

A RESIGNIFICATION OF C. RĂDULESCU-MOTRU'S CONCEPT OF DESTINY

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Abstract: *In the present study, the author aims to capture the connection conceived by C. Rădulescu-Motru between the concept of “destiny” and the concepts of “soul substance,” “ethnic” and “vocation”, arguing the idea of the great thinker according to which destiny of a man or of a nation resides, like the vocation, in their soul substance, as it is influenced by the external environment. At the same time, the author of this study reveals how the philosopher considered that destiny and vocation can be glimpsed and pursued. In achieving the mentioned objectives, there is a dialogue with some current resignifications of the thinker’s conception of destiny.*

Keywords: *Destiny, Soul Substance, Ethnic, Vocation, Energetic Personalism, Historical Time, Biological Time, Creative Spontaneity of Culture, Social Environment*

C. Rădulescu-Motru expressly referred to “destiny” in his 1940 work, entitled *Time and Destiny*, but the concept set out in the paper is integrated in the context of his reflections on the education of energetic personality, initiated in the final chapter of his fundamental work *Energetic personalism* (1927), amplified in the work *Vocation – A Decisive Factor in the Culture of Peoples* (1932) and completed in two other writings on the “Romanian vocation,” namely *Romanianism: the Catechism of a New Spirituality* (1936) and *The Romanian Ethnic* (1942). His conception of the destiny of individual people and the communities to which they belong to, therefore, also implies his considerations about the vocation of individual personalities and the vocation of collective personalities (peoples), about the relationship between the two types of vocational people, as well as about ethnicity,

as collective soul factor, but which also engages individual consciences. Summarizing, his philosophy of destiny also subsumes his conception of the role of the individual and society in the unfolding of history, a conception that occupies a significant place in the posthumous volumes of *Revisions and Additions*.

1. The distinction between physical time and destiny as organic time and the hypostases of destiny

In the “Preface” to his work *Time and Destiny*, distinguishing between physical and organic time, Rădulescu-Motru mentions: “I kept the name of *time* for the clock industrialized time, that is, for the time invented by human reason, and for the time lived, I used the old name of *destiny*.”⁵⁷

In the same “Preface,” however, considering that physical time is established conventionally, he specified: “for us, there is only one real time, that which is lived, and which we call destiny”⁵⁸. Consequently, although he announced the use of the terms time and destiny for well-distinct domains, during the paper he will frequently use instead of the term destiny that of time. In what follows, after I present the hypostases of destiny, I will use the term destiny only for the hypostasis called as well historical time of nations (but also of individuals), which the philosopher treats in the broadest and most detailed way.

Rădulescu-Motru considered that physical time was established conventionally, because it was correlated with the periodic movements of celestial bodies, such as the movements of the planets around the Sun, whose duration of movement was measured and divided into equal⁵⁹ moments, disregarding the substance of physical bodies and external conditions, the influence of which is, indeed, negligible. It was concluded that *physical time* is an *abstract* or empty frame (independent of the events that take place in it), *homogeneous* (any interval thereof being equal to another interval of the same size) and *universal* (the same for all phenomena) and, therefore, measurable by means of instruments (clock, stopwatch) that record the equal moments that

⁵⁷ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Timp și destin*, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Opere alese*, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2006, p. 106.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

follow one another. Physicists have reported the mechanical causal relationships as well to this abstract time, ignoring the conditions under which the connections between causes and effects take place.

In accordance with the knowledge of his time, Rădulescu-Motru claimed that abstract physical time cannot be applied to microcosmic phenomena, which are no longer subject to a mechanistic determinism. Moreover, he argued, physical time does not suit the individual soul's life, in which "several acts of the soul take place at once, each having its own different time"⁶⁰. Thus, "there is no act of will that in addition to the conscious elements does not have unconscious elements," and, among the conscious elements, "some happen faster, others more slowly, but all for the same functional purpose, and all together, each preserving its temporal development, form a whole". The philosopher added that the same thing happens in social life, where "we speak of a consciousness of people, race, class and individual at the same time"⁶¹.

Generalizing his idea of a different time, different from the physical one, in the same "Preface" of the 1940 work, the philosopher argued that, in the living world, each organic unit is characterized by a lived time, because it goes through the stages of youth, maturity and aging, each stage having its temporal characteristics. He argued that *lived time* or *destiny*, as time of a vital unit, by the very fact that it is lived, is *concrete* (dependent on the living unit that lives it), *inhomogeneous* (because any organism goes through unequal phases in terms of duration and rhythm of its evolution) and presents *uniqueness* (specificity according to each organism).

By analogizing destiny with the phases an organism goes through, Rădulescu-Motru seems to be influenced by Oswald Spengler's conception of his famous book *The Decline of the West*, but through his considerations about the hypostases of destiny and, especially, about the "soul substance" from which it emerges, the Romanian philosopher clearly differentiates himself from the German thinker.

The content of destiny, in the general sense mentioned, acquires several well-distinct hypostases, just as the vital units in which it materializes are different. Rădulescu-Motru refers to three hypostases, called: 1) physiological time (of the individual), 2) biological time (of the

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 110-111.

species) and 3) historical time (of the nation). Specifically, “it is physiologically the time that relates to the constituent tissues of an organic unit,” such as the time that a wound needs to heal and which is “proportional to the age of the body and the surface of the wound.”⁶² Biological time refers to the evolution of a species, and historical time to the evolution of a nation. Comparing the last two types of vital time, the philosopher specified: “In biological time we have the vital growth, which through ascending mutations connects the generations included in the units of animal species, thanks to which their persistence on earth is ensured; In historical time we have the spontaneity that springs from the souls of multiple human groups (groups that can reach the size of a giant empire), through which these groups succeed in creating new institutions and forms of culture and ensure their continuity. In biological time, a vital ascent; in historical time, an ascension of the soul.”⁶³

Regarding the relationship of historical time with other types of time (organic) and, in this case, with biological time, the author of the paper stated: “The historical time, which we have in mind, stands next to the psychological time, the physiological time and the biological time as a facet of the organic becoming with which we have identified destiny. In the genetic order, historical time is an extension, or rather a sublimation of biological time.”⁶⁴

Rădulescu-Motru often refers to destiny as “historical time,” because, according to him, since destiny is not exclusively given, but it can also be made, “in destiny enters as well, as we know, the meaning of life, which a nation attributes to itself, unlike all the others,”⁶⁵ but also the effective realization of this sense, which involves a certain pace and a duration, and, therefore, a measurable time.

2. The soul substance – source of individual and community destiny

Given the fact that peoples have different destinies and histories, the question naturally arises about the origin of these differences or, in other words, destiny, as historical time, where do these differences come from, in other words where does the destiny of a nation or man, as member of a nation, come from.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 160.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 163 (clarification made by the philosopher in a footnote).

Rădulescu-Motru claimed that the “soul tone” of an epoch, more precisely of a certain “human group” and, of course, of a certain nation in that epoch, is formed by the way the members of the group feel and it relates predominantly to the tone of the past, either emotionally (through feelings of “hatred, impatience, fear”), or voluntarily, or rationally. According to him, “there is an evolution of the soul motifs that entails the colour evolution of each epoch”, so that “between the historical evolution and the evolution of the individual soul life there is a close connection”⁶⁶.

The author of *Time and Destiny* also argued that destiny, as historical time, also differs depending on the culture of a particular human group, the “specific characteristics” of this culture, so that, without culture, a human group would not even have a history, but its life would take place only as a biological life, according to biological time. A unit of culture, he added, is constituted starting with the unity of language and religion. Culturally, some human groups are inventive, others are not; some are offensive and heroic in the face of difficulties, others are submissive; some live the spiritual content of the norms of culture, others have institutions and laws according to these norms, but they live below the level of this spiritual content (here the philosopher resumes the critique of substanceless forms!); members of some groups have a responsible spirit and respect each other, while members of others are egocentric individuals and believe they have the right to command other individuals. The philosopher will conclude that human groups that have in their souls the “culture-creating spontaneity” are those that impose their historical destiny and the “stationary,” “amorphous” groups are only “safety valves” for the influences received. He will conclude that “in the cultural environment of the historical life there is the force that brings with it the acceleration of time, which does not exist in the physical environment” and which “is the force of invention and originality”⁶⁷.

From Rădulescu-Motru’s considerations about the dependence of destiny as historical time of a human group both on the group members and on the group’s cultural unity, it results that, mainly, the destiny of a group depends on its members, on their availabilities, for

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 162.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 163.

the group cultural unity is also achieved by the individuals who compose it and not independently of them. The philosopher rejected the idealistic and materialist conceptions, according to which the possibilities of human groups to hasten their future would depend on means extrinsic to humans, be they spiritual or material means, respectively. Explicitly, the Romanian philosopher referred to the Hegelian type idealism, with emphasis on “symbols, ideas, or institutions of universal character,” which would have “in their own structure an invincible dynamic,” and to historians who, on the contrary, emphasizes the “economic technique of labour and, in general, the material factors”. Against the two orientations, in his work *Time and Destiny*, the philosopher reached the following conclusions, which are mutually supportive: “the future of a human group depends primarily on *the soul substance of its members*” (emphasis added, I.N.R.); “historical facts presuppose the historical perpetrators,” “we call this perpetrator the man of vocation;” “but even the man of vocation would not have this power of realization, if he were not in a close soul correlation with the whole group of which he is part of, his achievements resonated and change the rhythm of historical life, because they are the anticipations the soul’s finality of the group”⁶⁸.

Thus, understanding Rădulescu-Motru’s conception of destiny implies clarifying not only the “soul substance” of individual people, but also the “soul substance” of the human community (people, nation), equivalent to the notion of “ethnic” (national soul background), as well as the idea of “man of vocation”, as the philosopher attributes to the man of vocation a decisive role in the formation of ethnicity and community culture.

3. Ethnic / national community and man of vocation – a mutual involvement

Rădulescu-Motru referred extensively to the unity of culture and soul of an ethnic group in general, applied to the Romanian people, as well as to the role of the man of vocation in establishing the ethnic in his work *Etnicul românesc* (1942). Here, he stated that “the ethnic, according to its etymology (from the Greek *ethnos*), has the meaning of the word *national*, which we find in most European languages formed

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

from the Latin *natio* and which denominates the community of birth”⁶⁹. More precisely, “ethnicity is the soul of a nation,” namely the soul in the narrow sense, which includes “feeling together with a consciousness of the self”⁷⁰.

In his book on ethnicity, the philosopher further advocated the idea that destiny – *unpredictable*, but *influential* because it happens in “the reality of human experience” – depends on the individual and collective soul background: “destiny is the development in time of the soul background with which the man or the nation come into the world”⁷¹.

At the same time, the philosopher reiterated the idea of the preeminence of the individual soul background over the community soul. The idea of individual consciousness’ priority results from the explanation given to the formation of ethnic consciousness. Namely, the consciousness at the base of ethnicity was understood to be, in successive order, the consciousness of the community of *origin*, *language* and *destiny*. The community of origin consciousness was formed in the members of the village communities through customs, habits, dressing traditions and work, common beliefs. The language community consciousness was established both in the village and in the city and manifested itself in a common culture, correlating all the members of a nation and making the transition to the national. Thus, the language “facilitates the collaboration of vocational people from within a country in the cultural institutions of the cities” and “the cultural institutions prepare, in their turn, the community of destiny’s consciousness, thus perfecting the national consciousness”⁷².

In the explanation given to the formation of the ethnic group, the emphasis is placed, again, on the people of vocation, who exist even in the ethnic community of origin, from the village, but, especially, in the one of language and culture. Thus, “through the cultural institutions of the city, the people of vocation find the opportunity to broaden the horizon of the consciousness of the village community”⁷³. Given the role of vocational

⁶⁹ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Etnicul românesc*, Editura Fundației România de Măine, Bucharest, 1999, p. 96.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

people, “the originality of a nation, the originality on which its future depends, is not conditioned by the number, but by the soul quality of its children, or more precisely: by the vocational types among its population”⁷⁴. People of vocation “are connected to each other by historical achievements” and are doers of destiny, they have the conscience of “the citizen determined to show solidarity with the destiny of his community, out of intimate and free conviction”⁷⁵ and are “especially endowed by nature”⁷⁶.

The philosopher also resumes the distinction stated in previous works between people of vocation and professionals, who are also competent specialists, but whom, egocentric in nature, pursue only their personal interests, without reconciling them with community’s interests and without devoting themselves to the latter. In the historical context in which the work was published, the author of *The Romanian Ethnic* considered that, if a nation’s future threatened, then it needs its people with “exceptional qualities” to unite themselves “into a single thought and a single will” and also it needs a leader, who will secure “a strict discipline among the members of his ethnic group,”... “who will make one’s mark through prudent judgment and energy of will and who, above all, will take responsibility”⁷⁷.

As noted, “by the agency of his book on ethnicity, the Romanian thinker strived to rehabilitate a certain individualism, which is not that of the capricious subjective preferences, but that of the exemplary deed, which is fulfilled by the collective good of the nation and asserted by the universal dimension of the created values”⁷⁸.

Therefore, referring to the connection between ethnicity and vocational people, Rădulescu-Motru raised the issue of “the relationship between *destiny* and *the character of the individual man*, or between *destiny* and *the soul substance of a nation* (emphasis added, I.N.R.)”⁷⁹. Through this, he approached implicitly, but also explicitly, *the relationship between the individual soul substance and the community*

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 67-68.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 69.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 92.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

⁷⁸ Daniel Cojanu, *Vocația individuală și destinul comunitar. Elemente de etnopsihologie în opera lui Constantin Rădulescu-Motru*, in *Simpozionul național Constantin Rădulescu-Motru*, First edition Târgu-Mureș, 2016, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2017, p. 146.

⁷⁹ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Etnicul românesc*, quoted ed., p. 82.

soul substance, usually supporting the priority of the individual consciousness, not without asserting the reverse influence of the social, national consciousness, to which sometimes he has assigned a decisive role. In *The Romanian Ethnic*, the author emphasized more on the individual conscience and on the individual, but here too he kept the idea, which I quoted earlier, according to which “cultural institutions prepare, in turn, the community of destiny consciousness”, in other words, the idea of the importance of community consciousness and of the institutionally organized nation in shaping destiny.

In his previous work, *Time and Destiny*, he had also argued that the man of vocation has the power to create destiny because he is, and I quote again, “in close spiritual correlation with the whole group to which he belongs.” The mentioned correlation can induce a certain ambiguity. Or, if he supports the primacy of the individual consciousness, the philosopher has in mind the fact that this is the only independent existence, while social consciousness does not exist independently, but manifests itself in and through individual consciousness, as their common background. On the contrary, the idea of the priority of social consciousness, which, I emphasize, does not exist independently of the individual consciences, means that their common ground is more valuable and is imposed in relation to their strictly individual level. Therefore, social consciousness is required if the individual consciousness relates to it, which is equivalent to the fact that it relates to itself and is exercised according to its community background, and not its strictly individual level. The people of vocation are the ones who give course, par excellence, to the community consciousness, which is theirs, but they express the demands of the nation to which they are part of.

Despite their mutual connection, the consciousness of a man and that of a nation cannot be fully understood without the role of the social environment in the exercise of their intended content.

4. The soul background and the role of the social environment in achieving destiny and vocation

In his works *Time and Destiny* and *The Romanian Ethnic*, the philosopher analyzed in depth the role of the subjective factor and of the social environment in capturing and achieving destiny and vocation.

In the work *Time and Destiny*, as, moreover, in the previous works or in the only subsequent work, Rădulescu-Motru conceived the soul substance not as an immutable given, with certain potential qualities to be realized inevitably, but as a source with certain innate potencies, which are to be updated according to environmental conditions. According to him, “the soul life brings with it possibilities into the world; the realization of these possibilities comes from the environment of life”⁸⁰. In other words, “soul substance,” although referred to as such, is no longer understood in the strict sense of the term *substantia*, as a given entity, with certain attributes that exist by itself and assert itself, regardless of conditions, but is conceived as a potential entity, whose properties are updated in relation to the elements of the external environment. Therefore, destiny depends on the “soul substance,” it is inscribed in it, but it is not something already given, which is to be fulfilled exactly, but it is a unit of several potencies whose fulfilment depends on external conditions.

In his book on *Time and Destiny*, the philosopher identified a series of means by which the socio-cultural environment can contribute to achieving favourable conditions for asserting different types of vocations. Since destiny depends on the possibilities available to man, including the aspirations suggested by his ideal of life, the creation of destiny requires, on the one hand, the exact knowledge of these possibilities. On the other hand, given the fact that “not all people are born endowed with equal talents, but all can be brought to their maximum potential, if placed in optimal working conditions,” it turns out that “the art of creating the destiny consists precisely in preparing these optimal conditions for each”⁸¹.

Through its double dependence, both on the inside of the soul and on the outside environment, destiny can be created both by its subjective notification and by state’s creation of some optimal living conditions.

Subjectively, “premonitions, revelations, predispositions to conversion, sudden enthusiasm and enlightenment and so on” are important. All these “sometimes reveal not only what is in one’s soul, but also what may unfold in one’s soul in the future”⁸². Such revelations are generated by events, but the events become significant, that is, destiny revealing, only for those with “rich soul possibilities”, who do not treat the events with indifference.

⁸⁰ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Timp și destin*, in the quoted work, p. 212.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 210.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 211.

Therefore, the favourable environmental conditions are also very important: economic, educational, health, etc., which the state creates in order to “create its destiny, the individual in its margins, and the nation in its own”⁸³. In the same train of thoughts, also the conclusion according to which the individual destiny “merges, like a link, in the destiny of the whole people... and is not a destiny imposed by fatality, but a conscious conquest of the future”, because “every man creates his destiny as it is part of a nation, which consciously organizes its living conditions for the future”⁸⁴.

In his volume *The Romanian Ethnic*, Rădulescu-Motru included the idea of the correlation between the individual consciousness, as a hearth of destiny and vocation, on the one hand, and the environment, on the other hand, in an even more comprehensive idea, specific to his energetic personalism: “Isolated individual life cannot exist, whether biological or psychological; because life, on any level, implies a reciprocal action between the organism and the environment.”⁸⁵ He will mention that the idea according to which the individual soul has a real existence “only rounded in the environment’s living conditions” was a truth recognized at that time by the prominent representatives of metaphysics and which Heidegger and the existentialists had placed at the base of their philosophies.

Rădulescu-Motru’s conception differs from that of Heidegger and, in general, is not limited to any existentialist variant, in that it does not derive man’s “soul substance” from the manifestations of the human subjectivity, spent under the influence of the environment, but devoid of any substantial support. In other words, he did not claim that the human essence would be preceded by the subjective human existence and that it, conditioned by the environment, but without any support of the human substance or essence, would result from nothing.

For example, in *The Romanian Ethnic*, the philosopher revealed the following relationship existing in the Romanians between the community of destiny consciousness and the social environment, in which the soul background of the people remains a “permanent condition”: “The community of destiny is weak in peacetime; it

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 213.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 214.

⁸⁵ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Etnicul românesc, quoted ed.*, p. 45.

strengthens in moments of great balance, when there is a choice between peace and war, when the country is in danger. But the soul background is the same.”⁸⁶

In the given example, the state of war, the imminence of life destruction, hence the intuition of nothing is not a source of perceiving destiny and forming the community of destiny consciousness, but only a factor in invigorating this consciousness. It is not the soul background that changes under the action of the environment, but the updating of this background, which implies a strengthening of the form of community consciousness, which already exists in the soul of the individual, as well as in the soul of the people.

Like destiny, vocation, as a means of destiny creation, resides in the same soul substance of the individual and the community. In his 1932 paper, *Vocation – A Decisive Factor in the Culture of Nations*, Rădulescu-Motru stated that vocation is an inner “calling”⁸⁷ of the man of vocation, an “intense impulse, but lacking a clear justification,” an unconscious “feeling”⁸⁸ of his to engage into the creation of destiny, of the community of destiny, which is a community of culture. A calling inscribed, in its turn, into the “substance of the soul,” the vocation is not a voice that calls man independently of the external environment. Rădulescu-Motru stated that the vocation, understood not only as an impulse or a calling, but also as an accomplishment, is an innovation “used by totality (social group, nation, race) to adapt to evolution” and that “innovation is achieved through the skills of individuals, but under the rule of the requirements of totality”⁸⁹.

A good interpreter of Rădulescu-Motru’s conception, starting from his ideas about the relationship between the soul background and the environment and discovering that he did not think that inner dispositions are imposed on the somewhat inevitable environment, concluded that the philosopher did not conceive a substantialist human personality, but understood it functionally, the function being “a relationship between the

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

⁸⁷ Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Vocația – factor hotărâtor în evoluția popoarelor*, in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Opere alese*, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2006, p. 18.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

elements of two different classes”⁹⁰. Noticing, then, rightly, the fact that, in Rădulescu-Motru’s work, the vocation “responds, which is true, inside the individual, to an impulse, but this impulse is manifested only because there is a social expectation that arouses it,”⁹¹ he concluded as well that the vocation is also understood by the functionalist philosopher.

Rădulescu-Motru’s conception of destiny and vocation is not, however, entirely substantialist, but it is not of a radical functionalism either. As for me, I appreciate that the philosophy of energetic personalism, destiny and vocation is rather on the side of a moderate substantialism or essentialism, as the philosopher states that the “substance” of the soul remains the “background” from which both destiny and vocation emerge, while the environment is a factor with a conditional or causal role, but not in the sense of production, but as a factor of updating something pre-given, pre-existing. I also appreciate that, in the situations in which Rădulescu-Motru put in the foreground the personality of the people, not that of the individual, be it a man of vocation, he took into account the social consciousness incorporated in the main forms of the social environment and, above all, in the political institution of the state and in the other social institutions run by the state: educational, instructional, etc. He identified this state consciousness with the nation’s consciousness, which would be valid for a democratic political leadership, but not for a dictatorial state, which expresses only the consciousness of the ruling political class, its elites, distinct and essentially opposite to nation’s consciousness, as an expression of the true community interests.

Another interpreter of Rădulescu-Motru’s conception of destiny, starting, in his turn, from the correct premise that he does not conceive the soul as an immutable “substance,” proposes “a reconstruction” and a reorganization “from another perspective”⁹², a phenomenological one, of this conception, reaching the debatable, and, I believe, unsustainable

⁹⁰ Claudiu Baci, *Ideea de vocație la C. Rădulescu-Motru*, in *Simpozionul național „Constantin Rădulescu-Motru”*, Second edition “Măiorescu și măiorescienii” Târgu-Mureș, 2017, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2018, p. 149.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 151.

⁹² Cornel-Florin Moraru, *Timp, destin și vocație: reconstrucția concepției lui Rădulescu-Motru despre destin*, în revista *Studii de istorie a filosofiei românești*, vol. VII, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2011, p. 222.

conclusion according to which the philosopher himself would consider that both destiny and vocation would spring not from the human background soul, but, rather, from man's reference to nothingness, as the destination of his life. In its "reconstruction", as the author confesses, "the discussions about the *living environment, the people, the horizon of possibilities opened by the affiliation to a nation* will be excluded from the present research" and replaced with the concepts of "*time, destiny, line of destiny and vocation*" (author's emphasis, C.-F.M.)⁹³. In fact, the fundamental concept with which the interpreter operates is that of *nothingness*, because it subsumes all the other concepts. According to him, man glimpses both his destiny and his vocation by reference to the nothingness established by the end point of life, by death. In its formulation, "*destiny and vocation both have their common origin in nothingness, as two meaningful occurrences of human existence*" (author's emphasis, C.-F.M.).⁹⁴

It should be noted that the author replaces the fundamental concepts of Rădulescu-Motru's conception, those of *nation* (nation's soul and, in general, of "soul substance") and that of *environment* with those of *destiny* and *vocation*, which, in fact, are secondary in the philosopher's conception and which the interpreter subordinates to the concept of *nothingness*. In doing so, he replaces the conception of the philosopher analyzed with his own conception. Or, a historical-philosophical commentary of a thinker, by means of which to update and, possibly, to better understand him than he understood himself, allows you, indeed, to say anything about that philosopher, but with only one condition: not to replace his fundamental concepts and their logical structuring with other secondary concepts or as well with your own concepts, which you reorganize into a line of thinking that does not belong at all to the one "reconstructed" and "reorganized".

In Rădulescu-Motru's conception of destiny and vocation, the fundamental concepts remain those of *soul substance* and *environment*, the human soul, as well as that of the people, being understood as a source of destiny possibilities, which are updated only in correlation with the ethnic/national environment, this, in its turn, being, in its highest form, a community of historical destiny (of historical accomplishments), without

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 223.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

excluding, however, neither the community of origin nor the community of language (and culture), which, on the contrary, integrates them. His conception offers, even today, many suggestions for finding and following a meaning of life or a “line of destiny” for both the individual and the community, starting with the bringing to the fore of the competent activity and the social interest.

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