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Review to the Volume *Ipostaze ale simbolului în lumea tradiţională*, Author Daniel Cojanu, LUMEN Publishing House

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Abstract: Through the volume Hypostases of the symbol in the traditional world [Ipostaze ale simbolului în lumea tradiţională], the author Daniel Cojanu aims to offer us with an adequate interpretation of the symbols, based on some criteria of correct identification of these symbols and on an analysis of the conditions of the possibility of symbolic knowledge as a form of knowledge of non-epistemic type.

Keywords: *Daniel Cojanu; symbol; traditional world; sacred.*

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Introduction

The traditional society is based on the sacred - profane dynamics, and the conjunction between the two worlds, in an ontological unity, is mediated by the symbol, considers Daniel Cojanu, the author of the volume *Hypostases of the symbol in the traditional world*, a volume at its second edition, revised and expanded, published at Lumen Publishing House from Iaşi, Romania.

The symbol is the one that allows the quotidian world to become sacralized by participating to the transcendent meanings that this participation brings with it.

For the contemporary man, the images with symbolic significance are the striking ones, with evocative power, which have an increased communicational efficiency, being used for advertising purposes or in the rhetoric of political discourses (Cojanu, 2019).

The function of promptly and synthetically communicating information is common in both sacred images and road code signs. Thereby, Daniel Cojanu tells us, the simulacra are treated as symbols, and the spiritual allegories are subordinated to the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign (Cojanu, 2019).

Through this volume, the author Daniel Cojanu aims to offer us with an adequate interpretation of the symbols, based on some criteria of correct identification of these symbols and on an analysis of the conditions of the possibility of symbolic knowledge as a form of knowledge (Cojanu, 2019) of non-epistemic type.

The failure of reductionism

The author observes the failure of most forms of exegesis of the symbols, which become reductionist, either by reducing the expression to its meaning, to the content, as in the case of Freudism, or to the opposite pole, reducing the meaning to the expression itself, as in the case of structuralism. "The symbol is defined in turn as "sign", "symptom", "figure of language", "figure of the imaginary", "individuation of an archetype of the collective unconscious", "social fact", "anthropological fact" etc." (Cojanu, 2019, p. 11).

For the author, the spiritual values are constitutive of human lives and cultures themselves, not derived from them (Cojanu, 2019, p. 14). The symbol becomes operative precisely when it ensures the cohesion of the

valuing, spiritual universe of the society where this very symbol was born and shared.

Symbolon - breaking and restoring the original unity

Daniel Cojanu tries to reinvigorate an original meaning of the symbol, as it appeared in Greek Antiquity, where *symbolon* represented half of a piece worn by the two partners of an agreement and served as a sign of recognition of the pact, the two parts being likely to be reunited. Even though the two parts of the *symbolon* were worn by people different from those who made the original pact, their descendants, as legitimate heirs, recognized themselves through these parts and implicitly admitted the transgenerational value of the pact that their ancestors had made.

From the spiritual perspective, the symbol thus becomes a sign of the pact between the transcendent and the immanent, which recognize each other as part of the same whole.

Daniel Cojanu shows that in a metaphysical order "reunification is possible because unity precedes rupture (fragmentation)" (Cojanu, 2019, p. 19). Neither of the part holders of the symbolic disk could reveal the significance of its own part of the symbol except in the presence of the other part, which thus completed its meaning, revealing its fundamental unity.

Thus, the author tells us, between the symbolic image and the symbolized reality there is not just an arbitrary, semiotic, sign-to-signified connection, but an intrinsic one, being the very way of "presenting"[making present] the signified reality. In the sacred - profane dialectic, the sacred becomes present in the profane through symbols. The symbolic expression belongs to the sensitive world, but it communicates an intelligible world that cannot be made otherwise present except through symbols. "It is not the man who creates the symbolic meanings, but these meanings impose themselves within some existing systems of conventions and social practices, in response to a certain way of valorization and a certain attitude which is based on the adherence to a stratified ontology and on the primacy of a transcendent level unaffected by temporality, (which is most often associated with the divinity) with respect to the other levels and fields (of the transient forms of existence). "(Cojanu, 2019, p. 22).

The author perseverantly tries, throughout the entire volume, to outline the idea that the symbol represents a constituent of the traditional culture that it (the symbol) articulates, giving it a meaning, unlike the sign - which offers only a denotation of a particular, signified object. Thus hermeneutics overcomes semiotics by accessing meanings which get

established through symbols and which establish the symbolic universe of the traditional community.

The author carries the reader with himself in the world of symbols - from the iconic ones, in the plastic art, with a predilection for the Christian iconography, but also in the reductionist spheres of the psychoanalytic use of the symbol, by Freud or Jung, up to the different valorizations of the imagination in the Western philosophy.

The way out of reductionism is seen by Daniel Cojanu possible by recognizing the intrinsic connection between the transcendent archetype, the suprasensible form, equipped with entire reality and with the symbol itself, both dimensions being integrated into a stratified ontology (Cojanu, 2019, p. 74). The valorization of transcendence allows the exegesis of the symbol as a cultural creative fact.

"The valorization of transcendence can represent the common denominator of old or traditional societies, functioning as a typological sign and delimiting a coherent cultural universe, their diversity, "the local specificity" speaks to the one interested in the history of culture about the original way of each civilization of perceiving its own relationships with the suprasensible world or with the ultimate reality. "(Cojanu, 2019, p. 74).

Instead of conclusions

The volume *Hypostases of the symbol in the traditional world* of the author Daniel Cojanu wants be a legitimation of hermeneutics in front of semiotics, when it comes to understanding the traditionalism, closely correlated with the idea of spirituality and with the axiom of receiving the transcendent in the form of the symbol through which it is made seen.

We strongly recommend the book to all the researchers in the sphere of philosophy but also in the cultural anthropology, who wish to deepen the ways in which the dominant symbols construct the senses of a culture, which, although creates them in the process of its development, these become foundational in the creation of the respective culture as carriers of primary meaning.

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