

# EMANUEL CĂȘVEAN

## ON THE SYMBOLIC HOLOMERIA OF CONSTANTIN NOICA

**Emanuel Cășvean**

Babes-Bolyai University, Doctoral School of Philosophy, Cluj, Romania

**Email:** emanuel\_casvean@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** Review of the book of Ioan Biriș, *Constantin Noica - Holomeria simbolică* (Bucharest: Eikon Publishing House, 2019).

**Keywords:** philosophy, holomeria, symbols, Constantin Noica, Ioan Biriș

## DESPRE HOLOMERIA SIMBOLICĂ A LUI CONSTANTIN NOICA

**Rezumat:** Recenzie a lucrării Ioan Biriș, *Constantin Noica – Holomeria simbolică* (București: Ed. Eikon, 2019).

**Cuvinte-cheie:** filosofie, holomerie, simboluri, Constantin Noica, Ioan Biriș.

The present book represents a synthesis and similarly crowns the studies of the distinguished professor Ioan Biriș on the particularities of philosophical thinking of one of the most original and profound Romanian thinkers of the 20th century: *Constantin Noica*.<sup>1</sup>

As he frequently confessed in his articles, lectures and lectures, Ioan Biriș was spiritually defined by two of the Romanian philosophers who lived in the last century without enjoying a well-deserved appreciation during their earthly pilgrimage, both being marginalized and even imprisoned by representatives of the atheist-communist regime. Lucian Blaga<sup>2</sup> and Constantin Noica- two of the leaders of interwar philosophy, much aggrieved during the communist dictatorship (based of Soviet inspiration and materialist-atheist ideology) and rediscovered in the current context, determined Ioan Biriș to step on the path of philosophical research, to become a prolific author appreciated in our country, and even more so in the world, for having significantly contributed to the spiritual formation of the assemblage of contemporary philosophers.

Although professor Ioan Biriș proves through some of his writings (ex: monograph of his native village / Nadăș and Zărand county<sup>3</sup>) a great appreciation of historical aspects<sup>4</sup>, thoroughly documented in his works and articles with philosophical substratum, the historical, biographical or the historical-social framework in which the analyzed philosophers lived (eg Kant, Galileo, Brentano, Wittgenstein, Blaga, Noica) are scarce, sometimes laconically presented, or sometimes tangentiallly approached in connection to the crystalization process of thought, as well as the philosophical concepts presented, clarified<sup>5</sup> and promoted by the great thinkers.

Thus, Professor Ioan Biriș does not insist on biographical details related to Constantin Noica, but on his thinking, more precisely on the particular, *original* elements of his thinking - one of them being *the symbolic holomeria*, an extremely complex concept, whose

presentation, ἐρμηνεία (clarification) and perception requires a deep and long preparation.

Due to its depth and special variety of elements that come into its presentation and explanation, the symbolic holomeria can be genuinely perceived only by those who have philosophical concerns, whether they are trained and specialized in this field, or active in the wider and more comprehensive area of culture and spirituality (theology).

Last but not least, this writing - synthesis done by Professor Ioan Biriș is recommended to those who - like him - had initially followed the exact sciences<sup>6</sup>, especially mathematical theory - and can philosophize on the relations between *one and the many* and especially on the relations between unity (*a olos*) and its component parts.

In *the relationship* (in fact, *the relations* or more clearly the system of relations between unity and parts, between parts and whole (united) "it is hidden secretly, subtly and veiled, and the foundation of any philosophical thought must always be discovered; in these *complex relations between whole (unity) - parts, One and the many* (evtl. multiple) the vocation of philosophy is seen, its call to understand and to present, later in a more explicit manner, the relations between people (society being perceived as unity, and people / members as constituent parts of the whole), but also those between man / people and Divinity.

The author himself states from the beginning that the work (*Symbolic Holomeria*) "is not intended to be a biography of Constantin Noica. On the contrary, in this book we are interested in a fundamental problem, namely: that of holomerism - of partitive logic.<sup>7</sup> " Therefore, in the foreground it is not presented the tumultuous and tempting life of the philosopher constantly persecuted by the Communist authorities and forcibly circumscribed in the space of Câmpulug (Argeș) and the hermitage in Păltinișul Sibiului<sup>8</sup>, nor the special qualities with which God endowed him, helping to form disciples of great intellectual and moral value, such as Andrei Pleșu and Gabriel Liiceanu.

Professor Ioan Biriș's statement is very clear: "we are not particularly interested in the history of the philosopher Noica, but in the history of his philosophical concepts" his hermeneutic logic, the peculiarities of his thinking.

Structured in no less than twelve different chapters in terms of extension and style, but just as dense, significant through the multitude of philosophical thoughts, logical deductions and mathematical (numerical) reflections contained and exposed succinctly and clearly, Professor Ioan Biriș follows a particularly "wise" structure. Florea Lucaci<sup>9</sup>, essayist from Arad county, reveals this aspect, showing that Professor Ioan Biriș approaches this complex subject gradually, balancing his words and affirmations, preparing us in the first chapters to understand the topic, then helping us to deepen it, and finally, through a concluding short chapter (XII) to identify the particularities of the thinking of the philosopher Noica through a skilful reference to the thinking of *F. Brentano and Lesniewsky*. The 12 chapters reflect the gradual evolution of Noica's thinking, thinking materialized in conceptual-operational forms.

Chapter I: Mathetis and the mathematical method<sup>10</sup> deals with the geometric culture and logic of Immanuel Kant. This first chapter brings to the fore the idea of founding an authentic philosophical system, above transient forms and appearances. Noica does not reject the historical type of culture, but limits it - or rather - highlights its limits, its boundaries, preferring and starting to organize *a geometric type of culture, controlled by logical thinking*. Supporting this idea / intention, Noica researched, interpreted and used some thoughts from the writings of the ancient Plato and Aristotle, as well as *Descartes and Leibnitz* - two philosophers who discovered and communicated to contemporaries and posterity the connections between the world of numbers, mathematical models and geometric and philosophical concepts. Great philosophers such as Hegel, Heidegger <sup>11</sup> and obviously I. Kant offered Noica starting points and support in the design of his philosophical system.

Chapter II deals with the connection between the science of proportions and the logic of relations. For Noica, the logical approach

does not constitute only a simple and effective methodological tool for research or for deepening the realities and ideas. The logical approach can be a valuable, authentic and fruitful form of culture.

Chapter III, entitled the logic of spiritual invention and the problem of inhesion, presents the individual as an active, creative agent that enters into the composition, definition and characterization of the whole/ unity. Chapter IV: Cultural individuality and the methodology of identities highlight the fact that the idea of *the individual* enters as *a part* in the logic of relations, as *an agent* in the logic of spiritual interventions, as a significant *reference* in partitive logic.<sup>12</sup>

The theme of logical configurations of cultural creation is the subject of the fifth chapter; Noica insisted on the *genetic code of creation* and *the cultural world*, urging on the relationships between *the one and the many* in the universe and the sphere of culture. In this context, he also presented *sinaletism* as a universal mechanism.<sup>13</sup>

Chapter VI: rationality and calculation *highlights, in fact*, the methodological secret of Constantin Noica in approaching and perceiving the human being in his earthly and metaphysical destiny. Chapter VII contains extensive references to the evolution from categorical reason to individual reason, insisting on the alternative of perceiving typological or political reason.

In chapter VIII, professor Ioan Biriș analyzes the idea of the philosophical field<sup>14</sup> and the substantiation of logic. Noica deals not only with the concept of philosophical field, but also with the modulations of being in the linguistic field of the Romanian language, modulations that can be the subject of metaphysical-philosophical interrogations. Biriș insists that from Noica's perspective even the conjunctions, prepositions and phrases of the Romanian language (which he appreciates due to the richness and variety of terms and especially due to its great possibilities of expression) can be full of philosophical meanings.

In chapter IX (entitled the method of regressive progression and the meaning of language), presenting the method of regressive progression, Professor I Biriș urges us, in fact, to step on the path that

leads from communication to communion. Chapter X: the category of totality in Noica's philosophy has certain particularities, developing the discussion on a typology of totalities.

In the penultimate chapter (the ninth) - the hermeneutic concepts and the logic of Hermes <sup>15</sup>- it is emphasized that in Noica's vision, the hermeneutic logic has many particular elements and at the same time, it is distinct from that of Hology and Mereology (specific to Brentano and Lesniewski). Ioan Biriș underlined the idea that through the Romanian philosophical utterance (as numbered as original part, with own identity of the whole) we can integrate in the great European culture (considered as an ensemble, as a *whole*) assuming it, but without surrendering our spiritual particularities.

The final chapter (XII) - conclusively particularizes the holomeria of Constantin Noica in relation to the Hology of Franz *Brentano* and the Mereology of Lesniewsky showing that a series of thoughts and concepts of the latter *anticipate* the holomeria of Noica, without having a decisive role in the genesis and the evolution of Romanian partitive thinking. This last chapter frames the holometry of the philosopher who spent his "twilight of years" in Păltiniș in the system of coordinates of European thought. Practically, the readers of the treatise on symbolic holomeria discover - as the author intended - a new hypostasis of the philosopher Noica, passing from his position as a philosopher-essayist to the image of a thinker deeply concerned with the mathematical spirit of metaphysics and the shaping of a new type of logic. <sup>16</sup>

In point of fact, Ioan Biriș did not write a biography of the thinker Noica<sup>17</sup>, but considered that he should locate him exclusively (or at least predominantly) in the universe of ideas and in the world of his books, discovering many congruences between the thinking of the "loner from Păltiniș" and European philosophy.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> See also his other works such as Ioan Biriș, 2007 (1992), *Totalitate, sistem, holon* (Timișoara: Mirton Publishing House).

<sup>2</sup> See the monograph of Michael Jones, 2006, *The Methaphysics of Religion Lucian Blaga and contemporary Philosophy* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison).

<sup>3</sup> *Țara Zarandului- județul Arad* monograph, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ioan Biriș, 1996, *Istorie și cultură* (Cluj: Dacia).

<sup>5</sup> Ioan Biriș, 1996, *Istorie și cultură* (Cluj: Dacia). Ioan Biriș, 2019, "Este posibilă o logică ermineutică?" in *Constantin Noica- Holomeria simbolică* (București: Eikon): 257- 260.

<sup>6</sup> Ana Bazac, 2012, "Ioan Biriș repere și concepte", in *Noema*, vol XI, (București: Ed. Academiei).

<sup>7</sup> Ioan Biriș, "Cuvânt- înainte" in *Constantin Noica- Holomeria simbolică* (București: Eikon): 9.

<sup>8</sup> Numerous biographical references related to Noica can be found in *Jurnalul fericii*, where his friend Nicolae Steinhardt describes in detail the condemnation and sufferings of the Noica-Pillat group and states that Noica recommended the monastery "Sfânta Ana" from Rohia especially the peace and harmony of this monastic hearth, as well as the care and spiritual support of His Holiness Iustinian Chira Maramureșeanul. See also: Nicolae Steinhardt, 1992, *Jurnalul fericii* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia).

<sup>9</sup> Florea Lucaci, in the article "Noica sau despre o viață sub imperativul ideii " states that Noica belongs to philosophy and not to the world of human events (i.e., in the spirit of Plato's philosophy belongs to *essence and not to appearance*).

<sup>10</sup> See: Ioan Biriș, 2007, „Valențe ontice și logice ale raportului colectiv-distributiv la Lucian Blaga și D.D. Roșca” in *Lucian Blaga și D.D. Roșca – 110 ani de la naștere*, (Cluj: Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House).

<sup>11</sup> In a much rejoiced study written 100 years after the birth of the philosopher Constantin Noica, Prof. Konrad Klein mentioned that through Noica a whole generation of Romanian philosophers and men of culture "disciples and great admirers of his united in what we call the Păltiniș school were – and are influenced – by German idealism and Heidegger's existentialism. Konrad Klein, 2009, "Zum 100 Geburtstag des Rumaenischen Philosophen Constantin Noica", *Siebenburgische Zeitung*, July 25.

<sup>12</sup> The subject is extensively treated by the author in the work Ioan Biriș, 1996, *Istorie și cultură* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia); The subject is also treated tangentially in his work from 1996, *Raum und Zeit in der Gestaltung der kulturellen Mentalitaeten* (Space and time in the formation of cultural mentalities), Institut fur Philosophie, Logik und Wischenschaftstheorie, Muenchen.

<sup>13</sup> See Marta Petreu, 2011, *De la Junimea la Noica- studii de cultură românească* (Iași: Polirom).

<sup>14</sup> See also the study of Ioan Biriș, 2001, "Câmp și stil cultural la Blaga", Cluj-Napoca, May 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Constantin Noica, 1986, *Scrisori despre logica lui Hermes* (București: Ed. Cartea românească): 144-146.

<sup>16</sup> Ioan Biriș, "Postfață" în *Constantin Noica- Holomeria simbolică* (București: Eikon).

<sup>17</sup> A complete monograph was composed by Cornel Morariu, 2000, *Constantin Noica: monograph, annotated anthology and reception* (București: Ed. Aula).

## References:

Bazac, Ana. 2012. "Ioan Biriș repere și concepte". in Noema, vol. XI (București: Ed. Academiei).

Biriș, Ioan. 2007 (1992). *Totalitate, sistem, holon* (Timișoara: Mirton Publishing House).

Biriș, Ioan. 1996. *Istorie și cultură* (Cluj: Dacia).

Biriș, Ioan. 2019. "Este posibilă o logică ermineutică?" in *Constantin Noica- Holomeria simbolică* (București: Eikon): 257- 260.

Biriș, Ioan. 1996. *Raum und Zeit in der Gestaltung der kulturellen Mentalitaeten*, Institut fur Philosophie, Logik und Wischenschaftstheorie, Muenchen.

Biriș, Ioan. 2007. „Valențe ontice și logice ale raportului colectiv- distributiv la Lucian Blaga și D.D. Roșca" in *Lucian Blaga și D.D. Roșca – 110 ani de la naștere* (Cluj: Casa Cărții de Știință Publishing House).

Klein, Konrad. 2009. "Zum 100 Geburtstag des Rumaenischen Philosophen Constantin Noica". *Siebenburgische Zeitung*, July 25.



Jones, Michael. 2006. *The Methaphysics of Religion Lucian Blaga and contemporary Philosophy* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison).

Morariu, Cornel. 2000. *Constantin Noica: monograph, annotated anthology and reception* (București: Ed. Aula).

Petreu, Marta. 2011. *De la Junimea la Noica- studii de cultură românească* (Iași: Polirom).

Steinhardt, Nicolae. 1992. *Jurnalul fericirii* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia).