
Benjamin Fondane – True *Meditations* from a *False* Aesthetic Discourse

Ion Dur

Philosophy, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj, Romania

Email address:

iondur@yahoo.com

To cite this article:

Ion Dur. Benjamin Fondane – True *Meditations* from a *False* Aesthetic Discourse. *Advances in Sciences and Humanities*. Vol. 5, No. 6, 2019, pp. 138-143. doi: 10.11648/j.ash.20190506.11

Received: October 5, 2019; **Accepted:** November 15, 2019; **Published:** December 19, 2019

Abstract: For an author like B. Fundoianu, who thought and wrote on the edge of two centuries, aesthetics was about to change its canon. Morality and metaphysics were already into a stalemate position, and the *aesthete* Fundoianu was trying a private deconstruction of the poetic language in his essay *A False Treatise on Aesthetics* (1938). With the preface of *Images and Books from France* (1923), the chronicler was emphasizing the fact that creation is subordinated to the grid of differentiation, and not to that of similarity, while attachment for tradition does not mean imitation, but innovation. “The aesthetic man” comes alive, we believe, in the text headed *Peter’s Denial* (1918), where Fundoianu advocates the case of *pure art*. The issue that always imposes itself to aesthetic reflection is *the crisis of reality* generated by the lyrical creator’s autarky in relation to the existential texture and, even more, to the contradictory dialogue between Reason and Faith. The current essay also attempts to offer an assessment of *the final Fundoianu*, the philosophical testament pertaining to the text entitled *Existential Monday and the Sunday of History* (1945), a work where history and morality form a strange binomial.

Keywords: The Aesthetic Man, The Poet’s Autarky, Innovation Within Tradition, The Crisis of Reality, History-and-Morality

1. Introduction

Interwar period critics underestimated the value of Benjamin Fundoianu’s work, only for the author to be crayoned in the 1980s in shades reaching the superlative regarding his enlightened mind, his sensibility - adherent to genuine novelty, and himself as one of the outposts of Romanian aesthetic consciousness [6].

From a young age, Fundoianu feared not so much that he could be a challenged (*méconnu*) creator, but that, in those commencing moments of his literary destiny, he was “*nothing but a great unknown author*”. He was also stating then that “*I take the risk of being appreciated by my contemporaries only after my death*” [1].

In hindsight, after this restless author had physically detached himself from the Romanian cultural environment, by (re) reading his texts written in another idiom, we can judge his work with lucidity and, at the same time, with a sort of, as Nietzsche would say, “*pathos of distance*”, the necessary detachment required by an honest critical assessments [7]. (OK!)

2. Method

The present endeavour is an essay re-signifying the works of Benjamin Fundoianu, with an emphasis on his aesthetics. We used text analysis and entered into critical dialogue with exegeses of his creation up to the present day. We permanently referred the author’s texts to the *context* of their elaboration, in order to emphasize a causative nexus, a determinism of creation. The *hermeneutics* used here is a *deconstruction* of metaphysical and aesthetic concepts favoured by Fundoianu. Our purpose is to underline the *identity* of the author’s metaphysical and aesthetic reflection, and to examine its *specific difference* from other authors of his time. We are also interested in studying the image of “the last” Fundoianu, allowing us to trace the *constant landmarks* of his evolution, but also of any hesitations the *aesthetical man* might have had.

3. Result

3.1. Plain Aesthetic Meditations

It has become obvious that Fundoianu (he who hid his identity under several pseudonyms) was a spirit who had practiced his skills in poetry and philosophy, in theatre and film, in literary and drama criticism. Being preoccupied with the French, German and English literary environment, he had translated pages from Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Goethe, Heine, or Lenau. He had an equally strong interest in Romanian folk poetry and dramatic art. He proved to be a subtle commentator regarding drama and the actor's purpose, or the hypostasis of the reception of a work from the spectator's point of view.

Setting the existential metaphysics of his epoch as his horizon line, he was tempted to write drama. *Balthasar's Feast*, *Philoctète*, and *The Maule Well*, plays which he had not seen staged, had a formula that conveyed, in a special way, the manner in which Fundoianu understood the strong tie between poetry and philosophy. That was possible through the inexorable presence of the creators of *dramatic poems*: "What we needed", he was stating, "were not playwrights, but artists. Not the available reality, but fiction. Not fiction, but the dramatic poem."

In the early 20th century, Fundoianu was thinking and writing in a hot, tense atmosphere, rich in events of all kinds. He was on the edge of two centuries. One which had ended with the triumph of positivism, while the other had begun, among other things, to chronicle some *foretold deaths*: among them, that of tragedy, which could not bear fruit anymore in the hanging gardens of the great myths, aesthetically inactive, once the invasion of symbols built especially by the cinema took place.

The aesthetics was changing its canon in those historical moments. Around 1906, Croce was wondering, with some humour, "What is aesthetics?" He himself offered the answer, in the same humorous manner, during his lectures in Stanford - as it being what everybody knows it to be. Taking things seriously, the Italian aesthetician stated that the answer of the interrogation in question could be found, paradoxically, by setting another question: what is art? Art, which had survived, miraculously, through the first global cataclysm and which could still count on the human condition's *heredity*; that art about which, as Oscar Wilde believed, newspapers should not be allowed to write.

In fact, in that "crisis of reality essay" as Fundoianu was subtitled his *A False Treatise on Aesthetics* (1938), he himself was parting, rhetorically, from the bewilderment of: "Why art?" "why only for *the rational animal*?" His attempt, in the key of a somehow insidious motivation, was representing a densely critical exercise of reviewing the status that it currently had, encompassing the creator's work or his poetic experience. A validated approach on the French cultural environment which could have, the author himself admitted, through extension, obvious accents of universality.

Poetry, reporting to the philosophical discourse, "hands back to duration what it robs from concept", says Fundoianu;

the anatomy and chemistry of a moment represent, for the poet, "evidence of a world in which the Being itself is duration, life, mobility, act". His analyses, unfolded under the grid of *how*, were focusing on the *creation* of the poem, on the way in which the poet kneads a language of his own. It is a "*how*" nevertheless full of mystery. Because, beyond power, technique and lucidity the poet, when "the hand of God departs from him", becomes again nothing more "than a *poor individual* to whom all the techniques of the world could not express, on his behalf, any acceptable stammering" [3] (meanwhile, we have found out more about, as Irina Mavrodin would say, "the hand that writes").

During the first years of the twentieth century, metaphysics had not yet quarrelled with physics. Even Fundoianu was talking about such a conjunction. Nevertheless, not before trying his hand at poetry as, says Călinescu, a traditionalist (a synonym for "a form of modernism"). That poetry into which he was investing so much hope, blind certainty, Messianism, and which he believed to be "the only valid method of knowing, the only reason for the being to persevere into being a being"; a way of finding answers when morals and metaphysics had entered into a deadlock. These were reactions also quoted by the author of *The Principles of Aesthetics* when he was framing Fundoianu's poetry in the chapter entitled "The traditionalists. The 1923 Moment. The autochthonization of symbolism. The fruits' poetry" [2].

With the preface to *Images and Books from France* (1923), Fundoianu's reflection becomes critical, radical, his rebellion oriented towards the embezzlement of common areas and clichés, through "nurturing these excessive and paradoxical stances" [6]. It was as if here, in the text opening the quoted volume, one could find something from the nihilism of Ibrăileanu's attitude from *The Critical Spirit in Romanian Culture*. Fundoianu, in his well-known registry, said that Romanian literature was *parasitic*, that it had always imitated French literature; we do not have a past and a tradition able to bestow a certain consistency on the act of creation ("our cultural tradition can easily be exhausted until the fourth grade of high school..."). Therefore, we have borrowed from everywhere (Coşbuc, "the peasantry's poet", is not that original: the *soul* crayoned by his lyrical poetry also haunts Serbian or Czech poetry; Minulescu is a "conquistador", a "wholesaler" etc.); thus, we have usually "assimilated, but badly". He was finding one exception, though: Eminescu, "our only brilliant writer" (through a "chemical hazard"), "our first classic, in whose work the German spirit is consubstantial, is organically absorbed".

Fundoianu's option was not randomly determined. Creation implies *differentiation*, not similarity, and loyalty next to tradition means not imitation, but innovation: "To imitate means to fray, to vulgarise. A copy is a dead thing, not a sequel." [3].

On the other hand, according to Fundoianu, cultural influences in their proper functionality should take us away from routine, from conformism, and generate in our cultural being attitudes similar to those that occur in the metabolism of the human body: assimilation and dissimilation. With the

mention that the relationship between these processes must be of such nature as to eliminate deviations, failures.

Formulating, perhaps bluntly, such sentences regarding Fundoianu the critic, we cannot evade the interrogation concerning the *aesthetical* vision of one who had written a *A False Treatise on Aesthetics*, a book which aroused the reactions of Croce, Jean Cassou, and R. Aron. Undoubtedly, we will not encounter many Fundoianu texts bearing a theoretical stance, but we will discover, each time he makes a comment about a work, an obvious or background remark through whose sieve he assesses and formulates opinions, often against the grain, regarding the *fashion* of the day.

As Mircea Martin has also observed, Fundoianu's aesthetic conception ought to be investigated not only in thematic articles, in statement-programs and in large generalizations, but also in analytical applications, in fleeting dissociative brackets, as well as in detailed comments. [6]. He is an exegete with carefully decanted *landmarks* of value, with *principles*, increasing with every step of his aesthetic judgment the specific difference next to other receptions of a textual construction, with an always awake care, lest the deciphering mirrors distort the *reality* of that work.

We have asked ourselves if, in the case of Fundoianu, the *aesthetic man* does not somehow arise, in a primary form, with *Peter's Denial*. Here the author does not want expressly to be moral, as he does not intend to be immoral either (beyond good and evil?!) It is a place where he advocates *pure art*, *art for art's sake* being precisely its consubstantial *trend*. Furthermore, the alleged *artistic redundancy* could also have here the meaning of a mechanism of option: how the "yes" is decanted from the "no", how attractions and the rejections are expressed (and illustrated!), how the reel of doubt works for *homo aestheticus* on his way towards certainty.

Many of Fundoianu's remarks point towards the shiny surface of the ontology of artwork. For example, in a rough sketch of German Romanticism he focused upon the metamorphoses which have occurred along the path of creation (apparently, so well worn, but, unfortunately, always immersed in the unknown), from the *act* (intention) to the *expression* or, in his syntagmas, upon the relationships between *wilful*, *deliberate*, *preached* art, and *accomplished* art (so often against the grain, next to the initial projection).

He was interested, in the fourth decade of the last century, in a solution which might be advanced for bringing poetry out of crisis (under his magnifying glass was surreal poetry, which had reached the stage of *concept*; let us remember that the process of poetry had begun in Antiquity, with Plato); a gap that had interposed itself between poetry and its object, emotionality, language, and the public. German Romanticism (with its main proponent: Hegel) had generated the poet's autarky in relation to the existential fabric. Thus, it had generated a *crisis of reality*. Subsequently, however, through another spirit of the time, when the poetic act was claiming for itself a different complexity, taking part in the real act became again one of its features. Thus, a Baudelaire, a Claudel, a Dostoyevsky would appear. Moreover, and in a

paradoxical way, the spirit of Romanticism would fertilize an atypical creator such as Rimbaud who, through a *qualified piracy*, would restore the *Unknown*.

Nevertheless, with the establishment of a dictatorship of reason (the trial of reason, filed by Fundoianu in that period, will be the subject of his philosophical discourse and of the last texts published within his life), poetry had tried to eliminate that "religious lump" (once a vital thing for it). It was an operation during which "the fibroma" could not "be plucked but together with the ovaries". Thus, the critic thinks, "the disorientation, the distrust in one's self, the madness" [3] have appeared. In addition, the contradictory and exclusive dialogue between reason and faith will induce a less aesthetic *mission* into poetry, investing it, on the contrary, with an ethical, moralizing one over the real.

Fundoianu also held a different judgment regarding determinism, where the work of art operated within its framework. He did not accept that there would be any significant interrelation between literary and social movements. A creation, for example, of a Corneille, a Racine, or a Molière, would allow almost none of the drama of conflicts maintained by Louis XIV to come through. (Yet, at a closer look, things are a little bit different; in addition, that mundane *event* was not penetrating into literature in a specific form for completely different reasons, and not because, "the present has not received yet the green light to enter into literature". This is an opinion also shared by M. Martin).

Art, considers Fundoianu, cannot be legitimized through trends or through the mark of an ethnic group; it has neither social class, nor nationality. Those were his thoughts when he was commenting, crudely, on Marc Chagall's art (these delineations seem to him to be "*barren distinctions, clarifying nothing*") [4]. He thinks in the same manner when he writes about Ch. Maurras, or other authors. He stresses that even if "the environment may influence the subject of the work, but not its orientation, nor its instinct", it cannot be said that, in art, its construction would rest upon the shoulders of politics: "Literature cannot be a product of politics, as landscape cannot be a product of props" [3].

For him, as in the case of Nietzsche, aesthetics is fully autonomous; even the world as a whole cannot be justified otherwise but aesthetically (this latter judgment, says Fundoianu, seemed, later on, an error to the German philosopher; in contrast to Remy de Gourmont for whom the world, as an aesthetic phenomenon, becomes *temperament*, i.e.: "a physiological obsession").

The history of art thus becomes, for Fundoianu, an uninterrupted succession of re-presentations of the world ("the world is my representation"), through which the creators' spirits put boundaries to some imaginary spaces "with relations arising from them, with personal laws which measure the clarity of objects: with special abilities to concentrate or disperse, to multiply or inhibit. Marble is from Paros, from the archipelagos; the Dorian pillars are from within me. Or in short: there are as many aesthetics as there are individuals".

Regarding the meaning of the subjectivity / objectivity of art, but also other immanent features of the latter, Fundoianu was addressing them as early as 1919, in a comparative study regarding Jewish and Greek Art [4]. At the same time, in the *Salvation* magazine, he commented on ideas from Jules de Gaultier's philosophy and aesthetics. He was intrigued, among other things, by the latter's theory regarding Bovarism: he read both the 1892 *Bovarism* monograph [4] and the sixth edition of the work *From Kant to Nietzsche* [15].

Making out of illusion its *raison d'être*, more insinuating than affirming, rather suggesting than speaking the truth, the work of art is a useless thing, according to the reasoning of "The Notebooks of an Obsolete" (texts which have appeared in *The Ramp* magazine, in 1921). Often translated as the aptitude of being hypocritical, the illusion belongs even to the author of tragedy, "a liar *par excellence*", who "creates absurd situations in order to justify, on behalf of his hero, an attitude that he himself cannot restrain from considering absurd". Actually, the mechanism through which the playwright of tragedy hides from those who perceive his work, the very core of tragedy, its truth, "its true message" [4] is presented here.

The artist (but also the critic) is thus "a manufacturer of personal representations", and art, according to Nietzsche [16] and A. Gide, reaches peak performance only when it encounters obstacles and when constraints are projected upon it. Thus, for Fundoianu, aesthetics is far from the certainties of science (after he cohabited, profitably for a while, with the latter) and lives under the same epidermis with philosophy. He had separated from it for a while, after which "he had to return, from where he had left, at the teat of metaphysics and to beseech from it a support again" [4].

In his analyses of symbolism, Fundoianu's references point most often towards Nietzsche and especially to his option for Apollonian art, Apollo being, as we know, the symbol of the contemplative instinct within the art of Ancient Greece. A creator with a "formidable brain" and a "strong physiology", a "Dionysian monster" (as the philosopher called Zarathustra), the author of *The Gay Science* "hated the lyricism of the 'will to power', which he considered 'unaesthetic in itself'" (the text is entitled: "Nietzsche's apologies") [4]. Moreover, Nietzsche's *suffering*, which was supervising his creation, appears to Fundoianu as being different from that of Dostoyevsky's, for it "enters into equations, sneaks into problems, grins behind the metaphysical drama, as Aegisthus killed behind Electra, backstage". Nevertheless, Nietzsche "was parting from books" and the Russian novelist – "from people" [4].

Fundoianu, not just as a poet, approaches words with a special voluptuousness, slightly sober and misleading. He is not an extravagant person, as he seems to be at first glance (Călinescu has found, in his poetry, "verbal extravagances"). Indeed, he talks, with Aesopic accents, about "crab words" and about the "modest reader", but he also affirms that out of each word you must stamp a coin with its own effigy.

Fundoianu belongs to the family of those hacking the

shade (the Cioran phalanx). Not in vain was it said that he usually placed himself (also) in the blind spot of the utterance of vocables. From there he spied and arranged the meanings; he knew that the meanings *lie* there, in their palimpsestic nature, within their successive layers that make up the polysemy and, for this very same reason, the recurrence of a word did not represent for him a sign of redundancy, but, on the contrary, it brought to the surface underground, *phreatic* meanings. (Fundoianu says somewhere: "The words repeat themselves thus, and they could appear factual for the fast reader engaged in many occupations". Mircea Martin has observed and wondered whether Fundoianu is not among the first ones, among Romanians, to experiment "redundancy in the artistic sense"). The same Fundoianu knows that we cannot give up words due to their degrading masks which they have, circumstantially, worn: the depiction of ornaments, the hyper request and bidding of meanings, the maintenance of eclecticism or snobbery states. In the capillaries of their meanings, words have, perhaps in equal measures, honey and poison.

The *noble race* creator and exegetic pride is characteristic of Fundoianu too (pride, he says, is "absolutely human"), even if it seems to him that the *talents and the flock* alike have the consciousness of superiority, which, ultimately, is "a simple business of the dice". In his reasoning, however, beyond the vigour and the suppleness of his arguments, where the discursive strategy is that of an ostentatious "q.e.d.", penetrate, sometimes, the waves of some deliberate exaggeration; the diction of ideas becomes, suddenly, apodictic or allows, at other times, the steam of confusions to float freely over the working hypotheses. It seems to be also the effect of an inevitable game in which Fundoianu is caught, a game - we learn this fact straight from him - framed by the fiercest enemy of life: *the critical climate*. There can also be the case of a secondary effect derived from the ambition of a hermeneutic bearing a personal mark (see, for example, the analysis, from different angles, of Plato's relationship with poetry; let us think though, as a comparative judgment, also about the interpretation proposed by Noica, for example).

3.2. A symbolic Philosophical Testament

The exegesis performed on Fundoianu's work, as suggested earlier, has revealed a fruitful alliance between the author and philosophy. In the folds of his poems there hides a large mass of, if we are allowed to employ this expression, metaphysical *filings*, a serious meditation regarding man and his world. (Nevertheless, we will never confuse these two types of speech, poetry and philosophy, for we would violate a *law of the nontransposing character of values* about which Blaga was talking in his axiology).

Moreover, it was said that, in a certain way, Fundoianu's thoughts regarding the human being and his destiny within the universe are not just "a simple phenomenological exercise", but rather "an existential philosophy which implies and triggers the confrontation between the ego and the world, an ego squandered in irreducible palimpsests" [9]. An

existentialism of what we would call the “human, too human”, i.e. a philosophy regarding not the “generic man”, but the singularity and uniqueness of a flesh and bone man. This is the case in the philosophical texts from *Existential Monday and the Sunday of History* (a section of the book *Existence*, published posthumously) [10], the reflection of the final Fundoianu, a symbolic philosophical testament of his communitarian solitude.

Existential Monday and the Sunday of History is a dense text of discrete syncretism, with obvious critical and polemical emphases, with cutting, firm judgments, regarding what existentialism stands for and what it does not mean. The essay uses lines from Kafka and the evangelist Mark as a (pretext) foreword: “You are meant for a great Monday! - Well said! But Sunday will never end” and “The law is made for man, and not man for the law.” We have here, obvious from the very beginning, the logos of a philosophical discourse where history and morality form a strange and contradictory binomial. The biblical parables invoked by Fundoianu ultimately reveal how much the inner philosopher within him upholds his approach on the strength of the gnomic thought.

Moreover, Fundoianu does not commence here (rather he continues), but enhances, perhaps even makes more acute the trial filed against the universal reason, developed then by those who were forming the new generation of thinkers bearing the mark of Husserl’s school. The big punt was represented by the process of detecting the Christian horizon of philosophical thought. What interested him, right from the onset, was *the holiness* of the Law within Christian philosophy, when and how much of its spirit can be questioned and when it can be, indeed, violated. A slippage that occurs as long as he who lives in the bright circle of the Law is not the generic man, but the concrete man, the one surrounded by context.

Fundoianu writes about all of these, invoking one of Hegel’s works from his youth period, (*The life of Jesus*), in which the young philosopher, still under the influence of Kant and Spinoza, was erecting a dialogue regarding the biblical importance that the “Seventh Day” has [13]. Neither the Saviour, nor his disciples had complied with the canon: Jesus had healed a paralytic, while the others had also ignored the Sabbath law, and had gathered ears of corn to satiate their hunger.

Man’s existence is conceived in its implacable realism, on the border that separates (but also mixes) the Law and Faith. The bone of contention, the core out of which Fundoianu’s meditation nourishes itself, is the universal reason, the relationship with History, with the Spirit, with the Law. Nevertheless, not only Hegel, but before him Plato and Aristotle, as Christian philosophers, had appealed to the same universal reason to find the *sources* of truth. However, Fundoianu was judging Hegelian philosophy maybe too severely, in the terms of an ordinary sociology of *success*. The way in which the author of *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* would have bought grist to “History’s mill”, in order to grind as fine as possible the grains of universal reason

constituted, said Fundoianu, a “confusing manoeuvre”. Through it the old philosopher of Jena, and he was not the only one, was ratifying man’s absolute nothingness in front of history, spirit, and even God.

Not the same thing happened with other thinkers who, without making a touchstone of truth out of success, have been obscured regarding the value of their perceptions. There is the case of Kierkegaard, who waited a century for recognition. Neither was Dostoyevsky considered a philosopher right away, but much later than it would have been proper to do so. Moreover, Şestov’s serious thoughts would be labelled by many as a *vox clamantis in deserto*.

The Danish philosopher, however, without appearing *ex nihilo*, borrowing themes even from Hegel, has in actual fact overthrown speculative thought: the anguish conceptualized by him precedes logic (and it is the placenta of interrogation, not its *object*), as the Existent (the one which *triggers* the question) precedes the Existence, akin to the singular – the general.

One such mechanism generates, according to Fundoianu, the metaphysical act and “calls into question the cognition”. Thus, such a philosophy is an existential one precisely for revealing to us the Existent, the path towards the essence of universal reason, fully able to interrogate cognition and establish a genuine critique of pure reason. Only in this way, and not otherwise, the Existent will be able to justify for itself that *claim* that it demands. Even Heidegger, believes Fundoianu, will determine, ultimately, the existence through the frame of Spirit and Culture. It is a process that ends with “The Monumental, Archaeological and Critical History” and where, as Heidegger’s exegesis performed on Hölderlin’s work expresses it, poetry turns into a “megaphone of language, of dialogue, and, finally, of the ‘people’”.

And if we try to delimitate a time of existential philosophy, it began, according to Fundoianu, beyond the absolute realm of the vainglorious positive philosophy, when *teaching* had nothing more to say, when *science* had become powerless in relation to man’s interrogations and when “the hussars with drawn swords have vanquished once and for all”.

However, the new wave of existential thinkers has tried to convert into positivism the *existential Masters’ involuntary obscurity* and to develop a philosophical discourse in love with the revelation of Nothingness. The writings of Kierkegaard and Şestov have thus, paradoxically, contaminated the meditation of a Camus; a young writer, then an author who was somehow recovering what seemed to be laid aside by the other two, maybe in an act of conceptual caution (in fact, traces of a *betrayal* of philosophy), namely: the absurd brought to the surface by themselves.

The *Myth of Sisyphus* was crystallizing a vision of the absurdity of existence, revealing in the latter a *useless passion*, concludes Fundoianu. Nevertheless, such absurdity, from which it seems that neither Şestov [8] nor Kierkegaard shied away, would have never had the endorsement of reason. Thus, its reasons could be found, ontologically speaking, not *on this side*, but transgressing Reason. Therefore, Camus’ character is not, ultimately, a tragic one

[11]. Sisyphus smashes the understandable limit that limits ourselves, does not blame the reason, does not drive away the absurd, but we would not be entitled to say that he accepts it unreservedly or with serenity, such a behaviour not being a *rational* one, even if it is the expression of a thought.

On the contrary. Since it acquires not only the image of a mythical character, Sisyphus will have a specific existential attitude: he thinks he is happy; more precisely, as Camus himself suggests imperatively at the end of the book, we are those who imagine him being in such a state. A deft reverse empathy caused by the interpreter, a complicity of registries, of roles, an invasion of the logic of common sense, transvestite in the area of existential philosophy.

4. Conclusion

The hermeneutic Fundoianu was preoccupied by the mechanism of philosophical thought and, in particular, what specific modulations *the voice of the Existent* had, and how could it reach the truth. However, not the truth of some Master, of that philosopher moulded by Nietzsche with the mission *to command* and *to enforce* the law of “It must be so!” but imitating that disturbing thought of the Saviour, to reach the truth made for man, not the truth for which man was made. Fundoianu was tempted to draw up even an “organic” file (i.e.: “somatic”) of the existential philosopher, of *the Existent*, says the author, of the one who has existential passion but, however, cannot reach the *concept*, although it generates an irrepressible restlessness (within the existent) [17].

Therefore, ethics is a *must* for the philosopher seen as a kind of *master* who only proposes a personal truth but not a moral one, procuring in fact its arguments from the Bible’s substance. Moreover, if Kierkegaard, for instance, approached *the Old Book* and turned to it always against the grain, he did so in order to find there a support for Socrates’ meditations; moreover, Fundoianu was suggesting that the Danish thinker would have found within Christian thought not so much the image of an authority, but of a Power.

I was saying that Fundoianu had his sight aimed, especially in *Existential Monday and the Sunday of history*, towards the aurora of philosophical meditation. However, even in the absence of an influence coming from Christianity, the existential thought is, according to him, a philosophy of freedom, of possibility, and of the absurd, a *relative*, however distant, of prophetic thought. As it appears in Kafka, another existentialist who performs, among other things, *the trial* of a history in its depiction as the executioner, one that wants to impose, unscrupulously and unilaterally, its truths.

Benjamin Fundoianu’s texts, not just his philosophical essays, reveal to us a *doubting spirit* [12], seeking a logic neighbouring, probably, that of *the holomer*. An *outdated* and controversial author, one who had, in a Camusian sense, the attitude of a *dandy*, as a diaphanous ethics of negation

usually accompanies his critical attitude, in agreement, I think, with the tone of Mircea Eliade’s generation. Not only a *dubitative* Fundoianu, but also a sceptical one, in the most profound meaning of the term, is found in his work *A Trial Study about Lupascu* [5].

References

- [1] Lidia Bote, *Anthology of Romanian Symbolistic Poetry*, Bucharest, EPL, 1972.
- [2] G. Călinescu, *A History of Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present*, Madrid – Paris – Rome – Pelham N. Y., Editor Nagard, 1980.
- [3] B. Fundoianu, *Images and Books*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1980.
- [4] B. Fundoianu, *Judaism and Hellenism*, Bucharest, Hasefer Publishing House, 1999.
- [5] Benjamin Fondane, *Being and Knowing*, Iași, Ștefan Lupașcu Publishing House, 2000.
- [6] Mircea Martin, *Introduction to the Work of B. Fundoianu*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1984.
- [7] N. Manolescu, *A Critical History of Romanian Literature*, Pitești, Paralela 45 Publishing House, 2008.
- [8] Benjamin Fondane, *Meetings with Leon Chestov*, Paris, Édition Plasma, 1982.
- [9] Restitutio Benjamin Fondane. *Existential Monday and the Sunday of History*, *The Cultural Observer*, Bucharest, Dec. 2007 – June 2008.
- [10] Benjamin Fondane, *Existence*, Paris, Gallimard Publishing House, 1945.
- [11] Albert Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*, Bucharest, RAO Publishing House, 1994.
- [12] Dorin Ștefănescu (coord.), *B. Fundoianu or the Trials of Paradox. Towards an Existential Hermeneutics*, Cluj-Napoca, Eikon Publishing House, 2010.
- [13] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Life of Jesus*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 2016.
- [14] Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1995.
- [15] Jules de Gaultier, *From Kant to Nietzsche*, *Philosophical Library*, 2007.
- [16] Mircea Braga, *Ecce Nietzsche. An Exercise in Hermeneutical Reading*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2015
- [17] B. Fondane, *The Unhappy Conscience. Gide according to Montaigne*, Paris, Plasma Publishing House, 1979.