ABSTRACT

Our work, structured in four chapters, was thought from an archeological perspective. It aims at rebuilding, from an ethnological point of view, a philosophical concept, essentially ontological, the destiny.

The Romanian ethnology, even though it approached the topic from a multiple perspective, starting with the early collections achieved by our great folklorists, plus the contributions of the sociologists, the psycho-ethnologists or the cultural philosophers, the historians, did not manage to create those coherent coordinates by the aid of which the topic might have become a stable referential.

We propose an approach to the topic from the coagulant perspective of the popular teachings, understood as meta-text about destiny.

The sensitivity of the topic manifests substantially and methodologically. Substantially, our popular culture did not create a homogenous theme of the destiny, either meditative-philosophical or descriptive-ethnographical, but it only dissipated forms of representation of the destiny, of the fate, in various folkloric categories, having more or less degrees of functionality, as well as aesthetic subtleties: ritual songs, lyric songs, paremiology, legends.

This dissipation also induces the need for a specific methodology. We are of the opinion that the originality of our approach consists in the methodological solution we propose, the way in which *we assemble the textual drifts of destiny*, which exist at the level of our popular culture, monumentalized by collecting.

We approached this idea as a succession of theme concentricities: destiny as topic of the Romanian ethnology, destiny of the world, a Romanian popular ontology, and man's destiny. Each theme coagulates a chapter of our theme.

Apart from this macro-structured vision, as a logical demonstration, we developed a simple mechanism: having as starting point the musical principle of the alternance between theme and variation, we compared some folkloric categories with rich functionality, such as the rites of passage, which have an utmost social adherence, aimed at reconfiguring the social by staging, and consequently, with an immense ontic virtuality, with other categories, species with reduced or no functionality (lyric songs),

such as the legend or the popular teachings, folkloric species rather loaded meta-textually.

The purport of such a comparison is, on the one hand, a compositional one, but on the other hand, it is to correct. The non functional texts are aimed at confirming the meanings of the ritual texts concerning the idea of destiny within our popular culture.

The first chapter, *Destiny – topic of the Romanian ethnology*, is a panorama of the contribution made by the Romanian ethnology to the elucidation of such a topic. In a more or less exhaustive manner, we try to present the main contributions to this topic, the scientific coordinates, the specificity of the opinions, the ideational evolution, and the stylistic marks.

The chapter, designed as a database, as a bibliographic sectioning from the point of view of the proposed theme, might as well be perceived as a concise history of the Romanian ethnology, written with a theme apriorism.

Thus, the first chapter became a compendium of the history of the Romanian folklore, written from the perspective of destiny as theme. We reviewed an impressive bibliographic material, willing to outline as clearly as possible the coordinates of this issue in the Romanian ethnology.

Lazăr Şăineanu, Tudor Pamfile, Ion Otescu, Traian Gherman, Elena Niculiţă-Voronca, Gh.Ciauşeanu, Artur Gorovei, Ştefania Cristescu-Golopenţia, I.A.Candrea, M.Canianu, Gh. Pavelescu, Ov. Papadima. O. Băncilă, R.Vulcănescu, plus the writings of the younger or very young generations of ethnologists and folklorists, create the ideational scaffolding which we had as starting point when establishing the senses of destiny in our popular culture.

Their writings are useful both for their contents, and for their methodological suggestions. The strengths and weaknesses, the qualities and the drawbacks of the works mentioned above, led us to choosing the structure of the work, and to the setting of the work plan.

The second chapter, *Destiny of the world – immutable frames of a popular ontology*, contains different narrative creations which emphasize the value of the conception of the genesis, of the time, the space, and the casuality. Our model is Ernest Bernea's work, *Frames of the Romanian popular thinking*.

Our intention is to highlight an interrelation between these elements of the genesis, and, at the same time, that this interrelation carries with it their predetermination, which can engage a predetermination of man's destiny.

The materiality and the becoming of the world, the space and the time are the actual and perceptible forms of the destiny. Existing jointly, the space and the time have existed ever since the beginning of the creation.

The human being outlines his becoming in and by these coordinates of the nature, which help him conceive the world and represent it.

The physical coordinates, the space and the time, these constants of the traditional way of thinking, are initial and definitive. They occur with the creation, and they change only superficially, their essence staying unaltered.

This form of representation allows a high level of formalization and the emotional charge of reception, specific for such a mentality with schemes, symbols, images, and sensitive logic, acting as a popular philosophy.

This philosophy is the engine of the major forms, concrete representation of the world as harmony: the calendar, the rituals. The rituals, as symbolic scenography, are meant to explain and to perpetuate a form of cosmos, an order. Their explanatory and correcting function (when the crisis moments threaten the harmony of the world) and the emotional-psychical function (trust in the future and the world order) are the most eloquent form of philosophy in action.

They are in conjunction with the calendar, being a cosmic lesson about the way the world and the nature work. Coordinates, logic and superstitions, obligations and interdictions, explanations and mystery, all these impose a horizon of the formalized periodicity, of increasing and decreasing, of life and death, as common facts, attributes of the creation.

These constants which are the space, the time, the causality, take place in a ritual way, related to superstitions, and they involve signs, symbols, and images coagulated by the logic of the sensible, revealing the destiny of the world.

Between the destiny of the world and the man's destiny there is a rapport of interrelation and predestination.

The third chapter, *Man's destiny*, is the section where we want to shape the idea of destiny as passage and fulfillment, addressing the passage rituals from the perspective of their staging, as a succession of sequences, from the perspective of the interdictions they impose. The focus is on birth and death as critical thresholds.

Destiny as fulfillment under the sign of good luck or misfortune, as predestination, the succession of interrelations, marked ritually of by superstition, suggests to us a harmonic conception about the existence of our people, with a fatalism well-tempered by the belief that work can change man's destiny or that, in a way or another, man, unless he is the master of his own destiny, can bring his own contribution to its improvement, within the limits of the ontological harmony.

The third chapter of this work, *Man's destiny*, develops this idea by reviewing the birth, the wedding and the funeral rituals, by means of the superstitions linked to the ritual contexts, and the corpus of interdictions.

The fourth chapter, *Popular teachings, a philosophical meta-text*, is the center of our demonstration, and it reflects a double process, that of checking and coagulation of the destiny halo created by rituals, legends and lyric songs, and that of forming a philosophical meta-text.

Initially, our work had been thought as an approach of the destiny only by means of popular teachings. The study of the material proved the necessity for this oscillation between the ritual act as form of social communication regarding the destiny, and the popular teachings which we construed as popular philosophical meta-text.

The chapter benefits from the recent publishing of the most comprehensive collection of proverbs in our culture, Iuliu A. Zanne's book, *Romanian's proverbs from Romania, Bessarabia, Bucovina, Hungary, Istria and Macedonia*, a book published in ten tomes, which is comprehensive from the editorial point of view, each tome having about 700-800 pages.

Comprehensive regarding the title, the version by George C-tin Păunescu, with a foreword by Nicolae Constantinescu, cared for by Mugur Vasiliu, it was published by the Publishing House of the Romanian Association for Culture and Orthodoxy, Bucharest, SCARA, in 2003.

Among the contributors, we mention only some of them, such as the priest Teodor Bălăşel, N. Canianu, A. Carcea, Artur Sorovei, S.T. Kirileanu, Mihai Lupaşcu, N.C. Mateescu, Elena Sevastos, Th. Speranţia, Alexandru Vasiliu, many of them gaining their own place in the history of the Romanian folklore by the means of their own work.

The ontological references of the popular teachings are extremely reduced, shortened, conceptually focused, and facing the crucial moments of existence: birth and death. The meditative aspects lack or are weakly represented. Instead, the malfunction of the behaviors is over-activated, which imposes a first conclusion. Proverbs, when in action, are rather a book of wisdom.

Proverbs deconstruct and formalize an experience, a tradition. In other words, by keeping the proportions, they represent a meta-text on destiny. We could go so far as to state that popular teachings mean (naïve!) anthropology, as they capture the cultural behavior within the concrete ethereal limits (thus cultural).

In other words, by deconstructing, we can speak of a general destiny level reflected in the popular teachings (fate, luck, destiny, death, birth, misfortune, cause, effect, etc.), and of a particular destiny level which would reflect a traditional behavior, certified and synthetized (features, values, skills, feelings, etc.).

To support the ideas described above, we are thinking of a large corpus of texts which will constitute the annexes to this work, narrative, ritual, popular teachings texts, able to prove, at the same time, the poietica privacy of the work.