

# The epistemic apocalypse

"I would plead in favor of a return to the Great Problems,  
in order to push back the present trend of fragmentation and incoherence in science"  
**John L. Casti**

In spite of some official assumptions, economic research remains quartered in a methodological space with unclear references. The pretentious small talk among empiricism and historicism still is a source of motivation for the critical positioning. Unfortunately, that which gets reduced to empiricism in economical research proves to be an analysis of statistical data, as historicism still resembles the incrementum - decrementum type of story.

The studies which do not follow these directions are either event oriented, either hagiographical under various forms. A discordant note, in a neutral sense, is made by the never-ending suite of syntheses of what has been said, up to a point in time, in a thematic zone or regarding a fashionable idea, where the scientific goal is replaced by the goal of the profession. The thematic imitations are negatively highlighted, going as far as pretending the founding of disciplines, in accordance with the sensibilities induced in the public agenda by politically motivated intellectual groups.

The most bizarre situation is seen in the area of pretense of inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary studies.

The most voluminous package of this type relates to the pairing of scientific disciplines in an artificial manner, from the most indigestible and somewhat useless which amalgamate economics with medicine or with who knows which para-quantic theory to those which alchemically combine disciplines in the hope of obtaining the gold of originality.

There is no doubt that, until proved otherwise, any theoretical experiment contains a grain of insertable ore. The problem, essentially, is not of notional *mélangeing*, but that of the method followed by the experimenter – on the one hand, and of the coherent vision in which the meanings of theoretical referentials are established – on the other hand. The substituting of concepts might possibly suggest empty areas in the economic theory, as with the example set by the works of Georgescu-Roegen, but nothing more. The temptation of diversifying the translation of concepts from physics to economics, for instance, has the advantage of fashion, but not that of the invariable epistemic breakthrough.

The physical universe, be it even anthropically re-engineered, remains completely different from the rules contained within economic theory, eminently anthropically centered, being essentially a special theory which rationalizes human behavior. The laws called on by physics are of *natura naturans*, while economics tries to accredit regularities belonging to human nature, a subspecies which introduces a fault line into existence through the quality of being conscious, of emitting rational explanations and of communicating them.

The physical laws constitute the amniotic liquid in which the laws of human behavior are constructed, among them being – in truth, on the frontispiece – the laws of economics. The laws are complementary, interoperable, and not interchangeable. The laws of physics explain existence; the laws of economics, together with all the sciences of man, explain the states of conscience, which means those of the intelligent existence of the anthropic type.

Inter-disciplinarity thus understood is not just lacking in sense, but is also an error in the order of rationality. Inter-disciplinarity should offer the platform for the homogenization of consistencies in order to form a new unity. Unfortunately, until now we've only come across forced redrawings of the senses of some phenomena, from physics to economics, as if these would hold at least compatible consistencies.

The ridiculous can also be found in a different plane: the pretense of engineers of being able to offer solutions to the problems of the economy. That which comes out of this propensity is the paroxysmal expression of the managementization of economical discourse and the engineeringization of quantitative analysis. In reality it is a technological rigor applied to the void in the understanding of what economics is.

The case of multi- and trans-disciplinarity is represented by a mimetic current. And this because it manifests itself in the total absence of the curricular offer of superior education, from where expertise is to be expected. Unidimensionality is build on the fragmentation of specialization, also most often ripped from the contexts of the founding paradigms and of their theoretical referentials. A so-called marketing expert, for instance, who underwent the cycle of licensing of masters and doctorate which we call a "marketing" domain of study, is the sure victim of fragmentization as a solution for specialization and becomes autistic with regard to the power of explaining contexts.

This model, invariably multiplied, makes multi-disciplinarity illusory.

Epistemological inadequacy is obvious. Ignorance is finding a place to call home. Economic research has insured its comfort.

And as if all of this would not suffice, the non-recognition of several levels of reality – even of different realities, together with the refusal of non-classical logic (in fact, a lack of initiation) and with the total breaking-off with the stimulating dilemmas of theoretical visions – discards the area of economic research to the outskirts of scientificity, somewhat even to the derisory.

*Facti sumus sicut lapides oculos habentes et non videntes.*

Marin Dinu

## Contents

Evolution Scenarios at the Romanian Economy Level, Using the R.M. Solow Adjusted Model	
■ Ion Gh. Roșca, Stelian Stancu .....	3
Application of the Model of Principal Components Analysis on Romanian Insurance Market	
■ Dan Armeanu, Leonard Lache .....	11
Analysis Regarding the Perception and the Evolution of the Ethical Values of the Economist Students of the Faculty of Economic Studies of University of Oradea	
■ Ioana Pop Cohuț .....	21
The Market Power Measurement of Firms within the European Union	
■ Claudia Dobre .....	33
Aspects Concerning the Optimization of Authentication Process for Distributed Applications	
■ Ion Ivan, Mihai Doinea, Dragoș Pălăghiuță .....	39
Planning the Marketing Activity in the Health Care Services	
■ Violeta Rădulescu, Iuliana Cetină, Gheorghe Orzan .....	57
The Influence of the Active Rate of Interest over the Financing Decision of the Enterprise	
■ Irena Munteanu, Anca Bran .....	67

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