FONDEMENTS DU DIALOGUE CULTUREL

THE PROFESSIONALIDENTITY OF THE (ROMANIAN) ACADEMIC

Petre Gheorghe BÂRLEA
„Ovdius" University of Constanța
gbarlea@yahoo.fr

Abstract:
Evaluating the performance of academic teaching staff is a necessary process, but the present-day forms of numerical quantification (based on figures) may denature the results. Scientometrics measures the results of spiritual activities as any material product is measured, by submitting them to the rules of the market economy. The phenomenon of evaluation by means of competence criteria charts favours imposture, levelling values and annihilating human and professional identities hard to pigeonhole into a scheme or figure.

Keywords:
Professional identity, science, education, scientometrics, human values.

1. From the neo-liberal culture of knowledge to the culture of audit

1. 1. A few years ago, the official documents issued by the leading bodies and the development policy offices of the European Union launched a phrase that has become highly popular: "the knowledge-based *society*". This was the expression of confidence in the contribution that academic research could bring to the development of all domains of public and private life in Europe, to the resolution of the great economic and social problems that the new organism was taking over from the structure of the acceding countries.

1. 2. In fact, there was nothing new about this "European community strategy". The periods of economic flourishing of human societies have always been preceded and closely linked to major scientific discoveries, while developed societies have been able to further, in their turn, scientific research, the advancement of the arts, philosophical thought, etc.

1. 3. The top figures of the "intelligentsia" rise to prominence naturally: Archimedes proved his universal worth by theoretical and

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practical "tests"; so did Leonardo da Vinci. They and many like them were not part of any strategy and were not monitored by anyone or asked to complete a scientific Report. Nor were later great academics or researchers categorised into any grid of evaluation criteria. And, if this had happened, the results may not always have been spectacular. A few examples are enough to demonstrate the delicate nature of the situation.

a) We have shown elsewhere that A. Schopenhauer revealed, in newspapers and magazines, the formalism and pomposity of the great philosophic systems, constructed by contemporary academics such as Hegel and his circle. Around 1825, the latter had an overfull amphitheatre at the University of Berlin, while the lectures of the posturing critic Schopenhauer were hardly attended by two or three students. Neither his philosophic system nor his books were better appreciated until much later. The former would have scored many pointsunder all the headings of a current grid of criteria, but would have lost a few points in the peer evaluation, as another specialist in the field could bring arguments to refute his contributions. The latter, however, wouldn't even have fulfilled the minimum necessary for such a standardised evaluation grid, and in reality the academic authorities actually excluded him from the academic and scientific milieu, without any standardised set of criteria, but in an efficient manner. However, the same reality, seen at a historical scale, shows us that both of them were and continue to be, authentic values of human spirituality in the field[1].

b) In the Romanian academic space, George Călinescu gave magisterial lectures, with an overfilled amphitheatre, had an intense and varied publishing activity, so he would have "accumulated" many points of academic credit. In reality, witnesses who are still living (such as Professor Florica Dimitrescu-Niculescu, PhD) states that one did not have much to learn from the history of Romanian literature – the official subject matter of the course, as the Professor embarked upon considerations which had nothing of the didactic structure of coherent lecture. In addition, at examinations, he would evaluate the students' answers according to highly subjective criteria ("You have rambled on with nerve, you get a 10!"). The time of his professorship was also marked by other kinds of idiosyncrasies, absences, etc. He was, however, even in his lifetime, and has remained *per aeternum*a "revered master" of Romanian spirituality.

c) The great "teachers" of the world and of some nations, such as Socrates (here we could also enumerateJesus Christ, if the example did not

[1] Arthur Schopenhauer, 2010, pp. 107-111.

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seem a blasphemy), and, closer to outer times, Petre Țuțea, with an exclusively oral scientific, philosophic and didactic discourse, would not even have been accepted in a higher education institution. They had no "published work"! Not to mention academic qualifications (diplomas, certificates, etc.), as the context is easy to understand...

1. 4. In all these cases, which can be multiplied and nuanced much further, we should make at least three observations:

a. What the world's great scholars transmit is, first and foremost, *a way of thinking*. They give shape, for their contemporaries and for posterity, to *free thinking*, to the capacity of making bold associations of ideas, even to the aptitude of dreaming, of pursuing your dream and making it come true. We speak here of a *social efficiency* which can hardly be fitted into any matrix of "scientific" evaluation.

b. The effects of their scientific and didactic undertaking are manifested in time, their value increasing irrespective of the changes in society, which demonstrates that the great "teachers" are, as a rule, visionaries. By contrast, the modern system of academic evaluation measures the results *hic et nunc*. It is impossible for anyone to predict that an article or a book, which has not yet been cited on Google Scholar, will become writing of reference in the domain in a few years' time, when the respective domain will evolve well enough for specialists to understand their value...

c. There has always existed a certain kind of control over the competences of those involved in the system of instruction, education and research. One of the scholars whom will never tire of citing in our studies, Michel Foucault, speaks of the "procedures of organized control and redistribution of discourse" by the State in any type of societies, through the system of education and "societies of savants"[2], that is through academies, specialised institutes, etc. In principle, a neoliberal state should only assure the conditions for education and research, as well as those for the functioning of the "knowledge market"; in reality, recent research shows that the state is cannot even assure these conditions by itself any more, being assisted by private initiative, and that it is not in a flexible relation with the market, either. More exactly, it is the market that controls the state, said the philosopher from Collège de France, in another of his books[3].

A British sociologist whose studies have been circulating in the entire academic world for the past few years, Roger Burrows, investigates the

[2] M. Foucault, 1998, p. 36 *et passim*.
[3] M. Foucault, 2008, p. 116.

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phenomenon of the scientific and academic audit we are discussing here and observes the same thing: the market imposes its rules on the functioning of the state's mechanisms, which imitate it, actually:

„*... thesole mechanism by means of which the state can legitimise itself is by self-marketization*"[4].

1. 5. This change of the relations between State and Market has effects known to the academic field, as the above cited researcher remarks: higher education and scientific research (in association or separately) pass from a regime of "trust„ to one of "responsibility" (*accountability*). In the case of the professors and researchers of the past, the status of instructor and creator of scientific values was acquired through general recognition, accumulated in time, also due to the fact that not anyone could have access to such pursuits.

Auditing is an older phenomenon, known since the 20th century, but it was realised by a quite flexible system, by methods with a "human face". Academic qualifications and credentials, examinations, selection competitions, the assessment of the results of one's work, the number of disciples created, academic awards, etc. would confer both "trust" and "responsibility". The problems started when, from the germs of some older, somewhat more rigorous criteria, the *evaluation* was transformed into *accountability* (often contractual), and *trust* into*control*. Then came the gravest phase, the *crisis* from the beginning of our century, when *monitoring* –collegial, hierarchical, institutionalized, though also regulated by the free market, was replaced by *numerical control*.

2. The legitimacy of auditing systems and its human forms

Without any doubt, the ranking of values is a necessity in the conditions of modern civilization and contemporary democratic societies.

In the domain of values, we might assume that the free market spontaneously eliminates forgeries and poor quality products. In reality, we all know that it is not so, which means that professional producers are obliged to create their own specific systems of evaluation and accreditation of competitive products. Specialized organisms of control and certification are agreed upon, and these are submitted to certain national and international rankings, with the attendant affiliations. For example, producers of agricultural machines, of household appliances, electronic devices, etc. adhere to (trans) national professional associations, which recognise the authority validating the product and submit to minimal

[4] Roger Burrows, "Living by numbers? Metrics, Algorithms and the Sociology of Everyday life", *apud* Vintilă Mihăilescu, 2015, p. 3.

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standards of quality. The legislative framework is also automatically created to impose the compliance with these standards and with the respective bodies, from the perspective of consumer protection. It is here that the role of the state and of state unions intervenes, as protectors of their citizens. Evidently, the free market continues to dictate its own standards in both directions, that is also in the HQ, limited series production, as well as the "mainstream consumer goods", a phrase which represents, more often than not, a euphemism for various kinds of sub-products, substitutes, *no name* products and so on.

In the domain of public services (health, social protection, public safety, education), which presuppose spiritual values harder to control by the free market, "peer evaluation", that is of the specialists in the domain, functions in parallel with the one of the beneficiaries. Especially in the liberal professions, there are "closed societies", such as the Society of Architects, Psychologists, Physicians, Lawyers, etc., which protects both the professionals and the beneficiaries of their "products" from the unfair competition of impostors, self-taught individuals, or of those professionally and morally disqualified. In addition plus, for those selected by the system, there are the internal standards of value ranking which function, doubled, as usual, by the professional authority which each member of the respective corporations acquires on the free market.

Understandably, these forms of authorization of public and private services institutions and producers, as well as of those producing material goods, are not infallible: the market continues to be full of falsified or, in any case, of poor quality goods, while services continue being provided by people without the minimal competences required or the corresponding ethical qualities. To give only one example, the mass media show that at the beginning of the third millennium there still are "dentists" going through villages (the most isolated) and performing surgery right in the beneficiaries courtyards or tool sheds... . But we are not referring only to impostors or others who, though in possession of qualifications diplomas, provide poor quality services. Nor are we speaking now the state's role as protector of the consumer, but about the strategies of preserving the being of peoples on a historical scale, since the poor macroeconomic and social organization of the great human communities, poor quality in health and education services, in family protection, in stimulating sciences and arts question the very future of mankind. The fact that in some statesthe control and protection system works better than in others is not enough. Inequalities are sources of conflict in themselves, because, at a certain moment, they cause migrations

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of population towards the developed areas, a phenomenon which has already started and is still somewhat regulated by the authorities, but which can elude official control, when its magnitude will go beyond the controllable limits.

On the other hand, the "systems" and "services", even when they become partially liberal, privatised, such as medical or educational institutions, protection services, etc., maintain a close connection with the state. Inprinciple, though, the education and health systems, the police, the army and the administration remain in care of the state[5]. Then here comes the problem of financing. A meagre Budget, in principle, must be distributed according to criteria of quality, from the funding of a ministry and its subordinated institutions to the retribution of each employee. This situation objectively justifies the act of qualitative evaluations, at all levels, according to the idea – correct, in principle – that the reward should correspond to the performance.

One might say that states with a more solid economy and a more generous budget allocated to education –since this is the topic our discussion, with a particular focus on the higher education cycle –are not constrained to resort to the application of such so called "sociometric", "scientometric", etc. evaluations. Until a few years ago, one could even hear academics from France, Italy and even from the rigorous systems in Switzerland and England wondering at the scientometric enthusiasm of the countries which had recently joined the free world. A ranking of universities, of professors and graduates, respectively, had emerged, somewhat spontaneously, at a macroeconomic and socio-professional level, insofar as in the pragmatic societies of the SUA and Western Europe, of Japan and, more recently, China and others, the demand and offer of the work market generates classifications, recorded by specialised agencies, but also by the mass-media, by sociological studies, etc. They keep record of how many Nobel Prize laureates graduated from a particular university, how many presidents and high state functionaries, how many inventors, great founders and leaders of multinational companies, and, ultimately, how many

[5] Privatization was also implemented in these domains, though with questionable results. If in the West there are private universities superior in quality to the state ones, in Romania the race for quality seems lost for the former, because they were conceived according to purely financial criteria from the very outset. In the area of health, the relation seems to be reversed: the state system appears to be collapsing, while private health centres are better organized, but financially inaccessible to the mass of beneficiaries. In the other domains, the attempts are rather more timid in the former socialist states.

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employed and unemployed *per* cohort of graduates come out of universities in every country. But the evaluations by indicator quantification had not yet come down to the individual level of academic staff members, although this was expected to happen. What was measured was the final and global result of the work of a large team, and within it rankings emerged naturally, via peer evaluation and responses from students, who opted for certain disciplines and for particular teachers, within the framework of rationally and flexibly designed *curriculum*, centred on competences which were measurable, in their turn. Society, in its complexity, somehow acted by means of the same regulating mechanisms, as the same specialists were called upon to decide who should receive a raise in salary, the possibility of choosing a more advantageous post, an award of merit or grants for conducting advanced research in a domain in which one had already proven one's professional excellence.

3. The quantification of professional evaluations or the hegemony of the performance index

All these are far behind us now, constituting what the anthropologist Vintilă Mihăilescu calls "depressing nostalgias"[6]for *the good old times*, fit for novels like the ones in David Lodge's campus fiction series or those of Frank Parkin – other names we hold dear, whom we often evoke in our modest writings[7]. He, too, presents the academics' preoccupation with accumulating professional capital formally and administratively quantifiable, including the "classic" tricks used in these circumstances, such as participating in several conferences with the same presentation, with an ever changing title, and so on.

All of a sudden, some 10 or 15 years ago, this forms of evaluation, still acceptable rationally and emotionally, were transformed into a straitjacket system placing one in to the dark and cold universe of dry, abstract, impersonal, implacable figures. Grouped according to tables and headings, the respective numbers rapidly and decisively turn one away from the throbbing life which had somehow been preserved in the participations in specialist symposia, from the privations and joys lived during the writing of books and articles, from the challenge of the lecture hall full of students or the seminar groups. All these have become dead headings under which

[6]R. Burrow, *loc. cit.*

[7]The British sociologist is referring, in the case of D. Lodge, to the novels *Small World*, 1984 and *Nice Work*, 1988, and in Fr. Parkin's case, not so much to his famous book *The Krippendorf's Tribe*, as to *The Mind and Body Shop*.

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worrying statistics are aligned. Banal words acquire negative connotations in the formulations of the items thus quantified: "national" is not sufficient, "international" would be preferable, the status of "co-author" reduces one, naturally, to a half, a quarter, a modicum of what one might have been, according to the figure indicating the integral score for the respective feat.

In the end, all the numbers under the sections, rubrics and subheadings are added up in a cumulative figure, which sounds like a verdict, after a police inquest. The ordeal of confronting your own professional identity, which began a few rubrics above, reaches a dramatic climax with the final heading, entitled neutrally, but terrifyingly: "Total".

Your real professional identity is given by a figure coming from the virtual space, from a world you do not know much about. Some unknown individuals may have *once, somewhere, perhaps* (we underline these circumstances) come across books, articles, reviews written by you. It does not matter who they are, how competent they are, if they have sought you out specially or come across your text by accident, if they have read you and cited with full knowledge of the case or only casually. The height of absurdity is that it does not even matter if they have appreciated or criticised you, what matters is only the fact that computer memory, through those "RAMgigabytes" (whatever that means –anyway, the phrase sounds terrifying) has recorded that reference, that citation in a footnote or text, which may be rather inept, actually, not even this matters. Thus, a *feedback*has been received out of somewhere, out of this universe, oversaturated with information, which means that the information you have transmitted exists and, through it, you, too, *exist* as a professional. You are both happy and frightened, at the same time, as living beings are afraid of the unknown, even if, paradoxically, it stirs their curiosity. That is their scientific spirit...

The figure totalizing these citations is called the *Hirsch Index*, named after the one who created the algorithm of the respective calculation. Although it merges in the "Total" we were talking about, seemingly being seasoned with somewhat more humane items (more "godly", as we would say in an archaic Romanian formula), it remains the cornerstone of an evaluation and it is a clearly proven fact that the official evaluators in the Ministry of Education and in the evaluation agencies (CNCSIS, CNADTCU, UEFISCDI) require it to be indicated separately, once again, alongside the total figure.

Initially, we all thought that such evaluations were aberrations spawned by the incompetence, negligence and bad faith of some bureaucrats

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from the national administrative structures. The managers of Romanian education, ever changing during the last 25 years and always proving to be inadequate and unsuited for the position they occupy, having had neither the time and, more often than not, nor the drive to acquire the necessary management expertise in the domain, have become notorious for their manner of picking up ideas, fragments of theories, practical strategies and experiments from various corners of the world, which they scrape together and combine, despite their visible incongruences, in an attempt to apply them to Romanian education, under the name of "reforms". Before long, they get replaced by others, who start all over again.

We have all found out, eventually, that things can be much worse. The entire world has been seized by the demon of professional evaluation quantification, in education at all levels, as well as in other domains of activity. Globalization has its dark sides and its victims, like any epochal phenomenon. The reduction of a man's personality to a figure seems to be a part of this "collateral damage". We have known for about a century or so that an inmate of a prison or concentration camp is identified and called by a number. So is a hospitalised patient. Of course, the reasons are different. In the former case, the clear purpose is the annihilation of the personality of one who has been officially divested of all one's civil rights. In the latter case, it may be a matter of protecting the identity of a person who is in a critical, delicate state. Footballers, too, wear a number on their t-shirt. But this serves to indicate the role of each player in the team, while the surname is privileged in the sports commentary, until it becomes the *brand*of a team, a country, a continent. The streets in the great American cities, too, are often known by numbers. In this case the reason is merely administrative. This does not make them less dry and saddening, even if many of them are teaming with life and human activity, while others have already acquired a legendary status, like the *Fifth Avenue* in New York[8].

All things considered, the reduction of human personality to a number does not seem to be a factor of social development. Unfortunately, things have evolved in this direction to such an extentthat the numerical quantification of human value has acquired the hegemony of an anthropological phenomenon, begetting at least one discipline claiming the status of science, which means that man really tends to become no more than a dry figure. The Romanian anthropologist discussing these aspects cites Roger Burrows:

[8]In the electronic medium it is labelled as "the most expensive commercial street in the world".

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> "*... what happens when we reach a point at which there begin to appear metrical aggregates of such complexity that they take us beyond a culture of auditing, towards a different hegemonic project, in which systems of quantified control get to possess their own personality, beyond the auditing procedures*?"

Further on, the English researcher reveals the impact that this automatized system has on contemporary society:

> "... [There *emerged*] *a world in which the relations between measure and value are increasingly decided by means of a new form of power, which consists in a code, a software or an algorithm; a world in which the role of measurement and numbers has got to have political priority over the aesthetic, the affective and the hermeneutic; and a world in which the structure of feelings was fundamentally altered*".

R. Burrows analyses the transformation into figures of six criteria referring to academic performance, rather difficult to translate into Romanian, although the items have become internationalized: "*citations* – that is the Hirsch Index; *work-load models*; *transparent casting data*; *researchassessments*; *teaching quality assessment*; *university league table*".

It does not even matter that the number of these items keep changing, that some of them are totally irrelevant for the personality of a teacher. There are only a few aspects that count, of which few people are aware:

a. What is to be noted from the idea cited above is that, put together, these criteria create a coherent system, which is applied mechanically and indiscriminately (from one scientific domain to another) to all teachers, who are turned into a bar code.

Eagerly filling in these self-evaluation charts, these practitioners of education remain caught in a "depressive complicity", says V. Mihăilescu, "like a fly in a jar of honey".

b. What counts is the fact that this numerical control has already become a state policy. The Romanian Ministry of Education and research has already experimented the classification of universities and their corresponding financing according to the figure resulted from the completion of the general grid by each higher education institution, and at present the process of their identification by a bar code is in full swing, with a view to deciding on the financing for next year, as a measure avowedly assumed by the official authorities.

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c. What also matters, however, is the more serious fact that "value" and "measurement" are put together, in the situation in which the delicate elements of the former cannot be quantified numerically. Ingeneral, intellectual work has invisible aspects, hard to pinpoint in the abstract frames of ISI, Hirsch or other indices.

4. The identity crisis of the academic and its effects on tomorrow's society

4. 1. The crisis of the system

Lucid commentators link the present situation to the general crisis of Romanian education, unprecedented in the country's modern history: the volatility of the so-called educational strategies, "directly proportional with the changes of government" can be assessed by the inconsistency of the Education Law: between 1990 and 2004, it was modified 65 times![9] Inreality, the identity crisis of Romanian education is only in part responsible for the identity crisis of its practitioners. The phenomenon is ampler, as already seen. In all the countries in the world, the idea which explains it is that of the incongruence between values and numerical measurements. Or, in this sense, the evil is much deeper. A lucid analysis shows that, since pupils and students are evaluated on the basis of a standard multiple-choice test, in which they just tick some boxes, instead of constructing their own argumentation, based on knowledge, on logic, of correct and nuanced expression, there is little wonder that the teachers' work is also evaluated by means of evaluation item charts[10].

It is clear that the crisis situation is universal and that it stems from the *conflict between quantity and quality*, from the *incongruence between authentic value and its quantification distorted by a numerical system*, which has acquired the status of a science in its own right: *bibliometry or scientometry* or the *science of university rankings*. Some still have the courage to dismiss them as "pseudo-sciences"[11].

The author of one of the numerous articles published lately on the topic under discussion cites the opinion of a "remarkable professor":

"... perhaps what is quantifiable is not essential, and what is essential is not quantifiable"[12].

[9] Doru Costea, 2015, p. 21.
[10] *Ibidem*.
[11] ***, "Cum apreciem rezultatele cercetării științifice/How do we assess the results of scientific research", in: *România Literară*, XLVII, no. 11, 13 March 2015, p. 23.
[12] Marcel Cremene, 2015, p. 2.

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The question following from here, in the opinion of the above mentioned author, is what is gained by quantifying the results of scientific and didactic work and what would be lost by not quantifying them?

The problem is that the effects of applying or ignoring the process of numerical or other kinds of evaluations can only be established by other measurements. In other words, the process of measurements will never end.

Are measurements necessary? Definitely, yes! They distinguish between the individuals of the same community, highlighting performance and rewarding quality. Are scientometric evaluation criteria charts efficient? Apparent so, as they offer a certain guarantee of objectivity. Inreality, they are not, because the "activity of an expert (professor, researcher) cannot be reduced to a formula" (Cremene, *loc. cit.).*

Practically, as we have already said, only a group of experts in the same domain and in the same speciality can make an adequate evaluation. But here comes the natural human subjectivity, the team spirit (not to use the term encountered in the studies cited, "the university gang"). Many think that the Romanians get to be original in this respect, too... In this case, the best solution is to appeal to external evaluators, but these, however, are not familiar with the context of the activity of those under evaluation. More often than not, however the officer from the Department of University Quality Assurance and the sovereign Computer simply take charge.

4. 2. Changes of attitude

This digitalised system, elevated to the status of science and of an activity governing education and research brings about profound changes in the personality of the academic. This also happens in societies with longstanding tradition in higher education, with criteria of excellence which are well established in a coherent education system, as it is proved by the seminal studyof Roger Burrows, a study beginning with this very aspect, which shows a worrying change in British education:

"Many academics are exhausted, stressed, overloaded, suffering from insomnia, feeling anxious, experiencing feelings of shame, aggression, hurt, guilt, and «out-of-place»".

In fact, the grid sets have changed the teachers' priorities and working style. Until now, there were the familiar categories. There is that of the professors with no inventions, no seminal books, but who systematically and conscientiously transmit to their students fundamental knowledge and a certain attachment to the profession; another one is that of those training their students to think independently, to shape their own professional and

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social personality; a third category is that of the scholars with an impressive oeuvre, who are not adept at transmitting their science to the young, for no course of psycho-pedagogy in the world can substitute an inborn pedagogical gift.

The extreme categories have always existed, though in relatively small percentage. Now there is the risk of their developing within the structure of the teaching body, due to the system of evaluation by criteria sets, numbers, indices, bar codes. This is the category of the selfish professor, who, serenely and uncaringly, sacrifices class activity to personal studies. And there is, of course, the last category, of those "with no true calling" for the profession, people with no proper academic background, with no morals or professional conscience, but who have specialized, by virtue of the natural compensation law, in miming to perfection the exercise of didactic and scientific activity at university level. The tables and rubrics of the criteria sets mask their real identity, thus levelling the scale of values, under the anonymity and coldness of the dry figures.

At present, *all the categories* concentrate upon the maximization of the quality indices, but the advantages belong to the latter ones, to those who know how to use the figures to which the others migrate, because "the position creates the competence". The basic principle is that foreshadowed by the article cited: "We cannot obtain but what we measure". The techniques of accumulated the maximum possible number of ticked boxes in the chart of evaluation criteria, with a minimum of effort invested and small individual costs, are being learned fast. In other words, the quantity/quality ratio is settled in favour of the first term. We have to reiterate that quality is a truism, hard to assess. There is no indication anywhere of the efficiency of a teacher in the lecture hall or seminar room. There is no knowing how often one is absent from or late for these activities, how many student papers or essays one reads, how these are discussed with the students, how one organizes one's seminars or examinations so that they may have a formative value, and not only summarily evaluative ("scientometric", again!). On the other hand, the charts do not show the collegially proven reality that some "academics" present at scientific symposia and publish in journals and books if not the same materials, at least the same ideas, maybe with slight changes, especially in the title. Not only the Romanians, but also the French or others have adopted the illicit system of benevolently reciprocal citations: "*Cite me and I will cite you*". I have read journals whose publication guides contained the recommendation that at least one reference from its content should be included in the materials submitted for publication by new

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contributors[13]. This is because journals, too, are evaluated according to the same metrical system of quantification, which is closely linked to the evaluation of their academic contributors[14].

Consequently, few carry out conscientiously their main professional duty: the instruction (and education, at least by offering role models) of the students. When they are not up to their eyes in working on the kilometric "applications" for POSDRU or other kinds of projects, which bring points to the evaluation chart and money into the bank account, they devote themselves entirely to the "writing" and "re-writing" of articles, the "scientific" presentations, books, "academic" journals, etc. In such conditions, the evolution of the group of students comes last in the academic's preoccupations, as this cannot be measured and does not bring points anyway.

There many other perspectives on the problemexpounded here. The Parisian weekly *Le Point*has discussed the aspect of the costs which the French society incurs so that academics and researchers should attain the parameters calculated according to the bibliometric indices. It has been shown that the researchers paid from the budget of the state, namely of the entire nation, get to publish the results of their research free of charge in high class ISI indexed journals, especially in the topmost three that reign supreme worldwide: *Nature, Science, Cell*. But one can gain access to them only by paying a publication fee. If a researcher wants to make a subscription, he has to pay about 3, 000 de euro per year. Therefore, the state has to pay, via universities and research laboratories, in order to access the results of its own research. What is even worse is that the main financing body, that is the public at large, still cannot get to read these journals. The ensuing discussion naturally shifts towards evaluating the authors of those articles. Although the citations and impact factor of the journals is inventoried, "*... no one has made a scientific demonstration of the connection between the value of the research and the bibliometric index*"[15].

[13]*Revue Française de Pédagogie*, Paris, and the journal *Studii de Știință și Cultură*.

[14]We have shown in another study what are the formulae of ISI evaluation and which is the relation between the quality of academic publications and the real, concrete achievements in the Romanian space, cf. P. Gh. Bârlea, "Revistele academice de jurnalism și comunicare, între rigoare și compromisuri/The academic journals of journalism and communication, between rigor and compromise", in: Ilie Rad (coord.), 2014, pp. 45-69.

[15]*** „Cum apreciem rezultatele cercetării științifice/How do we assess the results of scientific research", *loc. cit.*

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Despite all these critiques, the system continues to be applied, and, even worse, the false science of classifications looms large like a black cloud over academic life. The academics' professional identity is decisively reduced to a bar code.

5. Conclusions

5. 1. One cannot entirely contest the importance of evaluation criteria sets. For a professor with a balanced activity, these can measure objectively at least the visible side of his/her activity. Fortunately, the current set of evaluation criteria for "Philology", drawn up by Professor Alexandru Gafton, from the "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iaşi, is a model of equilibrium. For example, the items include the editing of old texts, an activity as difficult as it is lacking in visibility, and only a specialist is able to appreciate the amount of scholarship and of physical and intellectual effort required by such an undertaking, absolutely necessary for the domain[16]. Still, these have to be completed by active cooperation with colleagues in the field, with students, etc. Otherwise, in the anonymity of the figures in the metric system, one may lose sight of both the authentic academics and the impostors, because figures can be manipulated, or in any case, obtained by more or less fair means, in the process of focusing the attention of *all* academics on fulfilling the criteria under the chart headings.

5. 2. There was nothing incidental about our using the image of the "black cloud" swallowing a multitude of individual identities which make up a professional community. The absolutely miraculous evolution of IT practices has already recorded the successful experience of the identity transfer of an entire country into what is called a *cloud*. The English term literally designates a "cloud" and everyone should learn it as such, since it is sure to become a global word, such as *mouse*or *soft*or *weekend*. It designates, in the IT register, the transfer of identity from the din sphere of the real, historically, geographically, economically, organizationally and spiritually determined, into the virtual space, administered by computers. The experiment was described by the British weekly *The Economist*, in the article "How to back up a country", published in issue 7, March 2015, which inspired the Romanian politologist Cristian Ghinea to write an article

[16] Al. Gafton, *Standardele minimale pentru conferirea titlurilor didactice din învățământul superior și a gradelor profesionale de cercetare-dezvoltare/The minimal standards for the conferring of academic titles in higher education and the professional degrees in research and development*, Anexa nr. 29 la Ordinul MEC nr. 6.560/2012, republicată ca Anexa Ia/Anexa 11, în MO din 29.01.2015.

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with a very telling title: "The country in the *Cloud. Can a nation go into cybernetic self-exile in case of a Russian invasion?*"[17] It is about Estonia, the country with the most advanced political and administrative cybernetic system in the world. Each Estonian citizen also has an *online* identity, which allows him/her to vote, do shopping, pay taxes, sign encrypted documents, etc. The *OfficialBulletin* of Estonia does not even exist on paper anymore, but only in its electronic version. The state which was, just like Poland, dissolved and confiscated several times in its history, has made a "plan B" of refuge, in case of necessity, in the virtual medium. Unfortunately, during the most recent conflict with Russia, that of 2007-2008, the big neighbour also attacked its electronic database, blocking for a while the activity of banks and central local institutions. After this experience, the Lithuanians identified the possibility of a transfer to backup spaces in the country, in its embassies from various countries[18], and, more recently, they have doubled saving options by a contract with the Microsoft Company. The article in *The Economist*refers precisely to this:

"*Wiping a country off the map is one thing. Wiping its data is another. Estonians know what the former is like. They are determined to avoid the latter*".

5. 3. The lesson to be learned from this that, inevitably, our identity will be compressed in a server, in a personal account and under a certain code. The public and professional life of an intellectual can occupy between 3 and 8 gigabytes. We do not even have to have them with us, although they fit into a USB memory stick. We can access our data from anywhere, from any device – laptop, pad, telephone–and we can offer others access to ourselves, partially or totally. By filling in the evaluation charts, we take a step further towards the minimalizing of our professional and institutional existence and contribute to what is called "saving" it in the virtual space.

From now on, we can communicate solely via this medium, we may not need to see each other at conferences, lectures, etc., as the virtual space erases real distances and brings us close, in its own way, by levelling the playing field of our individualities. It is very likely, but very sad.

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[17] Cf. *Dilema Veche*, XII, no. 578, 12-18 March 2015, p. 12.

[18]Lithuanian embassies in the US, England, France have their story very interesting, cf. Cr. Ghinea, *op. cit.*

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