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## The left path. The symbolistic of archaic ethics\*

### Preliminary clarifications

*We consider necessary the following observations to clarify the context and the meaning of a few terms used in this paper. We assign these clarifications axiomatic value, as a thorough discussion of their pertinence outside our demonstration is not the subject of the following text:*

Considering that the basis of traditional cultures implies a total and – in some sense – forced participation of the individual, it is important to nuance that, for this kind of mentalities, *the essence is previous of the existence*; this axiom implies *the acceptance of the human existence to be framed in some cultural patterns*, those coordinating the fundamental side of existence; Mircea Eliade tones this idea in this way: “FOR *homo religiosus*, the essential precedes existence. This is as true of the man of ‘primitive’ and Oriental societies as it is of the Jew, the Christian, and the Moslem. Man is what he is today because a series of events took place *ab origine*. For *homo religiosus* real, authentic existence begins at the moment when this primordial history is communicated to him and he accepts its consequences” (Eliade, 1963: 92).

Also, the adjective “archaic” is not used as a temporal qualification. It rather suggests the fact that the community defined as “archaic” is permanently connected to a transcendent level; this kind of community is described, in some sense fundamentally, by acts that are justified by the relations with some deity and the transcendent beliefs. Therefore, the concept “archaic man” is similar to that of “*homo religiosus*”, the latter belonging to Mircea Eliade’s terminology. More, the term “archaic man” implies a sort of archetype, but not exclusively independent of the experience; the concept suggests that the so-called “archaic” man is anchored in ritual

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\* The translation of the text from page 59. Translation revised by Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată.

manifestations, some magical and pagan acts, which expose a relation with the transcendent/the divinity, no matter how that is conceptualized.

The following generalizations do not support an empirical character, which would refute the judgment. The generalizing character of the following expressions implies the affirmation of the common character and the probability – which could be converted into a certainty – that each member of an archaic community is reported to some conventional values accepted by all the community members and he shares the same beliefs as others. More than this, the text doesn't want to reduce and fix some essential characteristics, but to highlight some specific landmarks of the archaic existence.

The concepts “transcendental” and “transcendent” have got a metaphysic connotation. The first one means the intrinsic deepest level of human existence, representing all that is before knowledge, and the second one represents all that is above knowledge, implying the divine sphere according to which the archaic man lives.

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This paper will evaluate the concept of “left” as it is defined and used in generic archaic communities. The traditional context of existence works, in this respect, in some interesting way, because the spatial landmarks (right/left; east/west) are related to the temporal ones (light/dark) all of them being grounded in the ethic distinction between good and evil. My hypothesis is that the process of selection and creation resulting in such binary structures as the previously mentioned ones is justified by ethic oppositions. Finally, I argue that the process explaining all human acts (and which creates the culture also) is marked by a qualitative investment, by which individuals manifest their transcendental dimension, expressed by symbolic pairs of terms.

In this way, in order to analyze the archaic man's sense and the meanings he infers for all that is around him, we consider that this two concepts are fundamental for the cultural acts and the ones that enhance the human existence permanently oriented towards resolving dilemmas. Thus, starting from symbolization, we will exhibit cases in which the concept “left” is used and the contexts of its usage will offer clues for understanding the manner in which the Romanian archaic man “conceptualizes” it.

## General considerations

In order to conceive the human existence in the fullness of its values and faculties, it is important to analyze its manifestations without leaving aside its organic character. Man, as an entity who works with his mental faculties in accord with axiological field, organizes the context of his life in relation to values previously assumed and to acts corresponding to those values, characterizing his actions as being good, bad, beneficial, toxic. Beside the specificity of the qualitative investment, what is unique for human activities is this axiological association with ethic terms, the derivation of certain properties out of actions; for example, the fact that a murder is not moral is associated to the idea that killing, as any other sin, is a kind of the “deform of the soul”.

It is important to nuance the axiological dimension of this qualitative framework – which is the main point of my paper. What is unique in this case is the qualitative relations connecting environment and human values – such as sin, good, evil – and some good examples are spatial or temporal consecrations: the perimeter of the sanctuary, 1<sup>st</sup> December as the day of Romania, the commemoration of Mihai Eminescu’s birthday, the day of Saint Andrew, the relics of some saint, the personalities of any society (politicians, writers, artists and so on). Thus, such processes represent forms of sacralisation, which imply the objectivity and the consecration of the element which stands out in some unusual, extraordinary context; in other words, in some sense, the whole process is about placing one element on a “higher” position than the one on which we expect it to be.

For archaic mentality, this sort of superiority is conceptualized as a sacralisation, which doesn’t represent “only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse” (Eliade, 1987: 21). From the closest and accessible elements – the house, the family, the fiancé or the fiancée etc. – to the organization of the world itself, the process represents a qualitative investment, particularly a connection to divinity as *the* element allowing sacralisation. In other words, for the archaic man, this kind of transcendent justification “ontologically founds the world” (*ibidem*) and the human manifestations imply the attempt to imitate the divinity, so that the environment enter in a symbolization process, becoming as faithful as a possible a copy of the inviolate space: “To settle in a territory is, in the last analysis, equivalent to consecrating it” and “this universe is always the replica of the paradigmatic universe created and inhabited by the gods; hence it shares in the sanctity of the gods’ work” (*ibidem*, 35).

This permanent relation with the transcendent level gives the specificity of archaic world and we consider that this process of idealization by consecration justifies the organization of any traditional community. In this way, the idealization is symbolic, meaning that “neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them. Among countless stones, one stone becomes sacred and hence instantly becomes saturated with being because it constitutes a hierophany, or possesses mana, or again because it commemorates a mythical act, and so on” (*idem*, 1959: 3-4). Hence, the archaic man “achieves communication with the World because he uses the same language-symbol”, the World speaks to him by any element of the environment and he responds “by his dreams and his imaginative life” – all of this because “for archaic man the World is transparent” and he “feels that he too is «looked at» and understood by the World” (*idem*, 1963: 143).

Consequently, the archaic existence concentrates upon this kind of imitation (“participation” in Latin, “μέθεξις”, “methexis”, in old Greek) which represents in the idealist theory of Plato the fundamental principle by which the man is enabled to know, as man has access only to copies of the prototype which are to be found in the World of Ideas. Justifying in this way the assertion that an empirical form of knowledge is not sufficient for one who wants to gain knowledge, Plato explains the objective form of the Idea, inaccessible to man, drawing attention to the fact that man may only know the imitations of the entities in the World of Ideas. Thus, if the symbol – the qualitative investment – would represent the process of imitation, we could observe the fact that the archaic man, permanently connected to the divinity, tries to imitate it, by putting in action the most important parts of mythical history and including them in his existence, and also by attempting to live according to them.

More than that, the symbol represents a kind of relating as faithful as possible to the transcendental level, because any representation phenomena which involves a qualitative investment suggests an internal relation of that element with one of the axiological system. The coherence of this kind of structure is implied by the fact that “that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” and it is necessary to “take culture to be those webs” which should be interpreted “in search of meaning” (Geertz, 1973: 5) in order to understand a cultural act.

Thus, this paper explores the meanings of the term “left” as it is used in Romanian folk culture both as a spatial element and as a symbolic one expressing a transcendent dimension in

the order of the world. “Left” represents a form of violation of the divine rule in a frame of thought based on associations of spatial levels to moral ones. Working with the binomial “good-evil”, any other dichotomy is defined in relation to this moral duality. The archaic mentality operates with process of treating coincidences as objective facts, thus being formed a homogeneous and totalizing context. The tendency of considering environment elements as independent is provided by the processes of assimilation and extraction of knowledge which represents “the result of direct observation, of direct contact with nature, and of human experience”, grouped “in pairs of oppositions or in binary oppositions” (Constantinescu & Fruntelată, 2006:15).

The stake of this study is to nuance the fact that the human being looks to resolve and deepen the inscrutable elements of the environment and the best way for research this processes is to “look at the symbolic dimensions of social action” and “not to turn away from the existential dilemmas of life” but “to plunge into the midst of them” (Geertz, 1973: 30). Only exploring the cognitive processes of human beings against their representative cultural contexts makes possible the “access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live” (*ibidem*, 24).

### **Embodiments of the “left” concept**

The “Left” concept, as a spatial landmark, has got its importance in the context of the environment qualitative organization. For the archaic man, the space does not have just a physical meaning, representing also a relation with an axiological frame; in other words, the archaic man may consider this “concept as positive because of its concrete references” or as a concept belonging to a spiritual order, but in either case, space remains for him “practical and diverse” (Bernea, 1997: 99) and the report between space and things “becomes in many situations qualitative as in cases referring to positions, forms and directions” (*ibidem*, 101). So, working with significations and senses, a symbolist study is necessary in order to nuance the directions and the structures used by archaic men in the process of associating space and values.

“Left” concept is associated with “anything that is abnormal, unusual, a sign of the other world” (Olteanu, 1998: 299) and together with its pair (“right”), it determines “the positions of things in space” and “represents the setting into motion and any material or spiritual activity employing the hands” (Bernea, 1997: 55). Thus, this kind of spatiality has got a qualitative base which elaborates and makes distinctions between things and spiritual senses operating with axiological instruments. This method is grounded in the ethical level of archaic culture, being

achieved a “*moral dualism*” (Ursache, 2014: 43) – the good and the evil – which extends in aesthetical pairs (“love-hate”, “beautiful-ugly”) generating structures such as “*good-love-beautiful / evil-ugly-ugly*”<sup>1</sup> (*ibidem*). Having the role of an “axiological support” for the entire “spiritual mechanism” (*ibidem*), it is extremely interesting how, for the archaic mentality, ugliness, sin and hate become similar to a spiritual disease. This metaphor is very interesting in the archaic existential context, as – being related to a mythical level – it is associated, in most cases, to a major problem both for the individual and for his/her community, the sin affecting the entire social group. I will address this issue further, but, for now, I mention as an example the baptism traditional practices, relating the newborn both with the positive and the negative spheres. The rituals performed on this occasion ensure that community rules are preserved and also prepare a prosperous future for the new community member; in this context, the “left” term represents an important element. Hence left, as a spatial landmark, is a result of the relation with the spiritual frame of the archaic culture. There are many manifestations in which this concept is used and the analysis of some of them is necessary for the understanding of this term.

When we speak about the practical frame, this term is in many cases dependent and subordinated to its opponent, the right side having more success: “You worship with the right and with the right [hand] you work, because that is where the Good comes from. Christ has worshiped with the right too. And if you give alms is better to give with the right; it is more appreciated.” “And if you worship with the right you have to make the sign of the cross; Virgin Mary has worshiped with the right too. This is said by the book and the saints have said it too” (Bernea, 1997: 58). The actions that are made with the left hand suggest an “impure territory”: “With the right hand is always better because we worship with it. If you give something to someone [with the left hand] he thinks that you mock at him. It is forbidden with the left hand; and you are too scared to do that. You work with the left when you make spells”, “There are people who work with the left hand and they have power, but it is not good, those are wizards/witches, not good people. Why would man go against nature? Thus God says, thus you do: work with the right” (*ibidem*); more than that, the removal of the toxic forces is necessary: “Do all things with the right hand, because it is the good one. You worship with the right, you eat with the right hand, and you hold the baby at the baptism with the right to remove Satan” (*ibidem*, 57). Ernest

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<sup>1</sup> We want to notice that the second structure, which represents the “negative” side, “*evil-ugly-ugly*”, would be better expressed by the series “*evil-hate-ugly*”. Nevertheless, it renders a homophony of Romanian, in which *urât* means both “ugly” and “hated”.

Bernea's informants provide the above mentioned examples as a matter of fact, which sets into light their constant relationship with a mythical level and – in this particular case – with Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary as mythical models with whom the Romanian peasant wants to maintain a relation as strong as possible, as long as he/she justifies his acts by imitating his/her models.

In the case of rituals, the “left” concept represents the negative forces, which the Romanian traditional community tries to annihilate. Before baptism, the newborn represents a danger and it will be so until the community members perform its first integration ritual. This attitude determines a set of qualitative anticipations, the acts and the position of the baby being interpreted in relation to spatial landmarks: “The children [...] who are born easily or «on the right hand» [...] will be happy and righteous, in opposition with those which «are born on the left hand» and «will live a wrong life»” (Știucă, 2001:111) and “the child which sucks from the left breast will be silly” (Gorovei<sup>2</sup> *apud* Știucă, 2001: 152). The baptism has a role of purification and spatial position of the baby and its family members is important and included in the ethical frame, being a first human experience and an act of integration: “When the aunt goes to the baptism she steps first with the right foot; you know, when she steps over the verge. It is good for the child” (Bernea, 1997: 59). More than that, to prevent the intervention of negative forces, some sort of sacrifice is performed in order to neutralize the potential danger: “[...] the dad and the mom of the newborn cut on the little finger of their left hand and let three drops of blood pour under the baby's cradle and say: «Take these and protect us against fire and water, iron and rock, against diseases and all that is unknown!». These words are addressed to *schima casei* [the snake of the house] which is venerated by any family” (Olinescu *apud* Știucă, 2001: 159)<sup>3</sup>. Also, the “left” concept is associated to the moment when a bastard gets its name, to different malformations of the newborn – in particular, the potential turning of the baby into a ghost (*strigoi*) – or to various anticipative signs. Thus, this concept represents “destruction, dissolution, unusual, infirmity, and negative magic” (Știucă, 2001: 159). In the case of the wedding, the role of the action is similar to that performed by the aunt at the moment of baptism when she holds the child in her arms: “When the bride goes to the wedding ceremony, she steps first with her right foot and also with this foot she steps into the church. The people say that this will bring her luck in life, in everything she does and in everything she works” (Bernea, 1997: 59).

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<sup>2</sup>Artur Gorovei, *Credințe și superstiții ale poporului român* [Beliefs and superstitions of the Romanian folk], București, published by Grai și Suflet-Cultura Națională, 1995, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Marcel Olinescu, *Mitologie românească* [Romanian mythology], București, Casa Școalelor, 1944, p. 215.

The “left” concept is present during the most important events of human existence and the funeral context is no exception. In funeral rites, the dualism represented by right and left integrates other spatial landmarks, provided by qualitative associations: “Sunrise and south mean right and Sunset and north mean left” (*ibidem*).

The funeral context implies a group of elements which have the purpose to prepare the soul for its last journey: “From the country with craving / To the one without it / From the country with mercy / To the one without it” („Din țara cu dor / În cea fără dor, / Din țara cu milă / În cea fără milă”) (Eretescu, 2004: 115-116). Thus, the entire context determines a commemoration and the traditional funeral manifestation includes ritual elements which support the ceremony. Its uniqueness is provided by the solidarity with the deceased expressed in the funeral ritual songs.

Probably the most frequent example of poetic and musical text in the funeral ritual repertory is the Song of Dawn, which implies ethnographical details, its structure organizing the funeral ceremony context. By addressing directly to the deceased, the song offers an intuitive guide, “a symbolic «map» of the universe which will be crossed to arrive in «that world»” (Bogdan, 2016: 131). The relatives and neighbours of the deceased (actually, the people who take part in the ceremony) are assigned in poetry roles of symbolic transmitters who speak to the deceased: “And we ask you, / With all our might, / With a big shout: / To be vigilant, / To take care on the road. / And not to set forth / By the left hand / For that is the dumb path, / Ploughed by buffaloes, / Sown with thorns all over / And tables are cleared, / And torches are put off. / But you should set forth, / By the right hand / Because it is the pure path, / By white oxen ploughed, / With wheat sown / And all over are full tables / With burning torches” („Și noi te rugăm, / Cu rugare mare, / Cu strigare tare: / Seamă tu să-ți iei, / Seama drumului. / Și să nu-mi apuci / Către mâna stângă, / Că-i calea nătângă, / Cu bivoli arată, / Cu spini semănată, / Și-s tot mese strânse, / Cu făclii stinse. / Dar tu să-mi apuci, / Către mâna dreaptă, / Că-i calea curată, / Cu boi albi arată, / Cu grâu semănată. / Și-s tot mese-ntinse, / Cu făclii aprinse”) (Eretescu, 2004: 117-118). The other world organization is conceptualized in the terms of the same ethic dichotomy which has a spatial role. The distinction “good-evil” is represented by the elements “pure-dumb” which are metaphorical synonyms of the spatial organization of the “long path, / Long, without shadows” (*ibidem*, 117) and the qualitative content of the descriptive code of the soul’s journey is determined by symbols with the role of arguments aiming to persuade the deceased to choose the right path. The archaic imagery of Heaven and Hell is composed from elements which employ quantity to express quality: the dark, obscure “bad” character of the left path, represented by the



presence of the buffaloes, of the thorns and of the wilderness – “all over cleared tables” and dark (“the torches put off”) – provides arguments to convince the deceased not to choose the left path but take the right road instead, a road characterized by purity and light. The final argument in favour of this choice is to be found at the end of the path, when the traveler will reach “the way over the plateau / At the place of a king’s son, / Who will take you to Heaven, / Because that is the place for living; / In the hill of dancing / Because there you should stay, / To the field with peony / Because there is your wistful longing” („La drumul cu plai / La un fecior de crai, / Să te ducă-n rai, / C-acolo-i de trai; / În dealul cu jocul, / C-acolo ți-e locul; / ‘N câmpul cu bujorul / C-acolo ți-e dorul”) (*ibidem*, 119). Also, the archaic belief says that Heaven “[...] is a garden with set tables and lights which burn without being consumed, where angels sing and the right people feast” (Mușlea and Bârlea, 2010: 146). From this paragraph we can observe, once again, the negativity of the “left” concept, which marks a land’s toxicity.

The same qualitative lack is to be found intuitively in a Făgăraș dirge (funeral lamentation): “But godson, where are you going / Because you’re so beautifully dressed? / Only in the Țarigrad’s fair. / In Țarigrad when you arrive, / Look to the right. / There’s a blooming tree / And a chair for rest. / And a little fountain / And a chair for rest / For you to stay a bit,” („Da cuscure, unde-ai plecat / De-așa frumos te-ai gătat? / Doar în târg la Țarigrad. / În Țarigrad când vei intra, / Să te uiți în dreapta. / Este-un pom mare-nflorit / Ș-un scaun de hodinit. / Ș-o fântâniță lină / Ș-un scaun de hodină / Și puțin să zăbovești”) (Pop, 1999: 193). As a possible form of consolation of the mourners, death is described as a journey to a fair as if the one who has passed away had left somewhere with business. Heaven implies passivity – the deceased is advised to rest – and it is described like a compensation for the person’s life of hard work: “each soul from Heaven has got a tree, a water source, a bed and tables always loaded with abundant meals” (Mușlea, Bârlea, 2010: 146). From the text of the dirge we can infer that, if Heaven (as Țarigrad fair) is to the right, then – relying the opposition presented in the beginning and on the dualist archaic mentality – Hell is to the left.

Hell’s landmarks – “to the west”, “to north, underground” (*ibidem*, 146-147) – appear in a carol (Christmas ritual folk song): “Down, to the west / The Sun isn’t on the sky; / Instead there are clouds and darkness, / And a huge depth,” (Marienescu<sup>4</sup> *apud* Ursache, 2014: 197). Therefore Hell’s geographical landmarks are left-down-west. They are opposed to Heaven’s ones: right-up-east. So, “I put the saddle on two horses. / And I went up to Heaven. / I worshiped three times /

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<sup>4</sup> “Carol published by At. M. Marienescu in 1859”.

But Heaven remained locked. / I put the saddle on a cock / And I went down to Hell” (Marian<sup>5</sup> *apud* Ursache, 2014: 198-199).

In this list of contextual and symbolic synonyms, what is impressing is the way of describing Hell, by adding suggestions of eternal punishment. A legend from Bucovina<sup>6</sup> which was written as a poem (Ursache, 2014: 194) is an example: “The death’s angel now / Joins me on the road / And takes me to Hell / Where the sinners burn. / Oh! As I looked at them, / What I saw scared me! / I saw dragons yawning / And fire spiting / As a river flowing / In fire and unstoppable; / And in front a devil was sitting / With Judas in its arms and burning”. This place – a chamber with “a great space were fire always burns and there are a lot of birds with iron beaks and sleepless worms which gnaw at the sinners” (Muşlea and Bârlea, 2010: 147) – is also described here: “Still to Hell, to Hell, to Hell! / Oh! And when I looked, / What I saw scared me! / I saw many heretic priests / With teachers and scholars / Thrown head down / In the burning fire, / And devils were pushing them, / With swords pushing them” (Marian<sup>7</sup> *apud* Ursache, 2014: 195-196), followed by “the robbers and the killers, the thieves and the rogues”, the witches, the merchants, “the women who abandoned their children”, “the wealthy men satiated by all the good things of Earth but without helping the poor people. There are nine fords” (Ursache, 2014: 196).

### **The consequences of existence oriented towards left**

The “left” concept determines chaos. The archaic mentality has got its essence in the point that there are unbreakable rules and the premises of a well lived life are in a transcendent frame. The traditional ethic system doesn’t have its support in the social argument, in a way to avoid the anarchy. Its reason is in the transcendent model, which people try to be faithful to and if the archaic man doesn’t have some indications he creates them in order to maintain his existence in the ontological parameters of his divinity. The mythical level of existence is thus brought forth and the importance of that is in the reinforced action aiming to maintain or repair the world’s order, after it was damaged at the spiritual level. The desire for redemption and the belief in the

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<sup>5</sup> S. Fl. Marian, *Înmormântarea la români. Studiu etnografic* [*Funerals of the Romanian People. Ethnographic study*], Edițiunea [published by] Academiei Române, 1892, p. 466.

<sup>6</sup> Bucovina is a north-east area of the Romanian territory, which includes the Suceava county, Botoşani county and some others.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem* 5.

power of man to win the battle against evil forces are some of the main arguments explaining the negative qualitative investment of the term “left”.

However, we consider that, in a particular sense, the term does not imply only negativity, but also suggests an alternative path, an action that destroys the balance of the world and of society and challenges the mythological model; that is why the archaic man, who is aware of the potential deviation, strives to fix his existential context or to prevent an unfortunate error.

Without trying to distort the subject of this paper and convert it into some existentialist issue, based on this last observation, we want to point out Constantin Noica’s point of view about the Nefârtat (The Devil – named “Non-brother” in Romanian folk legends). From the definition of the word “ba” (nay) as introducing an alternative answer or as a manner of adding a new opinion – “the intention of the person who answer *nay* isn’t the one of denying something, but to show that he has another perspective” (Noica, 1987: 146) –, the Romanian philosopher suggests that the sum of alternatives which are provided by the term “nay” points to an existential plus, specific to Satan: “Doesn’t *nay*, which drives you so easy through the rocks of negativity, blows too powerful in the sails of thought? Is it not an instrument of thought, but also one of the other, who offends you? Maybe «no» is a word of death, of canceling, of extinction into zero, but of man; while “nay” belongs to someone else, hidden behind man” (*ibidem*, 150). So, Satan is the alternative symbol who supports a break from the world’s order, a removal of certitude, a chance, something new in some way. Thus, “The Devil doesn’t say «no», it says «nay». Who overlooks this distinction when it comes to negativity [...] loses something essential for the meaning of life: the Devil’s nature” (*ibidem*, 151).

The courage of the Devil to propose another way – and by doing so to break the order – affects the archaic man’s axiological system, for whom the duality (which could be convert in a question like “How about not to do this?” or “How about to do this too?”) represents a deviation. And this deviation from the default order is the one that breaks the existential comfort of *homo religious*, abolishes the rules which represent him and leaves him suspended in the cerebral mist of possibility. But the archaic man doesn’t want alternatives, because they are useless for him in comparison with the divine law, which he tries to observe.

The above observations help us highlight the next aspect about traditional world (and in particular for the Romanian one): the fact that the existence of *homo religiosus* is based on the default rules and any transgression, representing something unfamiliar, means something uncertain, which calls for caution and preventive action. Thereupon, the evil forces – Satan and other similar entities – represent embodiments of the “nay” term and according to archaic man’s

thought, are his opponents in the battle of maintaining the relation with the transcendent level. Thus, the mythical transformations and the symbolic instruments have got a double direction in the Romanian traditional cultural context: on the one hand, they are directed to the Pure Transcendent and – on the other hand – they try to counteract the Impure Transcendent<sup>8</sup>, which “begets monstrous creatures-unsettled and disturbing” (Știucă, 2001: 92).

Consequently, the “left” concept is associated with the adverse manifestations and supernatural entities which are part of the Impure Transcendent and the encounters between those and the archaic man are a kind of challenges which he has to go for in order to have an accomplished life. The relation with the sacred level implies the attempt to understand the transcendent character and to reveal the position and logic of divine. In order to succeed, the subject of our research uses qualitative investment of objects and of environment, which – as symbols – have the role to preserve the communication with the divinity and the knowledge about the holy level. These elements are conceptualized by Lucian Blaga as, “revealing metaphors” (Blaga, 2011: 354) – which have the role to clarify opaque ideas by “replacing them with another vision” (*ibidem*). They clarify some brain gaps “through the instruments of the environment, the sensitive experience and the imaginary world” (*ibidem*). Thus, in the archaic man’s holy world, the symbol has got the role of a superior decryption and the transcendent code is the only valid source for *homo religious* in cases of revelation, understanding and becoming aware of one’s existence.

The stake of the divinity and the conceptual organization of the “left” term intersect in this point. To be aware of supernatural evil forms means to understand them as some superior entities – which belong to the sacred world – and with which the archaic man has to fight in order to preserve his true existence. That is why, according to Romanian folk culture, a man has to sleep with his right shoulder up, because otherwise “The Devil is higher and rejoices in the fact that the Angel is down” (Voronca<sup>9</sup> *apud* Pamfile, 1916: 29).

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<sup>8</sup> The “Impure Transcendent” refers to the evil forces which have the role of challenging and the attribute “Impure” determines the act which isn’t according to the typically solidary attitude of the divinity towards the archaic man. In the Romanian folk culture, the first entity which this concept refers to is the Devil.

<sup>9</sup> E. N. Voronca, *Datinile și credințele poporului român* [*The customs and beliefs of Romanian folk*], 1903, Cernăuți, p. 513.

We may conclude that in the archaic context of existence, man organizes his world by relation to the sacred level and any inadequacy in that respect leads to a toxic form which has to be suppressed as fast as possible. The access to evil forces and the means of fighting against them are offered by contextual symbols which are conceptualized in binary oppositions and are related to the most profound level of humanity, in which we find the essence of cultural activity. In this framework, trying to explore a few contexts (and texts) in which the “left” concept is used, we can conclude that it has a negative connotation in the archaic context, the man preferring to “be annihilate at last, in God”, refusing the independence and the evil alternatives, preferring not to “cling, like Satan, furiously, to oneself and be in hell” (Campbell, 2004: 55).

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