

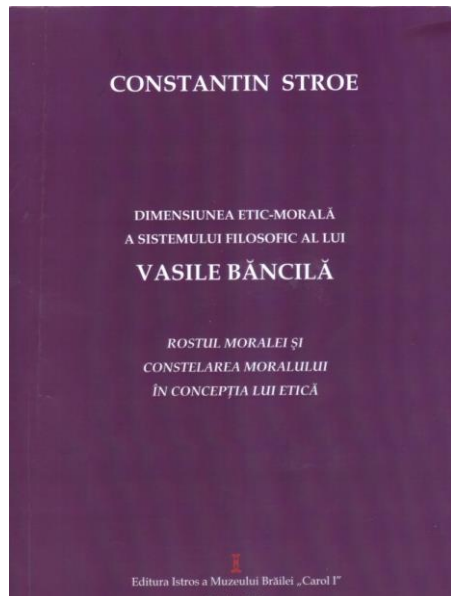
CONSTANTIN STROE ON THE MORAL DIMENSION OF VASILE BĂNCILĂ'S PHILOSOPHY

A Book Review

Ionel NECULA

The author of a consistent work on the history of moral ideas, Constantin Stroe returns to the showcase of philosophical novelties with this study on the moral conception in the philosophical vision of Vasile Băncilă - a lesser-known thinker, of whose work Dora Mezdra has so far published 16 volumes, and the entire edit operation should contain more than 30.

Constantin Stroe extracts from the vast philosophical work of Vasile Băncilă only what is related to his morals and ethical convictions. As Ion Dur also noticed in his consistent preface, we find in the exegete's approach a diverse and deep set of concepts and ideas regarding his moral vision - finally brought under the dome of the generous concept Constellation of morality.



And Ion Dur is right when he notes that the old kalokagathonic triads - truth, good, beautiful - Vasile Băncilă places, in the pendant, the triad God, ethics, man - which means that the entire normativity regarding conscience, conduct and moral behavior carries in itself and some of the imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount. I do not believe that God made man to have something to meditate on, but I grant that he had a doubt since, after the act of his creation, of man, he avoided uttering the sacramental formula, *and God saw that it was good that way, and I also confirm him in the idea that he is a depository of all current and past life on earth, but without being able to surpass it too much* (p.80). He is right and I really agree with the

opinion. Nor had Zarathustra shouted, in the public square, addressing the serfs: *you have traveled the way from worm to man, but there is still much of the worm in you*. Just as I also credit the author's idea *that, at least in the field of ethics, he (Vasile Băncilă, ad. n.) is rather a documentarian who did his own readings, having sometimes, and at times, hermeneutic outbursts and critical outbursts - sometimes even vehement - to the authors frequented from which, through ricochet, some of their own positions emerged* (p.225).

So, without having been an applied and consistent moralist, the Brailean philosopher made such a waste of ethical ideas and principles that one can, with rigor, relatively easily reconstruct a bunch of norms and convictions that would constitute the skeleton of a structured vision. Like his contemporary, Mircea Vulcănescu, the change of regime prevented him from giving metaphysical projects a structure and a certain finality. Hard times had come for the gentlemen, and even fatal for Vulcănescu. Vasile Băncilă tried in vain to defend him, from the condition he freely assumed as a witness of the defendant, in the trial that was filed against him, the sentence was not taken by the court, which was a mere figuration, but by the party organization, which was not joking, distributing the years of imprisonment with the casualness of throwing confetti on holidays.

Surprisingly, Vasile Băncilă makes an unexpected distinction between ethics and morality. *Ethics is the science that deals with morals, while morality is the practice of moral principles* (p.30). It is true that the X-ray of the Brailean philosopher does not cover the whole range of moral concepts, but his opinion about mercy is perhaps closer to Radiscev's vision than to the harsh and austere one of the Stoics and Schopenhauer.

There is no morality outside of religion, customs, the consciousness of good and duty, just as there is no moral fact that does not have as its motive a certain interest or a certain goal. Moreover, Vasile Băncilă postulates the debatable idea that *there are no different morals, but only a general morality* (p. 43). I say debatable because he himself speaks of a Stoic, Hedonistic, Epicurean, etc. morality.

A special division of Constantin Stroe's exegesis concerns the existence of evil in the world, which means, among other things, a recognition of the ills that can mark morals and morality - in general and concretely - to which we relate as people and frame our deeds. There is in all communities *something* - a meaning, a principle, a basis considered infallible and absolute against which our deeds acquire value for good or

bad, according as they agree or not with what we have proclaimed as perfect or, as Nietzsche would say, *beyond good and bad*.

Where does evil enter man and the world, through what fissure in man's or community's nature does it make its way and produce negative effects? In his answer to this question, Vasile Băncilă invokes the precariousness of human nature and the disregard of Christian teachings, which place love and piety at the center - the only ones that can lead to salvation. The postulation of a transcendent world meant to reward good in the earthly world is the crowning achievement of the author's moral philosophy and vision of good and evil. Whoever lives in the idea of the final paradise, understood as a reward for promoting good in the sublunar world, concludes the philosopher, *can no longer be so obsessed with the existence of evil*. It is the duty of morality to combat evil in man and in the world, but it cannot eliminate it, it continues to coexist with good, *as fruit and caterpillars coexist in the same tree*.

Without a doubt, Constantin Stroe's exegesis sheds light on an essential sequence of Vasile Băncilă's philosophy. As we do not yet have a complete collection of the writings left by the Brailean philosopher, we consider the exegetical approach, which we have focused on in these lines, as provisional because we do not know how this issue will be resolved in the rest of the volumes that remain to be published.

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And I also specify that it would not be bad if, following the model of the Seghers Publishing House, which initiated the popular *Philosophies de tous les temps* collection, a similar collection was initiated in our country, in

¹ *Bărăgan: the territory of a vast plain in Southern Romania*

which the Romanian thinkers still without a treatment could find their place monographic. It will be seen then, in the words of Sadoveanu from *The Wedding of Miss Ruxandra*, "that we are not to be neglected even in matters of the spirit".

Ionel Necula was born on May 12, 1940, in Liești commune, Galati county. He followed the school courses in his hometown, then the high school courses in Tecuci. He worked as a substitute teacher, and in 1965 he enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest, graduating in 1970. He defended his degree with a paper on the Philosophy of Knowledge under Lucian Blaga (1971). After graduating from the faculty, he worked in education until 1976, then at the House of Culture in Tecuci, from where he retired in 2000. Member of the Romanian Writers' Union. Published books: Cioran, the unsaved skeptic (1995); Cioran, from the identity of the peoples to the Wallachian nothingness (2003); The Fall after Cioran (2005); Ion Petrovici in the sights of security (2005); Ion Petrovici. A chapter of Romanian philosophy (2006); Discomfort of being Romanian (2008); Aurel Cioran, the brother from the leprosy (2009); Uricar at the Gate of Moldovei de Jos (2009); Romanian philosophy in epistemic sequences (2010); Ion Petrovici. Recurrences (2011); Eminescu in metaphysical temptations (2012); Ciaran. Concepts and fundamental ideas (2012); Cioran. Testimonials and references (2012); Cioran in epistemic receptions (2012); Cioran about the Wallachian nothingness (2014) etc.

