

# MARTOR



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Title: "Inwardness"

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How to cite this article: Șușară, Pavel. 2008. "Inwardness". *Martor* 13: 157-160.

Published by: *Editura MARTOR* (MARTOR Publishing House), *Muzeul Țăranului Român* (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

URL: <http://martor.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/archive/martor-13-2008/>

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*Martor* is indexed by EBSCO and CEEOL.

## Inwardness

Pavel Şuşară

In trying to contextualize **Nourishment**, the name of the two exhibitions hosted by the Peasant Museum as a whole, I must say that they could only be held in this place because of the pressure of precedent, of a subtle determinism which inevitably leads to museographic and spiritual constructions. This says a lot about the institutional structure we are part of, about its

style, about the type of thinking that generated it, about the attitude that made such reality possible. From this perspective, the name of the place known as the Museum of the Romanian Peasant seems to me to be somehow restrictive because the nature of the cultural projects unfolded here means more than particularizing or simply circumscribing a certain type of peasant,



whether or not he is Romanian, by a specific level of his historical, social, spiritual and moral existence.

I think that we rather find ourselves in a **museum of man**, in the deepest and most comprehensive meaning of the word that could encompass and represent any cultural space in the world. No matter if this museum is situated here or in Mexico, in Patagonia or in Canada, in the New World or in the ancient worlds, I believe that the existential reflexes captured and documented in its collections and exhibitions, which are spectacularly activated under our eyes and have affirmed man's integrity and coherence since day one, would be equally convincing and credible anywhere else, just as Grigore Leșe's music, for instance, could be placed in any traditional space, without seeming to be alien to it. Therefore, the first self-imposing statement is that we not only have to do with an identity segment as we generally understand the word, but also with an image of the substratum, with a dimension of primordial man in the full sense of the word.

From my point of view, this reality, this demonstration which, in the first place, is typical of the Museum and, in the second place, of the two exhibitions, reveal a fundamental aspect: our existence is only 5% material, external whereas the 95% left is a purely spiritual, moral one related to our inwardness. Our basic functions are almost insignificant, they hardly mean anything. The need for shelter is extremely scarce, the need for nourishment is very modest, the need for protective clothing is almost irrelevant. Inwardness means everything we add in order to make the whole complete, it means aspiration, a search for something. You can label that something in any way you wish: gnostic Absolute, the Christian God or any other name defining this transcendent, ultimate reality. The Peasant Museum and, implicitly, the two exhibitions display this very transgression of the immediate experience, of basic needs. It means looking up, jumping from the horizontal to the vertical

plane, but also looking back, from the austere space and sublime verticality to rich, baroque, and sensual horizontality.

As for the exhibitions, they are actually components of the same demonstration, they are two sequences of the same preoccupation. On the one hand, we deal with a redemptive journey of initiation represented by the permanent exhibition. It is an ascending journey, a route with fundamental stops like the Road to the Cross, as Mr. Paul Drogeanu said, which actually translate the interval between two crucial moments which are, after all, the only significant ones for the dynamics of our physical and symbolic existence. It stands for the distance between two absolute inner worlds, between the uterus and the grave, between birth and extinction, between coming into the world and the dissolution into elementary forms, which means an integration into the big Universe. All episodes connected with these two major moments are the very ceremonial whereby our existence makes sense, becomes significant and relevant in relation to our own existential awareness and to the others, to the world, to people, to the Absolute. Its inner ceremonial pursues a mystical-initiatic journey, the relation between day to day life and the absolute, between the underground world and the world above, between us and Heaven, between here and the afterworld. Nourishment becomes the vehicle of continuity, of existence beyond the visible and the invisible. On the one hand, nourishment ensures a kind of primary communication via a metabolic process, it makes its way from amorphous matter to structure, from inferior-ranked kingdoms to the celestial sublime and to what spirituality means. On the other hand, nourishment also means communication between the dead and the living, between the living and the paradisiacal space we crave for, at least theoretically and as a strong wish. Therefore, we are proposed an enlarged reading of our own being, a cosmic rhythm of the decisive moments of our existence.



The temporary exhibition also includes many levels and layers. It contains an ethnographic level, an objective level that is concurrent with an artistic level in the most accurate and true sense of the word. It is the level of pure expressiveness, of the object that communicates itself without any support or outside help. There is also a relationship between objects, the exhibits thus becoming an installation, a plastic perspective of an ensemble which becomes significant by junctions, by unmediated communication. Then we find the whole ensemble which means social life, community life that starts from the most different individual life experiences. We find characters, categories, *topoi*: the traveller, the host, the dining room or space, the feast of the dead, the celestial feast, the public house, the places where people meet, the places where people disappear or arrive. Thus, the structure of the exhibition is articulated on different levels even if, from the point of view of tactility, of sensory relationship, the exhibition is more conspicuous, more evident, closer to the idea of matter.

I believe that from all points of view, the two exhibitions also stand for a drastic sanction the Peasant Museum imposes on public space. In a world in which we shifted our focus on nourishment with all its connotations on to food as such, on to gregarious consumption, on to the ceremonial of a brutalized and aggressive daily life, the two exhibitions somehow put things in order and restore the foundation on which we should place ourselves in relation to ourselves, to social space, to public space in general. On the other hand, the exhibition is also a mystical, liturgical act, in the strictest sense of the word.

I cannot help confessing one of my major frustrations at this very moment, namely the absence of the person who acted as patron to this Museum, who initiated and trained this exemplary group of curators so that they were able to offer in their turn this event to us and to all potential visitors. I am obviously referring to Horia Bernea.

