invest the audience with the knowledge of regulating the aforementioned emotions, which are channelled toward the threatening Other. The apocalyptic narrative then proves as interactive and as involving both the conveyors and the audiences.

1. Textual strategies: What is particularly important in the textual strategies of the Romanian cyberhate is the relying on familiar and relevant information. The rhetoric and coherence behind

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these textual artifices lie in the episodic – in the historical sense – relevance of the concepts used in propositional structures. The textual strategy, then, is embedded in the sociocultural strategy and works with it toward a macro-strategy that depicts the apocalyptic worlds. These textual strategies reconstruct the world of the reader not by ignoring the current state of affairs and the baggage the reader has, but rather by using all the pieces and combining them in a new entity. At this point, the efficiency of the textual strategy rests in the potential the new structures and representations have. When other powerful strategies add to this potentiality, the relevance of the New Right apocalyptic speech appears even more poignant.

2. Visual strategies: Visual bridges, calligraphies, geographical representations work together on the New Right blog in re-constructing the world. Individuals work with representations of the social reality that they construct by themselves and with the aid of others – as is the process of primary socialization. It might be the case that the means by which the New Right re-constructs the world is a mere process of socialization on the third level – adulthood. These visual strategies tell to the viewer how the world is, how it must be represented and understood. The New Right assumes, again, the role of wisdom and understanding of existence, and such powerful roles get to model other people's perceptions.

3. Emotional and interactional strategies: The textual and visual strategies that I have elaborated in this chapter are efficient and simple to use since they are fixed in a sociocultural strategy that allows for the apocalyptic significance to be perceived and believed in. The intentionality of these strategies works on even higher levels, as they are combined in macro-strategies that co-ordinate and structure the narratives on the New Right blog. Macro-strategies aim at establishing the topic in a communication stance. Ahmed analyses the cultural politics of emotion as working with what she calls sticky words and metonymies (Ahmed, 2004). Cultural politics work through the repetition of words that gain, thus, power and intense significance, as they become increasingly associated with chosen items from the social reality. The combination that is created between a sticky word and a signified object becomes a tool of cultural politics in stimulating emotions, agency, change, scapegoating, understandings, explanations, representations of the world.

Chapter 6 Cyberhate and the Romanian mediascape

Nevertheless, since the internet is a constantly expanding environment, with intricate dynamics and dimensions, the value of the apocalyptic narratives on the New Right blog as relevant can be questioned. Chapter 6 addresses this question by positioning the New Right blog in relation to other websites and media, political and cultural actors from Romania, and shows that the blog, along with the rest of the websites, is a part of a large virtual rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, in Karatzogianni, 2006), a network without core which has the infinite ability to expand through each of its threads. This places the apocalyptic cyberhate discourse into a larger mediascape – a concept coined by Appadurai, which reunites all the channels of information flow, be it determined and controlled by media empires, be it sent in cyberspace by hobby journalists that write on their blogs (1996). This flowing dimension shapes the imaginary, delivers processed ideas, elicits new ones, in a never ending process, and can determine how the world is seen or lived. Thus, in chapter 6 I show that the Romanian cyberhate ethnic and national cosmology, in Appadurai's words (2006), is illustrative of the public opinion in Romania, regarding national and ethnic issues.

The fact that most of the articles present on the New Right blog are re-published from other websites has a double significance. On one hand, the New Right blog refers to external sources to gather data for their ideology, and if the original article does not totally comply with their goals, the

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New Right authors intervene and alter the body of the text or the images attached to the textual message. On the other hand, since the original articles did not need very much alteration in order to suit a far right speech, it can be argued that the original websites were of a far right, or nationalist orientation. Browsing the referred websites, it can be noticed that they were nationalist blogs, press review websites or important names of the Romanian written mass media. This is consistent with Andreescu's considerations on the Romanian public opinion, which, on several occasions, proved the availability for and proneness toward nationalistic discourse (2003).

In botany, a rhizome is a mass of roots that spreads horizontally underground. If a rhizome is broken into parts, each part has the ability to support itself and to continue to grow into a new plant. After describing and analysing the contents of the New Right blog, my aim is to show the extent of its interaction with the broader Romanian internet. A virtual rhizome connects the New Right blog with various other websites. The data have shown that the New Right blog is not a solitary on-line diary or journal of a few people, but that it spreads across the cyberspace in intricate, almost amorphous ways. Whether these connections are ideologically coherent will be the object of discussion at this point.

The virtual rhizome that develops through the New Right blog – my starting point, but not the core – indicates that what I have previously called cyberhate penetrates far more layers on the Romanian internet. A far right virtual rhizome develops from link to link, from article to article, from citation to citation. The combination of mainstream, religious, independent, alternative media and blogs suggests the potential of expansion of the far right rhizome. Since any part of a rhizome can survive and grow by itself into a new entity, an analysis on each point on the map would lead to alternative hate and fear universes.

Chapter 7 The end is nigh. Or is it? Conclusions

Chapter 7 resumes and discusses the findings of this exploratory research and also opens various opportunities for further studies.

Apocalyptic themes are constituent to extreme rightist and nationalist imaginaries (Berlet, 1999). This thesis has addressed the strategies used on the internet by the Romanian New Right to create dystopian futures, to manipulate emotions, to re-construct Romanianess, Europeaness, whiteness and, in contrast, Otherness. The New Right blog is not a peripheral phenomenon, as mapping the links it collects and summarizes showed an intimate relation between various types of media in Romania addressing apocalyptic and dystopian macro-themes.

Whose world is ending

The most pervasive characteristic of whiteness as constructed in cyberhate is its death. Whiteness is feared to disappear. The imaginative exercise that takes place in cyberhate creates dystopian futures that at times seem to come from science-fiction novels or films, but their realistic dimension lies in the emotional efficiency and impact they in fact have. The on-line apocalyptic narratives are highly reflexive, and a central question that needs to guide the understanding of these narratives is what does combining textual, visual and emotional strategies in on-line discourses tell us about the fantasy about the national self, to use Fortier's words (2008). The mere content of the narratives on the New Right blog is relevant and important to the present politics, and even more so when these narratives are observed across the media rhizome, since, as Fortier formulates, the multicultural question of the national future defines the urgencies of the present (2008).

The national self (Romanianess) and the racial self (whiteness) are feared to disappear due to increasing social uncertainties (Appadurai, 2006). These are tensions created in ethnoscapes and mediascapes through number or census uncertainties – when "we" do not know how many of "them" there are - and through unclear definitions of identities – when individuals can easily belong to several cultural, ethnic, racial groups, at the same time.

Europeaness is bordered, in Europe's apocalypse, by Islam, atheism, migrants and ethnic children. But the discourse creates two Europes. A Golden Age Europe is loved, sacred, Christian and God fearing, it is genuinely white and it is stable and reinforced by its peoples, the peoples born and bread on its territories. It is the Europe that once conquered the world, that was once the craddle of humanity and of culture. And the other Europe is feared to disappear, it is ill, it is spiritually and religiously weakened and feeble. It is torn from the inside and aggressed from the outside. As Fortier states, the figurations of transformations brought about by multiculturalism and globalization re-create the body that is being transformed into the evidence itself (2008). Thus, the apocalypse is a reflexive narrative – it is a proof to itself.

The far right virtual rhizome develops, as follows, an intense scenario of the end of white, Christian Europeans and of white, Christian Romanians. The two endings are related, and the fall of Europe draws along the fall of Romania.

Affective efficiency of cyber-apocalypses

The coconstructivist paradigm (Holodynski and Friedlmeier, 2006) and the social theory of emotions (Turner, 2007) explain the apocalyptic narratives in the far right virtual rhizome as a cultural context that manipulates emotions and imprints them on the viewer (Ahmed, 2004) – through production and transmission of emotions, and educate the viewer to channel their emotions towards external objects, the minorities – through regulation of emotions. Furthermore, these paradigms explain how the far right virtual rhizome creates and transmits emotions that can intensify without a necessary stimulus. Once imprinted on the readers, hate and anxiety have the capacity to grow on their own. The strategies used on-line in this sense place the moment of the apocalypse in undetermined times: it is already happening, and at the same time it will happen in a matter of years. The uncertainty of the moment of cultural and group extinction creates the certainty of the apocalypse. In other words, the on-line narratives manipulate the dystopian future and persuade that, even if it is not certain when it would happen, it will definitely happen.
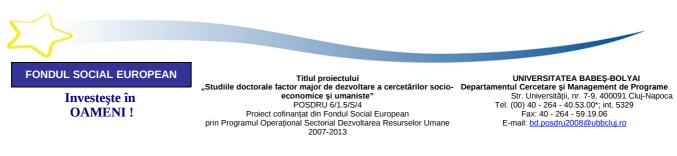
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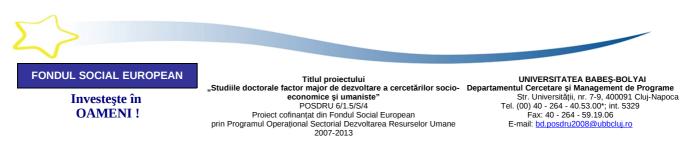E-mail: bd.posdru2008@ubbcluj.ro

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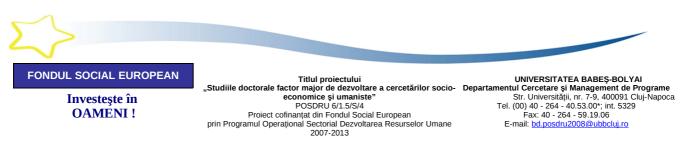
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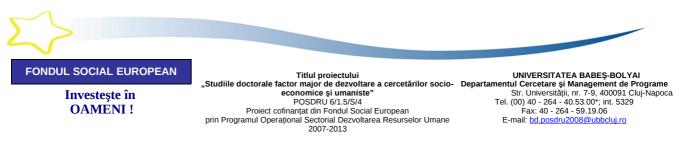51. Holodynski, M., & Friedlmeier, W. (2006). *Development of Emotions and Emotion Regulation.* USA: Springer.

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