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## *Ad hominem* and false analogy abuses in a Romanian intellectual debate

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### ABSTRACT

A pragma-dialectical inside view of a Romanian intellectual debate is meant to unveil strategic maneuvering and fallacies, in a public sphere said to be dominated by “status groups”, “backstage maneuvers” and “conspiracy”. A book written by a Romanian author sparked off an area of disagreement leading to *ad hominem* attacks and false analogies ranging from post-communist issues to political correctness.

### KEYWORDS

pragma-dialectics; argumentation; strategic maneuvering; fallacies; status groups

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## “STATUS GROUPS” VS. “FREE MARKET OF IDEAS”

A Romanian academic working in the USA published a controversial book in 2004, *Boyards of the mind: Romanian intellectuals between status groups and the free market of ideas* (*Boierii minții: intelectualii români între grupurile de prestigiu și piața liberă a ideilor*). Sorin-Adam Matei claimed in his book that Romanian public intellectuals are organized in “status groups”, a so-called “paramodern” type of social organization, combining traditional, “aristocratic” and modern elements. Drawing on Weber’s concepts of “charisma” and “status”, Matei extended his discourse on the Romanian intellectual environment following the revolutionary year 1989. The Romanian academic identified several dysfunctions, describing Romanian public sphere as a space distorted by power relations, instead of a “free market of ideas”. This space, according to Matei, is dominated by a number of charismatic public intellectuals, by group loyalties, by interests and rivalries.

Matei argued that the predominance of status groups in the cultural world, as well as the way in which they exploit market mechanisms, are “distorting” the process of “remodernization” after 1989. In order to support his claim, Matei discusses the way in which Horia-Roman Patapieviici (now a well-known writer, at that time director of the Romanian Cultural Institute) was “launched” by philosopher Gabriel Liiceanu, the leader of the most prestigious “status group” during and after the communist era, whose members were the disciples of philosopher Constantin Noica (1909–1987).

Matei’s book was at the origin of an intense dispute in the pages of the cultural weekly *Dilema veche*, under the name “Why are the intellectuals quarreling?” (“De ce se ceartă intelectualii?”) (June–July 2004). The editor asked three questions which were answered by fourteen prominent intellectuals: (a) “In your view, is there a battle for supremacy amongst ‘status groups’ in Romanian cultural life?” (b) “If yes, can these groups be grouped along the ‘left’ vs. ‘right’ political axis?” (c) “Is there a dominant group?” Answers ranged from approval of the existence of “clans” and “clientelist” relations, to the rejection of Matei’s standpoint as “aberrant” nonsense, an expression of the “resentment” of talentless people against those who have succeeded on the cultural market, or a manifestation of “political correctness” and “cultural socialism”.

Isabela Iețcu (Iețcu, 2006b: 246–248) reconstructed Matei’s argument, drawing a complex argumentation in support of several standpoints, of which standpoint (1) (i.e. Romanian intellectuals are turning Romania into a paramodern society, or distorting the process of modernization) is the most important, as a direct connection to the declared purpose of the book is easily recognizable: an investigation into the “role” of the Romanian intellectuals.

Romanian intellectuals are turning Romania into a “paramodern society”, i.e. distorting the process of (re)modernization after 1989.

Romanian intellectuals are predominantly organized in status groups.

1.1'. Status groups are a "paramodern" form of organization, i.e. they distort modernization.

1.1'a. Status groups "distort"/"manipulate" the functioning of the market.

1.1'.1a.1a. Patapievici's reputation was created by the Păltiniș group.

1.1'.1a.1b. If Patapievici had not received the support of the Păltiniș group, he would not have enjoyed the same success.

1.1'.1a.1b.1. Criticism of Omul recent has called into question the quality of his work.

1.1'b. Status groups are a pre-modern, undemocratic form of social life.

1.1'b.1a. They are closed, elitist communities, with non-transparent procedures of access ("rituals", "apprenticeship"), traditional (premodern) values, etc.

1.1'b.1a.1. Patapievici was adopted by the Păltiniș group as a sort of "prophet", "genius", "messiah", etc.

1.1'b.1a.2. Patapievici's auto-biographical writings are evidence of the mechanisms characteristic of status groups.

1.1'b.1b. The fundamental type of relations which structures a status group into masters and followers is charisma.

1.1'b.1c. Status groups have the capacity to confer identity (status) to individuals.

1.1'b.1c.1. The individual is "recognized" as a member, undergoes a symbolic "baptism", "initiation".

1.1'b.1d. Status groups are based on symbolic monopoly.

The reconstructed argument (1) is supported by the premises 1.1 and 1.1', which state that the Romanian intellectuals are predominantly organized in status groups and that that status groups are a "paramodern" form of social organization. In turn, this last premise is supported by 1.1'a and 1.1'b, which say that status groups distort the functioning of the market and that they are based on pre-modern, undemocratic principles of organization.

Premise 1.1'a is supported by an example, involving the way in which Patapievici was allegedly "launched" as an important public personality by Gabriel Liiceanu and the Păltiniș group. Matei argues that, in the absence of support from the Păltiniș group, it is improbable that Patapievici would have enjoyed the market success he has enjoyed and he would have become the public authority he has become. Premise 1.1'b is also sustained by several premises, like the elitist nature of status groups, the way they tend to monopolize the cultural act, etc. Matei emphasizes that cultural monopolies can have a positive function. He illustrates this by reminding readers of the pre-1989 period, when a variety of intellectual groups functioned as centres of cultural information and "substitutes" for civil society (Matei, 2004: 31).

The book also centres upon other few very significant standpoints. For example, Matei insists that status groups are neither the product of "any conspiracy" nor "historical accidents", but the natural correlate of a certain type of

society, specific to a post-communist era, i.e. a closed society with strong hierarchical relations, based on a conception of “natural order” (“each individual must know his place in the world”), of subordination to authority, of privileges which are “granted”, not gained, and on a belief in “ontological” differences between social categories or classes (including differences between the “genius” and the mass of ordinary people) (Matei, 2004: 14–17). All these elements are included in the definition of the “paramodern society”.

Matei puts forward his claims, in terms of speech acts, as usage declaratives and explanations. The author starts by defining the terms he makes use of. “Intellectuals”, for example, are defined as “public intellectuals”, who are actively influencing public life (a usage declarative at the opening stage). Another usage declarative is meant to define “paramodernity” in terms of a system of social organization which combines modern and premodern elements, e.g. a belief in the existence of essential differences among social groups or categories, in the role of social elites and exceptional individuals, etc. In Matei’s definition, status groups (seen as power groups) are structured around the prestige of their members, which is not necessarily gained by “democratic means” or by the neutral play of market forces, but is generated by allegedly privileged access to certain “esoteric” intellectual sources (e.g. Plato’s philosophy, Christian-orthodox patristic literature, etc.), “enlightenment”, “recognition” and “confirmation” by the group (Iețcu, 2006b: 248).

According to Matei, the members of status groups seek to form coalitions in order to gain access to social status and political power and to reconvert cultural capital into such other forms of capital. Status groups tend to suppress the free expression on the market of ideas, having as a result the creation of cultural monopolies. Status groups are implicitly associated to the elite class and one of the selection criteria for future members is the concept of “charisma”.

The definitions and explanations coexist in Matei’s text with descriptive passages, in which other cultures are analysed. In the United States, for example, the existence of status groups is acknowledged, but they function on totally different grounds. Status groups in America are the expression of common-shared ideologies, they are not “closed”, the members are not submitted to any long-term “initiation”, the access of the large masses to their work transformed into capital is unrestricted. A public figure is the result of the recognition by the market.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL OVERVIEW

Argumentation is defined as “a verbal, social and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition

expressed in the standpoint” (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 1). In pragma-dialectics, argumentation is conceived as a means of resolving a difference of opinion by testing the acceptability of a disputed proposition in a process of a critical discussion. Argumentative discourses deal with exchanges: a speaker who advances a standpoint acts as protagonist and a speaker or writer who expresses doubt with regard to the standpoint acts as antagonist (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 131–133).

Four stages can be distinguished in the process of resolving a difference of opinion which the participants in an argumentative exchange of views need to go through to arrive at a resolution of a difference of opinion. The confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage and the concluding stage form the discussion stages of a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 59–62). Pragma-dialectics offers a normative model of argumentation. Solving the differences of opinion is the end of a process of critical discussion, where the protagonist and the antagonist must use reasonable justifications. Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004: 190–196) formulate “ten commandments for reasonable discussants”, creating a code of conduct showing acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a critical discussion, forbidding any procedures which could obstruct the resolution of a difference of opinion.

In the pragma-dialectical approach, any violation of the rules of critical discussion, touching any of the four discussion stages is considered to be a derailment from the argumentation code of conduct, and therefore fallacious. Committing a fallacy is wrong in the sense that it frustrates the effort to arrive at a resolution of the dispute (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 102–106). Fallacies are inevitably connected to the rules for a critical discussion: fallacies in the confrontation, in the distribution of discussion roles, in representing a standpoint, in choosing the means of defense, in dealing with unexpressed premisses, in utilizing starting points, in utilizing argumentation schemes, in utilizing logical argument forms, in concluding the discussion, in usage.

#### DATA ANALYSIS. *ARGUMENTUM AD HOMINEM*

Matei’s definition of the term “market” refers to “the free cultural market” or “the free market of ideas”, conceived as a critical discursive public space, a dialogical site, where judgments of value can emerge as a consequence of public space debate. Given the strategic maneuvering Matei opponents use at the opening stage, by distorting the other party’s standpoint, it is in this case relevant to speak about “the power of a certain discourse about the free market, understood in the liberal economic sense, to act as an all-legitimizing discourse in post-communism” (Iețcu, 2006b: 25)

In tracking down the Greek roots of the ad hominem argument, Graciela Marta Chichi (Chichi, 2002: 340) makes a philosophical survey:

1. The “abusive” type of ad hominem, leading to the argument *ad personam*: Y (the answerer) obstructs “p” by disqualifying (with insults) H (the questioner) who offered “p” as question.
2. The “circumstantial” or *tu quoque* type of ad hominem, which covers the notion of *ad hominem* argument: H (the questioner) attacks “p” because Y said that “p” but then admits “non-p”, or contradicts “p” by acting or having acted according to “non-p”.

Pragma-dialectics discusses *ad hominem* argument as a fallacy which arises at the confrontation stage. At this level of the critical discussion, a dispute is started when someone advances a and someone else casts doubt upon it.

It is only when a dispute has fully come to light that it becomes possible to make systematic attempts at resolving it. Ideally, the dispute should become clear at the confrontation stage, which precedes the actual resolution process in a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 107).

This tactic is meant to be a rhetorical one, because personal attacks are aimed at convincing an audience, rather than each other.

These variants of the *ad hominem* fallacy shall be further applied to the polemical discussion on the basis of Matei’s book *Boierii minții*. Patapievici had a violent reaction in his answer published in *Dilema veche* paper against the author’s standpoint and used the argument of dissociation in order to define, on one side, his view on culture as a “republic of letters”, in which values can assert themselves freely, independently of power relations, and, on the other side, his view on culture as a field in which values are determined by backstage battles between contending groups. Patapievici dismisses the latter position by identifying it with an extreme left-wing position, i.e. what he calls “political correctness”.

At a first level of rejecting the other party’s standpoint, he discredits this extreme left-wing position of which he accuses his opponent by equating it with “fanaticism”, “brutality”, “aggressiveness” and “primitiveness”. Patapievici suggests that the promoters of the “cultural socialism of the American academic left” are trying to impose “political correctness” onto the whole of the Romanian society. They “invent” enemies and condemn them through “Soviet-style” instruments: “ideological critique” understood as “unmasking” and “stigmatizing” the enemy.

This is the very moment Patapievici feels free to launch a series of direct personal attacks against some public intellectuals which had previously criticized his work. He does not refrain from casting doubt on the expertise, intelligence or good faith of a long list of “suspects”. Among them, Ion Bogdan Lefter,

chief-editor of *Observator Cultural*, “the Andreescu family — father and son, equal in fanaticism, differing only in intelligence and knowledge”, and “the Mi-roiu clan — who are colonizing entire faculties and disciplinary fields” (Patapie-vici, 2004). His abusive attempt to minimize his opponent’s credibility is also oriented towards less visible promoters, issued from the “left-wing crucible” which dominates American and British universities, former recipients of scholarships of western funds, who are now “opportunistically sniffing the air for careers” and have taken it upon themselves to promote “cultural socialism” in Romania.

The verbal attacks Patapie-vici makes use of are the abusive variant of the *argumentum ad hominem*. In direct assertions, the promoters of “political correctness” are described as being fanatical, stupid, brutal, primitive, aggressive, and their position is even said to be, possibly, a manifestation of “biological stupidity”. The opponents’ standpoint is rejected as being an “aberration”, but his verdict is supported much less on argumentation rather than abusive personal attacks (it is “aberrant” because they are “biologically stupid”). These people are also discredited by being classified as “clans” and “families”, which suggests a pre-modern (if not mafia-type of organization), in which blood bonds override other types duties towards society, and the interests of groups prevail over the rights of individuals.

Abusive personal attacks (considered to be fallacious in all typologies of fallacies) rest on an unexpressed and unacceptable premise that any argument made by someone who displays certain characteristics (he is stupid, aggressive, brutal etc.) must be rejected (Iețcu, 2006b: 256). By portraying his opponent, Patapie-vici is claiming the *ad hominem* legitimacy, which has been widely taken into account (Walton, 1992; Aberdein, 2014; Bondy, 2015). One of the *ad hominem* variants is “poisoning the well”, “which is an attack on a person’s standing in a situation, to the effect that the person is not entitled to be listened to” (Bondy, 2015: 452). Citing the source of an argument rather than focusing on the argument is still committing an *ad hominem fallacy* (Waller, 2012).

Patapie-vici’s line of argumentation:

1. The defenders of “political correctness” argue in favour of “political correctness”.
2. The defenders of “political correctness” are stupid, aggressive, brutal, fanatical.
3. Any argument made by a person who is stupid, aggressive, brutal, fanatical, should be rejected.
4. “Political correctness” should be rejected.

The reconstruction of the argument reveals the third premise (the one which is supposed to make the argument valid) to be false, making the argument unsound. But the argument may be sound whatever personal qualities the arguer may be said to have. Personal characteristics of an opponent are not good enough to reject the argument made by that opponent.

The second form of the *ad hominem* argument used by Patapievici is the circumstantial type. He suggests that his opponents have some interest in putting forward such a standpoint. According to Patapievici, his “left-wing” opponents are opportunistically pursuing their career interests. The premises of the circumstantial type of the argumentum ad hominem can be criticized in the same way like the premises for the direct personal attack. The false premise on which it stands is “whenever someone would benefit from a course of action, one should reject their arguments in favour of that course of action” (Iețcu, 2006b: 256). If this premise were always be considered to be true, someone would always commit a fallacy when arguing for his own interest, desires, aims, etc.:

1. The defenders of “political correctness” argue in favour of “political correctness”.
2. The defenders of “political correctness” would benefit from the success of “political correctness”.
3. Whenever someone would benefit from something, we should reject their arguments in favour of it.
4. Therefore, we should reject their arguments in favour of “political correctness”.

Referring to one’s adversary in a way that debases them (by positioning them as animals or other types of non-human entities) is an obvious “derailment” of strategic maneuvering. Patapievici attacks his adversaries who are “sniffing the air for careers”, “colonizing entire faculties and disciplinary fields”, who are produced (or apparently mass-produced) by the “left-wing crucible” which dominates western universities. These rhetorical devices are fallacious according to Rule 4 of the critical discussion (the relevance rule), which forbids the use of non-argumentative means as a mechanism of defence.

*Ad hominem* attacks are seen in pragma-dialectics as violations of the first rule of the critical discussion, the freedom rule: the opponent is discredited by casting doubt on his intelligence, honesty, motives, etc. This is a fallacy at the confrontation stage. The debate is oriented towards the flaws of “political correctness” and the opponent is not even recognized as a serious and credible discussion partner and his standpoint is rejected before argumentation even begins. Patapievici in resuming to pointing out aspects of his opponent’s personality, disregarding his discourse, leading to the “direct” form of *ad hominem* (Wrisley, 2019: 83).

## FALSE ANALOGY: PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL APPROACH

Arguments in favor of the standpoints need to be evaluated in order to determine their soundness and, therefore, validity. Pragma-dialectics uses the term “identification procedure” to describe the relation between premises and

starting points. This is the way to verify whether the propositions concerned can be identified as part of the joint point of departure. Whether the defense of the standpoint is indeed adequate for resolving the dispute cannot be established solely by following the identification procedure, which may prove inconsistent.

In order to adequately support the standpoint, in every single argumentation that is put forward in defense of a standpoint the right kind of argumentation scheme must be used and this scheme must be used properly (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 158).

Therefore the identification procedure must be balanced by the testing procedure, relating to the argumentation scheme in use. The testing procedure aims at determining whether the argumentation put forward in defense of a standpoint does indeed have an appropriate argumentation scheme which is correctly applied.

An argumentation constitutes a conclusive defense for a standpoint when there are enough mutually acceptable starting points and argumentation schemes and when it is perfectly clear what they are. If the identification procedure and the testing procedure produce a positive result, the standpoint has indeed been conclusively defended; if they both produce a negative result, it has been conclusively attacked.

Some argumentation schemes are generally accepted to be sound, as long as they are appropriately used in a critical discussion. Argumentation schemes like the argument from authority (symptomatic argumentation), argument from analogy (similarity argumentation) or argument from consequence (instrumental argumentation) may be in principle used for any kind of proposition. When the argument from analogy is used as an argumentation scheme, it depends on whether the protagonist and the antagonist can agree on the conditions for its use. If the discussion partners cannot agree upon it and the protagonist nevertheless goes ahead using it, he is guilty of one of the variants of the fallacy of wrongful comparison or false analogy (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 161).

With arguments from analogy, one of the critical questions is whether the comparison is really justified or whether there are crucial differences. If the comparison is defective, the argument from analogy is used incorrectly and constitutes a fallacy of false analogy. Hence the conditions for a correct comparison are not being fulfilled (the discussants do not agree on the terms of the comparison which may lead to similarities), the discussant who uses the analogy incorrectly is committing a fallacy at the argumentation stage by violating Rule 7 for a critical discussion ("A party may not regard a standpoint as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argumentation scheme that is incorrectly applied" [van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 208–209]).

## MISREPRESENTATIONS IN THE OPPONENTS' RESPONSES

Iețcu (Iețcu, 2006a; Iețcu, 2006b; Iețcu, 2007) has pointed out the way Matei's opponents distort the original standpoint, using a false dilemma, which consists of a dichotomy between a radical form of liberalism and an extreme left-wing position. Matei defines the "market" as a component of the public sphere, as a space destined to dialogue, as values and ideas subjected to public debate. His concept of "market of ideas" opposes the one put forward by Patapievič and Liiceanu, who take into account the consumer market, claiming that readers' choice in buying their books and sales figures provide the warrant for the quality of their work and the best proof against the "status group" theory. Patapievič claims that it is impossible to decisively manipulate people's economic behaviour.

Iețcu-Fairclough (Iețcu-Fairclough, 2007) notes that Patapievič seems to be relying here on a partially implicit argument which says: (a) My books sell well. (b) Sales figures are indicative of the intrinsic quality of a product. (c) Therefore, my books possess quality in themselves. In other words, the theory according to which their value is "manufactured" by a status group is false (Rule 4 of the critical discussion, the relevance rule) hence no cause can be established between the number of sold books and the value of the product. Commercial products sell well, but quality does not stand for accessibility and success.

In his further denial of Matei's claim, Patapievič advances again his concepts of "cultural socialism" or "political correctness" as extreme manifestations of the American communism, as opposed to modern liberal views.

As the generation of the 60' became institutionalized, a species of "cultural socialism" appeared in the United States, whose enlightened ideology pursued the unification of all (recent or traditional) left-wing radicalisms under one militant umbrella: the political correctness agenda. Its fundamental claim is that groups know better than individuals what is good to think, what ought to be done, felt, etc. In order to improve society and eliminate all those conflicts which make social life complicated (inequality, xenophobia, discrimination, etc.), the solution proposed by cultural socialism is re-education, for individuals, and affirmative action, for institutions. [...] Cultural socialism sets out to eliminate conflicts in society, by re-educating us all in the politically correct spirit and requiring the state to abandon its claim to liberal neutrality and intervene openly in favour of the "progressives" (i.e. of the new ideologues of political correctness). If traditional socialism has failed to destroy the capitalist economy, although it has hated it more than anything else, it has now, by means of cultural socialism, set out to destroy the traditional liberal culture of western civilization.

There are very few intellectuals who defend cultural socialism in Romania. There are some, however, who — by inducing a feeling of guilt within society and stigmatizing adversaries — would brutally and aggressively like to impose the cultural socialism of the American academic left (which, in a 1994 article that was promptly condemned

by those who are politically correct, I called the “American communism”), as the only modern solution to Romania’s problems. [...]

On the whole, the conclusion is that the ideology of political correctness, as well as Marxism, for which it acts as a neo-Puritan American cousin, needs enemies, against which it may legitimize itself as necessary and which it may grow parasitically upon. These enemies have to be invented. By means of which instrument? Here the bizarre perverseness of the defenders of political correctness manifests itself fully. The most aggressive among them are attempting to gain public recognition with the help of an ideological instrument that has not been used in this country since the time when Romanian culture was ruled by Soviet power: ideological critique aimed at unmasking and stigmatizing the enemy. [...]

Understanding what is wrong with an opponent in the realm of ideas comes down to branding him with the politically correct stigma. You will agree that there can be no question of a debate in these conditions. It is however easy to obtain spectacular summary executions (Patapievi, 2004, trans. I. Iețcu).

Patapievi develops an analogy using “political correctness” as a source. The reconstruction of his argument would be the following (Iețcu, 2006b):

1. In the United States of the 60’s, left-wing radicals launched the political correctness campaign.
2. Political correctness implies that individuals cannot outstand the groups.
3. Political correctness is the enemy of capitalism and liberal culture.
4. This attitude is dangerous and therefore should be rejected.
5. In Romania, communism was the ultimate expression of political correctness, leading to totalitarianism.
6. Left-wing followers tend to invent enemies and brutally stigmatize and repress them.
7. These are the means by which political correctness adherents in Romania understand modernity.
8. Ideological critique against enemies marks a return to communist practices.
9. Opposing ideological adversaries does not create a space for dialogue, but for public executions.

In order to understand logical deficiencies in the analogy Patapievi puts forward, it is necessary to do a critical examination of the analogy. André Juthe reveals the etymological Greek source of this argument. Analogy has to do with the notion of proportion, and “a proportion is a relational structure between two things” (Juthe, 2005: 5). A one-to-one correspondence is needed between the elements of two different analogous fields. It is important whether the elements and the relation system pertain to the same domain. Therefore, we can distinguish between a same-domain-analogy and a different-domain-analogy. In the first case, not only the relations between elements are identical, but also the elements belong to the same domain. The different-domain-analogy supposes that the elements belong to different domains, but the relation stands.

In Patapievici's contribution to the debate, his "political correctness" analogy does not limit to a relation system, but it makes references to identical terms. Therefore, it is easy to speak about a same-domain-analogy. The core of his argument is the use of the term "group". This is the first similarity he identifies between Matei's theory regarding "status groups", and the "group" concept in the radical left-wing vision. This free association was sustained by the cultural context in which Matei developed his ideas. Matei was living in America (United States), the home of what Patapievici describes as "political correctness" or "American communism".

Therefore, a syllogism by Patapievici can be drawn:

1. Matei reflects American culture standpoint.
2. "Political correctness" developed in America.
3. Therefore Matei defends "political correctness" agenda.

Analogy implies an association between two domains, described as source and target. Cameron Shelley states the following connection: "The source domain is that set of concepts that the analogy draws upon as the basis for a conclusion" (Shelley, 2004: 226). The correspondence between the two domains is called "mapping". Three kinds of mappings can be recognized in the analogy (Shelley, 2004: 226). The first type of mapping is called "attribute mapping", which consists of the association between the elements of the two domains. In his discourse, Patapievici uses knowledge of left-wing politics to base a conclusion about "status groups". The common features in Patapievici's analogy could be considered as it follows: group — enemy — criticism — repression — anti-liberal attitude — opposition to modernity. The second type of mapping is the "relational mapping", based on the set of connections the attributes form: invent (enemies are regarded as imaginary) — return (to the totalitarian system) — harm (left-wing views are dangerous) — reject (such attitudes should be rejected). The third kind of mapping is the "system mapping", between "relations of relations". This is the logical level in which sequences of meaning are connected: because (such attitudes are dangerous and mark a return to communism) — either/ or (in conclusion, "political correctness" should be permanently rejected).

The coherence of an analogy should satisfy three constraints (Shelley, 2004):

1. Structural consistency: each mapping is a one-to-one correspondence.
2. Semantic similarity: corresponding concepts are similar in meaning.
3. Pragmatic effectiveness: the analogy provides information relevant to the issue in question.

The attributes which "status groups" and "political correctness" share have been established, therefore the structural consistency is insured. But it is hard to accept a semantic similarity between the two fields. It is difficult to prove that Matei "invents" his enemies. First of all, because his "opponents", the members of "status groups", are not imaginary. Real names are brought into

discussion and Patapievici is among them. Matei opens a critical discussion and advances a standpoint, an argumentative move which Patapievici seems to reject, thus breaking again the first rule of the critical discussion, the freedom rule. Further on, it is difficult to determine whether status groups would manage to induce a regression to totalitarian values. As for the danger they present, this destructive potential is not founded on argumentative ground. A reconstruction of the relational mapping does not make clear any type of connection between the two domains.

The semantic similarity test leads to different meanings of the analogy. The absence of semantic similarity raises the question whether this turn of the discourse brings relevant information to the discussion. In fact, the “political correctness” analogy does not comply with the relevance rule. Pragmatic effectiveness constraint does not stand. The approach of the analogy in this light of cognitive research leads us to the conclusion that, in his discourse, Patapievici uses an incorrect discussion move. We are actually dealing with a false analogy, which is defined as “an analogy that is superficially appealing but that proves to be untenable on further examination” (Shelley, 2004: 224). The conceptual similarity between “status groups” as pertaining to the “political correctness” agenda can be extended neither to a semantic connection, nor to a relevant purpose.

Any counterargument of the analogy, such as the false analogy, needs to include two dimensions: orientation and effect. The orientation is, obviously, the rejection of Matei’s standpoint. The effect should leave a conclusion or no conclusion at all. And this false analogy does not put forward a conclusive argumentation. The evaluation of the analogical arguments reveals a misrepresentation of the original claim. Patapievici uses an ideological pattern which proves to be irrelevant for this point of the debate.

Like Patapievici, Liiceanu (Liiceanu, 2004) draws an analogy between the theory of status groups and the radical Left-wing position. Matei’s theory is accused of being a “fiction”, in the same way in which communism was an “enormous fiction”, a “continuous mystification”, a case of entire societies allowing themselves to be “fooled” (Iețcu-Fairclough, 2007). Liiceanu places resentment, envy and frustration at the root of any critical reaction against the Romanian public intellectuals (a causal argument against Matei’s standpoint). He does not put forward the “political correctness” issue, but he resumes to involve the “liberal economic theories” in the discussion. He adopts the same dissociation between “status groups” and “liberal values”. Matei’s “cultural market of ideas” is also being distorted as a “consumer market”, where authors cannot influence the sales of their books. The false analogy with the extreme left-wing political view leads Liiceanu to the same misrepresentation of his opponent’s argument.

Both Patapievici and Liiceanu, in using the false analogy, distort Matei’s original standpoint (the existence of “status groups”). They do not apply the

argumentative scheme correctly. Their attack on the standpoint proves to be inconclusive. They do not accept Matei's claim, but they do not manage to defend their position, breaking another pragma dialectical rule: the concluding rule.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Pragma-dialectics offers a normative model of argumentation. Solving the differences of opinion is the end of a process of critical discussion, where the protagonist and the antagonist must use reasonable justifications. In the pragma-dialectical approach, any violation of the rules of critical discussion, regarding any of the four discussion stages is considered to be a derailment from the argumentation code of conduct, and therefore fallacious. Fallacies are inevitably connected to the rules of critical discussion and committing a fallacy is wrong in the sense that it frustrates the effort to arrive at a resolution of the dispute (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992: 102–106).

The reconstruction of the argumentative discourse reveals the fallacious moves which often occur in the argumentative practice. The pragma-dialectical approach integrates both rhetorical aspect and dialectical aspect in argumentative discourse. The arguers have two aims: to win the conflict, but also to conduct the discussion in a reasonable way. The attempt to reconcile the simultaneous pursuit of these two objectives, which seem to contradict themselves, is described under the name strategic maneuvering. "This strategic maneuvering is directed at diminishing the potential tension between pursuing at the same time a dialectical as well as a rhetorical aim" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2002: 135)

In the Romanian intellectual debate on "status groups" vs. "free market of ideas" Patapievici and Liiceanu identify Matei's theory with an extreme left-wing position, blending political correctness with post-communist ideological remains. Both Patapievici and Liiceanu use strategic maneuvering, appealing to rhetorical skills, to *ad hominem* attacks and to false analogies, violating Rule 1 (Discussants may not prevent each other from advancing starting points or from calling standpoints into question — the freedom rule) at the confrontation stage (discrediting the opponent, preventing him from articulating his standpoint) and Rule 7 (Reasoning presented as formally conclusive in an argumentation may not be invalid in a logical sense — the validity rule) at the argumentation stage (using the scheme of analogy incorrectly, but not fulfilling the conditions for a correct comparison) for a critical discussion.

Matei's opponents project the issue of "status groups" onto the war against the Left without using empirical evidence and analysis. The analogies with

extreme Left used by Patapievici and Liiceanu divert the discussion onto irrelevant lines, hence the acceptability of the analogy with “political correctness” is insufficiently supported. Therefore, Patapievici and Liiceanu make no effort to bring the dispute to a resolution of the difference of opinion. The main arguments advanced in the intellectuals’ debate unveil the philosophical background of the two challengers of Matei’s ideas, who make use of argumentation in Aristotle’s dialectical terms, creating new spaces of opinions and failing to embrace an apodictic style requiring a scientific approach (Zingano, 2017; Leal, 2021).

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