

## BOOK REVIEW

ARABELA NECULAU<sup>1</sup>

---

Cristina Gavriluță, *Negativul cotidianului* [*The negative of the daily*],  
Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2017, Iași, pp. 253,  
ISBN 978-606-714-371-3

„Negativul cotidianului” [“The Negative of the Daily”], written by Cristina Gavriluță, appeared in 2017 in Iasi, at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, as part of the prestigious Social Observatory collection.

The book title was inspired by the reading of Moshe Idel's book, *Absorbing Perfections. Cabbala and interpretation*, as the author confesses: Moshe Idel makes deep interpretations of the white alphabet, of the white spaces between sacred words. The author of “The Negative of the Daily” extrapolated and states that social reality can function like letters and white spaces between them. The book deals with highly relevant themes in the field of socio-anthropological research, and presents social reality, everyday facts with an emphasis on meanings, on *what is not seen* in this world. As it very well expounds, “the negative can camouflage itself in contexts, signs, symbols, and beliefs. It is the subtle, invisible, but deeply real dimension of our existence”.

The work includes in a novel, unitary and nuanced manner texts previously published in other versions in specialized journals and collective volumes<sup>2</sup>, as well as other newer texts. The book uses the habilitation theses and

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD student, Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, arabela8@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> We recall here some of the texts that were an important source in shaping the book „The Negative of the Daily”: C. Gavriluta, R. Asiminei, „The problem of evil and responsibility to Elie Wiesel. New Perspectives on the Holocaust” in the European Journal of Science and Theology, December, 2011, vol. 7, No.4, pp. 75-82; C. Gavriluta, „The Sense of Value in a Desacriized World” in the Journal for the Study of Religion and Ideologies JSRI Volume 10, No. 28, Spring, 2011, pp. 234-239. , C. Gavriluta „Moshe Idel The Book And The Hermeneutics Of The Negative” in The Journal for the Study of Religion and Ideologies , volume 6, No. 18 ~ Winter, 2007, pp. 226-236; C. Gavriluta , „Mentality and Ideological Construct in Social Economy” Journal of Social Economy, vol 1, no, 1, December, 2011, pp.49-75; C. Gavriluta, N. Gavriluta, „SacredRituals, the Body's Religious Symbolism and Human Trafficking” in vol. Cristina Gavriluta & Nicu

presents itself as a synthesis of the author's concerns. This allowed the topics to be placed in a coherent system of socio-anthropological analysis, in which Cristina Gavriluță particularly favours qualitative analysis. Its novelty comes from the fact that the book promotes *an illustration of the negative of social phenomena*, highlighting in this way the study of the invisible dimension of the world. Thus, the symbol, gesture, social representations, contexts, etc. make up a discrete fabric of the world and can explain many social phenomena and not only. *The Negative of the Daily* newspaper represents, from this perspective, a photograph of reality in the negative.

*The Negative of the Daily* is a book structured in four chapters; the first chapter, *Epistemological Highlights in Social Research* tries to answer questions such as: *What is significant in understanding the phenomena of society?; How can a sociologist approach reality so as to penetrate its essence?.* To answer them, the author uses an interdisciplinary approach to the socio-anthropological research of reality. Here we note the role of the contextualization of the social phenomena researched, the importance of interpreting the results of the research, and the choice of research method.

Chapter two, *Beyond the „air wall”. Mentalities and cultural landmarks in social life* have been discusses themes such as: Romanian capitalism, where we find answers to the questions: *What do Romanians think about work?; Romanian, man of money or good?; and Tradition or modernity?* As for the last aspect, the author offers three types of answer: the first concerns pessimism in the face of the challenges of modernity, the second argues for the coexistence in the world of tradition and modernity without excluding each other, while the last type of answer captures the camouflage of tradition in the elements of the modern world or in banal facts. The problem of *social activism* as a resource for social change, the problem of image and imagination in a global world or that of the image of *the book* in the social mind are presented as examples of how mentalities can function and work subtly in our lives.

Chapter three, *The Sacred and its social expressions*, familiarizes us with the problem of knowledge and understanding of the Other. The relationship with alterity may be under the sign of the positive, but also under the sign of the negative. Thus, the presence of evil in the world can take, according to Cristina Gavriluță, different forms: “evil as an inexpressible experience”, “evil as the anti-world of this world”, “evil as action and nonaction”, “evil as indifference”, “evil as oblivion”. The same chapter draws attention to the crisis of contemporary society. It is seen and felt as a lack of meaning in the context of the „californization of

---

Gavriluta, Human Trafficking. Secularization and Public Policy Intervention Publishing House European Institute, Iasi, 2013, pp.11-25; Cristina Gavriluță, „Ethnic and Cultural Identity”, in vol. Institute of Romanian Philology „Al. Philippide”, Luminita Botosineanu, Elena Dănila, Cecilia Holban, Ofelia Ichim (coord.), Romanian majority /Minority Romanians: linguistic interference and cohabitations, literary and ethnological, Alfa Publishing House, Iasi, 2007

culture”<sup>3</sup>. In this respect, the author considers that the fate of human being is similar to that of the prisoner in the Platonic cave and his true bet is to „distinguish between shadows and reality”. A number of practices in the unconventional area related to the symbolism of fire, divination and Satanism complete the picture of „social expressions of the sacred”.

Chapter four, *The Body as normal or deviant*, exposes representations and ways of reporting man to his own corporality. “The body - a prison of the soul”, “The body - the garment of the soul”, “The body – a social construct” and “The corporeality in the dynamics of power and social normality” are sections that bring to attention the way attitudes, behaviours, the way social phenomena are born and develop starting from the way we understand and relate to our own corporeality.

With clearly argued explanations and comparisons, the work has an interdisciplinary character, it is also useful to the sociologist, anthropologist, psychologist and those concerned with the knowledge of everyday life beyond appearances. The reading of the book introduces the reader to a diverse and challenging theme that benefits from a new approach, from the perspective of a hermeneutics of the everyday negative.

As we have become accustomed to in her other books<sup>4</sup>, Cristina Gavriliuță insists on the importance of direct, authentic and profound encounter with the reality of the world in which we live. That can only be beneficial to us, as it contributes to “establishing a less mutilated dialogue with reality”<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, it requires a hard look at the negativity of the world, sincerity and the courage of an uneasy enterprise.

Beyond the pleasure of reading, *The Negative of the Daily* is a book that conveys new meanings for our actions, gestures and choices.

---

<sup>3</sup> We mention here the work Gavriliuță C. *The Sacred and the Californization of Culture*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 2008, 208 p., which capitalizes in title the syntagma proposed by Paul Barbăneagră in one of the interviews given to the author.

<sup>4</sup> The author, Cristina Gavriliuță, signs four other books that propose a socio-anthropological approach to some topics of real interest: C. Gavriliuță, *The Everyday Sacred. Symbols, Rituals, Mythologies*, Saarbraken. Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013, 197 p.; Gavriliuță C., *Socioanthropology of divinatory phenomena*, Iași: European Institute Publishing House, 2008, 296 p.; C. Gavriliuță, *The Sacred and the Californization of Culture*, Bucharest: Paideia Publishing House, 2008, 208 p.; C. Gavriliuță. *Socioanthropology of the religious phenomenon*, Iași: Axis Foundation Publishing House, 2003, 240 p. Egar Morin, *La paradigme perdu: la nature humaine*, apud, C. Gavriliuță, *Negativul cotidianului*, Iași, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, 2017, p.75

<sup>5</sup> Egar Morin, *La paradigme perdu: la nature humaine*, apud C. Gavriliuță, *Negative of the daily*, Iași, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, 2017, p.75