

STUDII DE ISTORIE A FILOSOFIEI ROMÂNEȘTI
VIII

MIRCEA VULCĂNESCU

Coordonator: Viorel Cernica

**STUDIES ON THE HISTORY
OF ROMANIAN PHILOSOPHY**

VIII

MIRCEA VULCĂNESCU

Editor: Viorel Cernica

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

INSTITUTUL DE FILOSOFIE ȘI PSIHOLOGIE
„CONSTANTIN RĂDULESCU-MOTRU”

**STUDII DE ISTORIE
A FILOSOFIEI ROMÂNEȘTI
vol. VIII**

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Coordonator: Viorel Cernica
Ediție îngrijită de Mona Mamulea
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ABSTRACTS

MIRCEA VULCĂNESCU: 1904–1952

Mircea Vulcănescu and the Romanian philosophical speech

Alexandru Surdu

Mircea Vulcănescu considered the possibility of a Romanian philosophy grounded on the Romanian language. To this end, he resorted to words and philosophical meanings that cannot be found in other languages, such as *ins*, *fire*, *chip*, *rost*, a.o. On this base, he sketched an original philosophical system he termed ‘The Romanian dimension of existence’ which was taken over and accomplished by Constantin Noica in his book *Rostirea filosofică românească* [Romanian philosophical speech].

Key-words: Romanian philosophy, Romanian philosophical speech, national character of philosophy, philosophical system

Considerations on the place of Mircea Vulcănescu within the Romanian philosophy

Dragoș Popescu

The author sketches a short history of the evolution of the Romanian philosophy from the time when the first university institutions were created until the beginning of the 20th century. Mircea Vulcănescu’s philosophical contribution is to be placed in an age concerned with the modernization of the state, concerns that are specific to the decades following World War I. The author stresses Mircea Vulcănescu’s effort to promote an original philosophical thinking based on Romanian moral, religious and traditional values.

Key-words: school philosophy, Romanian interwar intelligentsia, modernization

Mircea Vulcănescu: ethical view and moral attitude

Marin Diaconu

The author presents Mircea Vulcănescu’s works related to the problems and concepts of ethics, in order to conclude that the Romanian thinker ‘lived’ his ethical view within his moral attitude. At the same time, his moral attitude was embodied and reached its height in his ethical view.

Key-words: moral philosophy, English ethics, ethics and religion, freedom and determinism, Dimitrie Gusti, medieval philosophy, Kant’s ethics

**Mircea Vulcănescu's „temptation”
or looking for ourselves between selfness and otherness**

Roberto Merlo

The present study represents a survey of theories relating to the Romanian specific national character developed in the 30s–40s of 20th century by Romanian philosopher, sociologist and economist Mircea Vulcănescu. In the first place some of the key concepts that underlie the speculations of the author (*neam* roughly ‘people’, *ispită* ‘temptation’) are discussed and contextualized in the cultural, social and political reality of his time. Further, some relevant aspects of Vulcănescu’s ‘theory of temptations’ are analysed in detail, in relations not only with the cultural reality of the author’s time but also with contemporary situation, highlighting strengths, flaws and topicality of Vulcănescu’s questions and answers.

Key-words: Mircea Vulcănescu, Romanian national identity, Romanian nationalism, interwar Romanian culture

Generation and ‘spirit of time’

Ion Dur

Vulcănescu unravelled in the structures of culture a more or less organized organism whose role was, among other things, to establish criteria in order to provide culture with a certain degree of rationality and order. ‘Generation’ was and somewhat remained such an ordering tool. In this essay, the author investigates Vulcănescu’s idea of generation in relation to the idea of a ‘new spirituality’ that animated the thinking of his time.

Key-words: generation, new spirituality, Romanian spirituality, creation, culture and politics

**The ‘historical’ dimension of the Romanian existence
in Mircea Vulcănescu, Gh. I. Brătianu, and Vasile Băncilă**

Mihai Popa

In this article we intended to outline several characteristics of the idea of ‘historicity’ as understood by three Romanian thinkers: M. Vulcănescu, Gh. I. Brătianu, and V. Băncilă. In our opinion, the common element that crossed their works was precisely *historicity as a spiritual synthesis* in the milieu of a given community that sought to express itself at a universal level. They pertained to different spiritual spheres: metaphysics and orthodox spirituality (Vulcănescu), history and law (Brătianu), and philosophy of culture (Băncilă), yet there was a point where their ideas met each other: the Romanian spirituality.

Key-words: historicity, becoming, existence, synthesis, culture, determinism

Mircea Vulcănescu: a philosophy of folk religiosity

Ioana Repciuc

The paper aims to apprehend Mircea Vulcănescu's view on traditional religion phenomena, as this was successively perceived in his various stages and perspectives of the Romanian scholar's activity and works. Positivist and empirical sociology practiced in D. Gusti's monographic school joins the polemic attitudes for defending the traditional Orthodox ethics, and the broad philosophic program of an autochthonous ontology. The constant approach of the philosopher and sociologist on Romanian folklore and the emphasis on primitive, animist, and magic features of this traditional imagery are all analysed in the context of sociological theories on folk religion. The unified philosophical expression of the way Vulcănescu understands religiosity is finally gained by abandoning classic objective sociology and the admitted preference for phenomenological interpretative sociology, the only way towards the authenticity of the performers involved in the ritual life. In order to point out Vulcănescu's contribution on the inventory of socio-anthropological understandings on Christian-pagan syncretism, the philosopher's works have been placed in a broad context of Romanian and international debates over folk religiosity.

Key-words: Mircea Vulcănescu, folk religion, sociology of religion, sociological monograph, interpretative sociology, phenomenology, traditional magic, Romanian folklore

A reconstruction of Vulcănescu's ontology

Remus Breazu

Based on the folk Romanian thinking, Mircea Vulcănescu proposed a systematic and original ontology which resembles rather the Presocratic visions than the post-Platonic European philosophy. In Vulcănescu's view, time is kairotic and the ontological principle has an ordering function, not a creative one. Being is not viewed as a stable presence, but as change and becoming.

Key-words: Mircea Vulcănescu, Presocratic philosophers, kairotic time, being, becoming

Notes for the reconstruction of the 'metaphysical' concept of *logos* in Mircea Vulcănescu

Cornel-Florin Moraru

The main theme of this essay is the philosophical reconstruction of Mircea Vulcănescu's conception of knowledge and *logos* from a phenomenological point of view. The analysis of the concept of *logos*, as it is referred to in Vulcănescu's conference *Logos and Eros in the Christian metaphysics*, brings forward a distinction between the human and the transcendent *logos*. The purpose of this essay is to show that the former offers the possibility of an ontological logic, while the latter offers the possibility of a meontological one, which can be put in correspondence, as a strictly philosophical image, with the theological thinking.

Key-words: meontology, logos, knowledge, phenomenology

Methodical aspect and the ‘portrait’ of happening in the Romanian thinking of Being. Hermeneutical exploration

Ioan Drăgoi

Following Mircea Vulcănescu’s ontological projects, this paper aims to reassemble some of the meanings of the Romanian word *întâmplare* [*happening*] in order to give a possible answer to the question: ‘what does it mean that something happens in a Romanian manner?’ We will point out the methodical role it plays, by putting it in relation to other classical hermeneutical concepts like ‘tradition’, ‘symbol’, or ‘language’. These connections will prove their effectiveness in a quantitative analysis (cause by accident as a principle of movement), as well as in a qualitative one (by resorting to some Romanian ‘hypostases’ of happening: *pretext of dispute, fulfilment as integrality, passivity as receptivity, bringing to pass, worldly proper arrangement, fate [or destiny]*). Their peculiarity will be proved in comparison to some of their equivalent meanings, as grasped in Western philosophy.

Key-words: happening, “Romanian Dimension of Existence”, hermeneutics, portrait, pretext of dispute, fulfilment as integrality, passivity as receptivity, bringing to pass, worldly proper arrangement, fate

Philosophy as descriptive metaphysics

Bogdan Rusu

In this study we use the concepts of ethnophilosophy and descriptive metaphysics to theoretically locate Mircea Vulcănescu’s kind of philosophical enterprise in his seminal work *The Romanian Dimension of Existence*. We first offer a historical explanation of the emergence of concerns with national-ethnic philosophy in the 18th and 20th centuries, and we discuss several concepts of national-ethnic philosophy, including that of ethnophilosophy. We then argue that Vulcănescu had an ethnophilosophical project and that he understood ethnophilosophy as a form of descriptive metaphysics. Borrowing Susan Haack’s terminology, we show that Vulcănescu’s ethnophilosophy-as-descriptive-metaphysics is possible under the assumption of a weak local connection between language and conceptual scheme. Finally, we express doubts concerning the possibility of descriptive metaphysics of successfully accomplishing the ethnophilosophical project.

Key-words: Mircea Vulcănescu, national philosophy, ethnophilosophy, descriptive metaphysics

Mircea Vulcănescu and the sociology of modernity

Lucian-Ștefan Dumitrescu

A broad discussion about Mircea Vulcănescu should include micro- and macro-social factors which have influenced the scholar. Thus the social determinations that moulded the author’s agenda, but also the manner in which Mircea Vulcănescu has left its mark on the social fabric of his time would become comprehensible. His attitude and behaviour in various contexts could also be explained. This article focuses on highlighting Mircea Vulcănescu’s microcosm in the attempt to show the convergence between man and author

in a context, the modern one, characterised by the segmentation of social roles. Offering insights on his philosophy of life, the article illustrates how Vulcanescu decoded modernity from a sociological point of view.

Key-words: modernity, Mircea Vulcănescu, elites, sociology

Analytics and dialectic of sovereignty in Mircea Vulcănescu

Silvia Giurgiu

The main purpose of this paper is to analyse the way in which the image of sovereignty is articulated in Mircea Vulcănescu's works. The theme goes through the several disciplinary frameworks assumed by the author (philosophy, sociology, economics and theology), establishing a connection between them.

All forms of sovereignty are conceived on a dialectical basis which will ultimately lead to the disarticulation of the phenomenon itself. Thus the plenitude of sovereignty coincides with the undermining of its attributes and therefore with the removal of the concrete marks of sovereignty. Interesting enough, in a theoretical perspective this dialectical authority makes use of the instruments of the analytic philosophy, which, in a proper use, should have determined a positivist approach to the object/phenomenon. It is still to investigate to what extent the strong presuppositions of the system that provided Mircea Vulcănescu with a method mark his philosophical structure. Is it a tension that turned into a symptom of a crisis, or is it rather a welcome synthesis of the two different theories? And finally, to what extent could such a synthesis be ever possible?

Key-words: dialectics, analytical philosophy, sovereignty, war, interdisciplinary

Mircea Vulcănescu and the Romanian interwar village

Ionuț Butoi

This article proposes a detailed analysis of the contribution brought by Mircea Vulcanescu, within the Gustian School, to the research of the economic dimension of the Romanian village. To the profitability of the peasant family's budgets, method used by prominent agronomists of the time to study peasant economy, Vulcanescu opposes a nuanced approach emphasizing the subjective economic judgment of the peasant, inspired by the research of the Russian economist Ceajanov. The method Vulcanescu proposes is part of a perspective where the household is considered the cornerstone of a homely-peasant economy, systemically different from the capitalist economy. Socio-economic problem of small farms/households represents a key part of the interwar debate on the way forward for Greater Romania: either the agrarian way or the industrial-bourgeois path. The Romanian village, for Vulcanescu and other monographists, was not just a special economic reality; it was considered as a social world in itself, radically different from the social world of the interwar Romanian cities. The whole discussion seems, at first sight, of purely historical interest; however, recent research on the importance of social capital and governance of common property shows that ignoring the special socio-economic character of the Romanian village ruined not only the quality of academic debate on the subject but the society as a whole.

Key-words: household, peasant, village, monograph, social capital, agrarianism, neoliberalism

The age of precariousness and dailiness. Mircea Vulcănescu on press and journalists

Romina Surugiu

The paper briefly presents the activity as a journalist of the Romanian philosopher, sociologist and economist Mircea Vulcănescu and his opinions on press and journalism expressed in a public conference: “The professional training of journalist”. We explore the personal, the political and the professional context of the conference, which was held in front of students, in 1940. We also outline the main ideas and concepts related to the production of the newspapers.

The conference is very important for the history of Romanian press, as it represents one of the first theoretical attempts to explain the role of media and journalism in the modern Romanian society. Vulcănescu argues the necessity of a professional training for journalists in order to achieve a better understanding of politics, economy, social life and culture for the audience. The speaker also emphasises the need for a social responsibility of journalists.

Key-words: journalism theory, history of press, profession, Romania

‘What if?’ Mythology as a ‘background theory’ for thought experiment

Mona Mamulea

Focusing on the Romanian hypothetical expressions mentioned by Vulcănescu and considered by Noica from an ontological standpoint, the present article shifts from ontology to epistemology in order to map out a few guidelines for their investigation as thought experiments. The benefit of such an approach is that it can contribute to the elucidation of the mechanisms by which a specific community organizes its knowledge and shapes its world view.

Key-words: thought experiment, hypothetical thinking, mythology, folk knowledge

The phenomenal building of the theory of existence

Viorel Cernica

This paper proposes an interpretation of Mircea Vulcănescu’s discourse on the topic related to the “Romanian dimension of existence”. There are three directions of interpretation linked to the three aspects of the mentioned work. The first one involves an analytical aspect concerning the idea of existence; the second one, a hermeneutical aspect through which we get a concept of the Romanian dimension of existence; and finally, the third one entails a phenomenological aspect that describes the phenomenon of the dimension of existence. The author argues that the phenomenological aspect constitutes the stake of Vulcănescu’s discourse.

Key-words: idea of existence; the dimension of existence phenomenon; the Romanian dimension of existence; analytical, hermeneutical and phenomenological discourse

RESTITUTIO

‘Always a beacon light in a nihilistic world’. Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu – documentary contributions

Liviu Bordaș

The main documentary evidence of the long relationship between Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu lies in their journals and correspondence. However these have not yet been entirely published. This article throws new light on their relationship on the basis of the following inedited material published in the *Addenda* to the article: 1) references to Mircea Eliade in I.P. Culianu’s autobiographic novel *Răul Selenei* (finalised in 1976), which is based on his journal and recollections; 2) three new letters of Culianu to Eliade from 1976 and 1984; 3) thirteen autograph dedications to Eliade from the years 1976–1985; 4) seventeen letters of Culianu regarding the posterity of Mircea Eliade, dating from the years 1986–1991 (four of which are addressed to Christinel Eliade). The inedited material is preserved in Eliade’s archives of Chicago (now in the University of Chicago Library) and Paris (now in the Centre of Euroasiatic and Afroasiatic Studies, Bucharest). We have corroborated these data with other unpublished material: inedited notes from Eliade’s journal, his daily notebooks, letters from Culianu’s family to Christinel Eliade, and letters of I.P. Culianu from private archives.

These new materials enable us to shed more light on Culianu’s biography and work and allow us to formulate some hypotheses on less-researched topics such as: the fate of his letters to Eliade absent from *Mircea Eliade Papers* (University of Chicago Library), his personal philosophy during the Italian years (1972–1976), the suspicion of „anti-Semitism” cast on him by some fellow Romanians from Paris (1976), his conflict with the poet Horia Stamatu (1978), the initiative to found a “Mircea Eliade Association” (1984), the publishing of the fourth volume of Eliade’s *History of Religious Ideas* (1986–1991), etc.

Key-words: Mircea Eliade, Ioan Petru Culianu, master-disciple relationship, correspondence, History of Religions, nihilism

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