

*BOOK REVIEW*

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**Vasile Muscă, *Coordonate filosofice românești*,  
Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Școala Ardeleană, 2024, 390 p.**

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With a long and constant preoccupation exercised in the perimeter of philosophy - predominantly in the history of philosophy -, university professor Vasile Muscă is an advocate of a harmonized vision of philosophical values, minimizing the temptation of any speculation that does not rest on the firm ground of research and documentation. The vision of the integrative philosophical approach comes from his apollonian nature, a nature that lacks the pathos of sterile disputes, of irrelevant polemics. He prefers the method of clear exposition, using accessible language, free of any artifice or colorful jargon. As his writing bears the distinct stamp of one who has not only enlightened himself with the love of wisdom, but has sought to enlighten many generations of students. He is a philosophical storyteller, simplifying things to the point of total comprehension.



The paideic tendency emerges from the auctorial lines, the ideas evolving towards a synthetic, integrating vision. As he is a speculator with a free will of reason, a thinker who embraces with enthusiasm, but also with circumspection, the so diaphanous realm of philosophical ideas. Ancient Greek and German philosophy constitute his favorite areas of analysis, with an emphasis on German Enlightenment, but also with a constant interest in Romanian philosophy. Calm values, epistemological prudence, belief in hard truths, which can interfere with history, remain his guiding landmarks. As a philosophy teacher, he prefers systematized thinking, philosophy of the rational type. As a private thinker (in the sense of Kierkegaard), he prefers personalized ideation, the courage to think on his own. The professor and philosopher Vasile Muscă is one of the rare cases who can clearly tell us what they have understood of philosophy, who can befriend us with its abstract language. With his infectious kindness, of a hermit forgotten among books (in his huge library), he moves discreetly in the narrow perimeter of philosophical thinking, accompanied by the sounds of classical music, as he oscillates affectively between Cluj and Oradea, in the tendency to inhabit a Hölderlinian and concrete idea at the same time.

A few years ago, he published a volume in which he tackled some landmarks of universal philosophy, and now he proposes a prospective exercise of the Romanian one. His book, *Coordonate filosofice românești* (Romanian philosophical coordinates), Ed. Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca, 2024, as the author states, is an anthology of texts that address a number of themes, conceptual controversies and disputes related to the possibility of being able to define a philosophy as being Romanian. As he does the examination of its representatives, starting with T. Maiorescu, who, and is important to know, was skeptical about an original creation in this field. The volume is a compendium that captures some essential moments of Romanian philosophy traced in its diachrony, those that aroused the author's concern and empathy. "Such a title, like the one I have placed at the head of my present considerations, may provoke displeasure and irritation in those who do not accept the reality of a Romanian philosophy, but do not even admit its possibility", writes the author at the very beginning of the book. Even the very

title seems to denote a certain circumspection towards the overly strong use of the concept of “Romanian philosophy”, the volume’s content proposing only a few of its coordinates. Its new publication is a necessary and useful introduction to the dynamics of the exploration of Romanian philosophy, putting into context its specific data and articulations. The focus is not so much on the analysis of ideas and their ontological and metaphysical overview, but rather, on the socio-historical background in which these ideas germinated. We are dealing with a well-documented historical-philosophical approach, one that highlights its connections and key points, with a hermeneutic emphasis on the thinking of L. Blaga, D.D. Roșca, C. Noica (who attempted to capture the “Romanian sense of being,” being ironically criticized by Cioran for his claim), and M. Eminescu (who, lacking an appropriate conceptual language, attempted for the first time to partially translate Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* through the expression *Critique of Pure Judgment*).

Although profound philosophical thought does not emerge anywhere randomly, but rather in a specific place and time, within a given social and historical context, being the original creation of an exceptional individual, it implicitly implies a general openness to its truths and conceptions. Beyond the facts of its origin and tradition, the external influences and borrowings of philosophical thought, the ancestral imprint of the place and time in which it was conceived, and the coordinates of the realities and ideals that give it substance, it must aim at the universal dimension of knowability. Philosophical thought has no geographical or cognitive limits, and an authentic interrogative approach can stimulate its multiple idiomatic possibilities of expressing the essence and meaning of humanity and the world. Philosophy (like poetry) maximizes the possibilities of language to decipher the reality and ideality of the human being, beyond any spatial-temporal determinations and connotations. Beyond national cultural origins and traditions, beyond the particularities of language, the historical universality of thought speaks in any philosophy. Because “any serious history of philosophy must be an exercise in both philosophy and history itself,” as A. Kenny argues. For there is no pure philosophical thought — a *tabula rasa* —

uninfluenced by the precedence of other thoughts, by the past, and by the contextual and universal spiritual environment from which it was born. Philosophy philosophizes with its own past.

Following this synthetic journey through Romanian philosophy, and after highlighting its intrinsic coordinates, the author remains skeptical about its current status, yet relatively optimistic regarding its potential to produce original ideas, despite its historical tardiness and anachronism. “We do not yet have a philosophy, but we may have one in the future. This is because, among the wide range of cultural vocations of all kinds that constitute the native heritage of the Romanian people, the vocation for philosophy is not absent,” the author believes. Someone once said, with a slightly malicious undertone, that “there are Romanian philosophers, but no Romanian philosophy.” Professor Vasile Muscă’s book provides yet another argument that, beyond probing, external influences, and gradual accumulations, beyond desynchronizations and inertia, beyond conjectures and negotiations, Romanian philosophy can make a significant contribution to the great debate of ideas that shapes the existence and becoming of human beings.

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