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**Representation of heavenly couple in romanian
literature**

REPREZENTĂRI ALE CUPLULUI PARADISIAC
ÎN LITERATURA ROMÂNĂ

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The present paper aims to explore and to highlight the multiple meanings and symbols associated with the myth of the primordial couple, which is closely related to the myth of the androgynous being, using an original approach. The biblical and quranic texts regarding Adam and Eve are the starting point of this thesis. It is worth noting that the biblical and quranic texts that tell the story of Adam and Eve are rather short and, at a first glance, might appear simple, but in fact those rather short excerpts are exceedingly complex and abound in symbols, as the texts have several levels of interpretation.

The focus of this research follows the ways in which Adam and Eve are transformed in fictional characters that evolve along with the human society, and manage to adapt to the inherent changes. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, Adam and Eve manage to preserve their essence, turning into messengers of a mythical past, still relevant for the modern human, who is not ready yet to part with the ideal of true love.

Some of the **characteristics that define the authentic perspective of the present paper** are, first of all, the interdisciplinary approach (that weaves together mythological, anthropological, theological, sociological, philosophical, psychological, and scientific elements), used mostly for the first two chapters of the thesis. This approach that creates the ideal setting to exploit knowledge that belongs to various fields allows us to accurately contextualize the myth of the original couple, and the myth of the androgynous being, while presenting the parallel between the evolution of the human society and the humans' changing response to myths. These are all necessary steps that set the parameters for analyzing the portrayals of Adam and Eve in the selected literary works, while also providing the instruments that will allow us to connect the literary figures with all their particularities to the biblical and quranic figures.

Second of all, we consider that our research brings forward a series of novelty aspects while analyzing the selected literary works – for example, while dealing with the chosen creations belonging to the universal literature, we have identified and showcased several elements that are relevant in nowadays speeches regarding gender equality, sharing responsibilities in a modern couple, the rapport between partners, as well as the changes that redefine our social structures.

The main part of the thesis analyzes the myth of Adam and Eve in a series of literary works belonging to representative Romanian writers. For start, we pay attention to a selection of texts by Mihai Eminescu, process that highlights (aside from the usually mentioned aspects regarding the function of the natural environment) the relationship between the two types of energy – masculine, and feminine. Then, we stop to look at Liviu Rebreanu's novel, *Adam and Eve*, novel that is often either skipped when discussing the major works of the writer or treated in a superficial manner. The narrative does have a rather repetitive structure, but it does contain a multitude of interesting elements that enrich our knowledge regarding the primordial couple and its perception in literature. Our work does identify here several particular aspects – such as the revelatory function of the eye, that we also set in a wider spiritual context. We consider this ability of the protagonists to be associated as well with the concept of the third eye, popular in Hinduism, or with the pineal gland, the center of the soul in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. In addition, we also analyze the symbolism of the intercourse and its role in the reunification of the androgynous being, underlining that Rebreanu's heroes aspire to a perfect, complete love that binds together the spiritual and

the physical dimensions. In *Adam and Eve*, the desire to possess the other, the lust, as well as the physical act of making love do not diminish the magic that connects the soul mates, but in fact help amplify it. The intercourse has a ritualistic function that helps reunite the two halves of the androgyn, so that the two become one and, at least temporarily, experience the privilege state of happiness.

While analyzing Mircea Eliade's novel *The Snake*, we focus on the relationship between beings coming from different worlds, who find themselves on different spiritual levels, while following the methods they are able to use in order to communicate. We highlight the function of the game, and we also consider the states of dream, and trance, states that allow contact between the two dimensions of reality. In Eliade's *Marriage in Heaven*, we differentiate between the two distinct images of the woman, suggested even by the names used for her by the two men in her life. Here, we also deal with the ambivalence of love and sex, using the approach proposed by Julius Evola in his work *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex*.

The main reason we opted for the theme studied in the present paper was the multitude of symbols and implications associated with the original couple by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, incompletely revealed and therefore with a great potential for bringing forward new perspectives. Another argument for our choice is represented by the fact that we have not encountered a similar approach in the context of Romanian literary studies, which would follow the representations of the prototypal couple in literature, and the changes that continuously shaped the way we perceive this myth.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the depictions of the original couple in Romanian literature, while showcasing that the story of Adam and Eve has several level of interpretation, and can be read from different perspectives. We also highlight that the events that played a role in the evolution of Adam and Eve mirror in the same time the human's attempt of finding the right answers for some of the most deep, existential questions he has. Basically, we show that in literature the story of Adam and Eve has two major roles – on the one hand, it reflects the present into which Adam and Eve have been brought (by submitting the original myth to a series of changes that reflect the modern approach), and on the other hand, the two are a means of remembering and rediscovering a mythical past, the Golden Age of humankind.

The main objectives of the thesis are: contextualizing the myth of the primordial couple and investigating the myth of the androgynous being as well, as the two myths are closely related, using an interdisciplinary approach; studying the transformations Adam and Eve went through and the associated stages, while also analyzing the possible meanings and messages, as well as the major themes that can be identified in the biblical and quranic texts; using a set of clear and constant criteria for the selection of literary works analyzed in the paper – when selecting texts from the universal literature we have focused on creations that could prove the universal and prolific character of the proposed theme, as well as its adaptability, in order to foreshadow the chapters dedicated to depictions of the theme in Romanian literature; the Romanian literary creations have been selected so that they could show the evolution of some of the main aspects of the studied myth, the differences that shape the creators' vision.

The starting point of this research consists in the fact that the biblical myth is a prolific source of inspiration, most likely because the myth of the original couple deals with universal human aspects – it speaks about love in all its dimensions, about mistakes and their consequences, about sin and absolution. In the same time, the story of the original couple and their fall from grace might be seen as a metaphor for our evolution and growth as humans.

Regarding the research methodology and the methods used for the study, we mention the extensive research effort, that went beyond the fields of literature and theology, as we have studied the philosophical, mythological, anthropological (just to mention a few) dimensions of the myth of Adam and Eve, in order to find the necessary answers to our questions (some of which we have anticipated, while some have arisen while researching the proposed subject). We also deal with some of the essential concepts used in the biblical and quranic texts regarding Adam and Eve, because without a clear definition of these concepts we could not dive into a deeper analysis of the topic we have chosen. For example, we have explained from the beginning what *ish*, *isha* or *adamah* (words used in the original texts) mean in order to avoid later confusions or misunderstandings. Therefore, the present paper has a theoretical part, that has an extremely important role in setting the parameters for the study of the literary creations selected.

We underline here that the choice of literary works included in the paper also aims to demonstrate that the theme of this research has always been one of particular interest for writers (and not only for them). Also, our work shows the ways in which the perception on the original couple has changed in time, while highlighting that the story of Adam and Eve opens itself to a multitude of possible interpretations (as this might be the reason for our never ending fascination with this myth). In order to develop our original hypothesis in as clear approach as possible, we chose to analyze the literary creations in chronological order, based on their publication date. This method has also allowed us to offer a more structured view of the conclusions resulted, and to better showcase the particularities identified.

In our research we have also utilized textual and contextual analysis methods (in order to create the background for this paper, and to set the context), and we have also used comparative analysis techniques (in order to identify the resemblances, as well as the differences between the elements of interest), while trying to maintain a clear, concise, and systematic approach of the chosen subject.

The scientific and methodological support for this paper is based on a multitude of studies, some belonging to Romanian experts, while the others are written by foreign specialists, such as: Gheorghe Glodeanu, Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ștefan Borbély, Mircea Eliade, Terry Mortenson, Umberto Eco, Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, Jean Libis, Ivan Evseev, Victor Kernbach, Jean Libis or Michel Philippe Laroche.

This thesis consists of six chapters (each ending with a part meant for conclusions), preceded by an **Introduction**, and followed by a section dedicated to our **Final assessment**.

In **Introduction**, we present the subject of this research – depictions and symbols of the myth of the original couple in Romanian literature, while introducing some of the multiple layers of interpretation and meaning associated with the chosen theme and pointing to the interdisciplinary approach of our study.

The first chapter of this thesis, **The perfect love and the paradisiacal places. Universal nostalgia**, aims to present, from an interdisciplinary perspective (that weaves together data from anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and science) a series of aspects, such as the relationship between man and myth or the changes that influence the role of the rites and rituals. This chapter also sets the wider context for the myths of the original couple and of the androgynous being, while creating a parallel between the story of Adam and Eve as seen in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. As one cannot discuss the story of the original couple without referencing the original space they were placed in, the Garden of Eden, we also discuss here the various depictions of the paradise, differentiating between terrestrial and heavenly paradises (and those that are in between). We also take note of the man's obsession with recovering a paradisiacal place translated in the imaginary geographies created, and in the efforts of discovering a terrestrial paradise – this is the reason that stands behind some of the most famous voyages of the Middle Ages.

The sub-chapter **From the origin of man to the original couple** is a journey into the myths that the human have fabricated in order to explain their own origin stories, therefore these myths reflect the man's perception of the divinity, as well as showing how the individual sees himself, the rights and responsibilities he thinks were granted to him, and most importantly the man's perception of happiness. We include here a possible classification of myths, referencing Martha Weigle's vision as presented in her book *Creation and Procreation: Feminist Reflections on Mythologies of Cosmogony and Parturition*. We also underline in this sub-chapter that we cannot fully comprehend the man's universal nostalgia for perfect love and paradise-like places without a wider perspective on the myths concerning the origin of man and his position in the universe.

The first subsection, *The human being – clay and breath of life*, deals with one of the most known anthropogenic myths, the one according to which the human was made out of clay by the divinity and received the divinity's breath of life. This myth can be identified with some nuances in the Christian, Judaic, and Islamic traditions, but it is also present in the Amerindian and Maya cultures, in the beliefs of some tribes from Africa and New Guinea, and in a great array of mythologies, such as Greek, Egyptian, Hindu, Hawaiian, and Chinese. We look here at the creation of the man in Judaism (including texts from the rabbinic literature), Christianity, and Islam, while also including some relevant examples from the great mythologies of the world. Some of the examples selected regard Enki (the Sumerian god of water, fertility, knowledge, creation, and crafts) and Ninmah (also known as Damagalnuna, goddess of fertility and mountains) from the Sumerian mythology, Nuwa (mother goddess, sister and wife of emperor god Fuxi) from the Chinese mythology or Parvati (goddess of fertility, love, marriage, and children) in the Hindu mythology.

The second subsection, *The myth of the androgynous being. Forms and representations*, deals with the meanings of this concept that is essential to our research. First, we

differentiate between two concepts - *androgyn* and *hermaphrodite*, that are considered to be similar, but that are bearing completely different implications, in order to avoid future confusions. We look here at Plato's vision of the androgynous being, and we also analyze definitions and theories regarding the androgynous being as stated by specialists such as Mircea Eliade, Carl Gustav Jung, Ivan Evseev, Carmen Dărăbuș, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Karen Massetti – Miller or June Singer.

The third subsection, *Adam and Eve in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* analyzes the particularities of the original couple in the three traditions. This subsection brings the necessary explanations regarding some of the concepts used in the paper (such as *ish*, *isha*, *adamah*, *Adam*) and follows the narrative about the creation of Adam and Eve, while also discussing the androgynous character of the first man and woman.

The second sub-chapter, **Representations of the Paradise**, defines the notion of *paradise* and studies the role played by this image in the collective mentality. The first subsection, *The Paradise of the afterlife. Terrestrial paradises. Juxtapositions* presents a series of paradisiacal spaces as described in the mythologies of the world, while also looking at their characteristics. Of course, the biblical and quranic paradises receive special attention. The second subsection, *In search of the lost paradise*, shows how the humans' obsession with paradisiacal places offered the perfect pretext for creating an entire imaginary geography. Also, the need to recover such an idealized place led to numerous expeditions in search of terrestrial paradises.

The second chapter of our paper, **The paradisiacal couple. Stages**, is focused on Adam and Eve, the biblical figures that are a symbol of true, eternal love, but also a pretext for all the attempts made to attain such an extraordinary ideal. We analyze here the stages the couple goes through, highlighting the fact that the biblical narrative touches some major themes and can be perceived as a starting point for discussions regarding the divinity, the relationship between man and God, knowledge and methods of obtaining it, responsibility and irresponsibility, love, unity, fulfillment in and with each other, challenges and ways to overcome them.

The first sub-chapter, **Adam and Eve. Perfect harmony**, focuses on the initial state of the original couple, before their disobedience, as well as on their connection with the myth of the androgyn, the being in which both the masculine and the feminine coexist. We take note here that the first chapter of the Genesis states that God created the human being both male and female. This man who does not have a name yet is lonely.

We also analyze the nudity of Adam and Eve (detail that will be included in some of the literary works as well), as well as aspects such as: the creation of man by God and the symbols and implications of this action, the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam together with the possible meanings, the tasks and the responsibilities of the original couple. We also show that the biblical narrative of the first humans is different on several levels from that presented in the Mesopotamian myths, for example, in which the man is just a servant of the gods, he is inferior, has no power whatsoever, and is deeply affected by the difficulties of day to day life. The Christian version brings forward a man that is placed on a superior position, one that is close to that of the angels. God shows His generosity to Adam

and Eve by placing them not in the wild, but in a garden that has been designed for them, so as to fulfill their needs. Adam and Eve are privileged, and have everything they might need within reach.

The second sub-chapter, **On the original sin**, analyzes the event that will trigger a complete shift of the paradigm. After all, the sin committed by Adam and Eve does not have strictly individual implications, but it has consequences that affect the entire humankind. We take a look here at the possible roles of the interdiction set by God, two of the most discussed being God's attempt to protect the man from things he was not yet ready for, and respectively God's attempt to consolidate the relationship between man and divinity. We also deal with the symbols associated with the tree from the center of the garden and the symbols of the forbidden fruit, the function of the snake and the temptation itself, the role played by Eve in the fall of man.

The third sub-chapter, **Adam and Eve. The burden of sin**, considers the new state of the original couple and its implications. We highlight here that neither Adam or Eve from the Christian and Judaic traditions do not ask for forgiveness, nor do they seem to regret their deed. Therefore the two seem to be well set on their way to receive the punishment of the divinity. The punishment they receive will create a greater unbalance between the man and the woman, the sexual act itself, necessary in order to produce offspring (to create life), become a confrontation of the two forces, masculine and feminine. It is also suggested that the woman's desire to procreate offers the man an opportunity to show his domination, implying therefore that the two sexes are not equal.

In the third chapter of the paper, **Adam and Eve in the universal literature. Highlights**, we talk about the ways in which the literature proves how ingrained the myth of Adam and Eve is in the collective mentality of the humans, underlining that some aspects stay the same. The search for the perfect love and the challenges that arise while looking for it, paradisiacal spaces and the cursed earth, the human condition, the differences between the two sexes, obedience and independence, temptation, errors and punishment, as well as the long road to salvation and forgiveness are complex aspects that can be identified in the biblical narrative.

The biblical fragment often exploited in literature is extremely versatile, as the same story shows various possible approaches regarding the human condition, and none of the existent interpretations can completely explain, without any trace of doubt, the story of Adam and Eve. Nevertheless, we might state that the narrative of Adam and Eve is an instrument that offers us the possibility of understanding that the human being, while far from God, is still part of the divinity, and the literary works included here support this hypothesis.

The first sub-chapter, **John Milton – Paradise lost**, analyzes the text published, most likely, in 1662, considered to be one of the greatest epic poems in the universal literature. Here, we focus on the perception and role of Eve as representative for her gender. Milton did not intend to offend women, but his manner of describing Eve, her characteristics and her role in the story, reflect the manner in which women were perceived in those times.

According to Milton, the woman was created as mate for Adam, but the two are not seen as equals. Eve is of a superior beauty, but overall she is inferior to Adam, her greatest weakness being her vanity (she falls in love with her own image). Adam is described as intelligent, pensive, and spiritual. He is the one that gently leads, while the woman obeys. Despite these differences, Adam and Eve seem to find happiness together, and there is also hope for their salvation. Adam considers their fall to be a *felix culpa* through which God can show His love, His mercy, and His willingness to forgive.

The second sub-chapter, **Imre Madách- *The tragedy of man***, deals with one of the representative dramas for the Hungarian culture. The Hungarian author, like Milton, creates an ambitious poem that abounds in exquisite details. The poem presents the creation and the fall of man, as well as the role played by Lucifer in the entire string of events. While in Milton's vision Eve is to blame for the fall of man, the Hungarian author's vision shows that Lucifer tempts both Adam and Eve, using their weaknesses against them – her vanity, and his pride. In *The tragedy of man*, both decide to disobey God's command, as Eve does not act on her own, but asks for Adam's advice.

We also note that the Hungarian poem tries to depict the relationship between the two sexes without idealizing it and without ignoring its downsides. Although imperfect, Adam and Eve's relationship is complex and harmonious in its own way.

The third sub-chapter, **William Butler Yeats - *Adam's Curse***, analyzes the poem mentioned in the title, a creation that focuses on the condition of love and beauty after the fall of man from his privileged state. In Yeats' poem, the main consequence of the original sin is that everything beautiful on earth, especially the art, requires extensive efforts. In other words, nothing worthy can exist without hard work. The title of the poem offers the key to decoding the text. Although there is just one mention of the first man in the selected text, the poem is centered on the consequences of the fall and, implicitly, of the punishment that fell not only on Adam and Eve, but also on the generations that came after them. Art, beauty, love, and work are the topics of a profound dialogue that also includes a declaration of love, one that is unrequited.

The fourth sub-chapter, **Mark Twain - *The diaries of Adam and Eve***, brings a different perspective regarding the myth of the original couple. Twain's narrative is slightly ironic and presents in a rather funny way the evolution of Adam and Eve's relationship – starting with the creation of the woman, going through their life together inside and outside the garden of Eden, and ending with her death. The American author's narrative is often seen as offering a different perspective to Milton's *Paradise lost*.

In Twain's vision, Adam and Eve's life in the garden of Eden is defined by a warm hearted teasing between the two, that learn to live together. For them, the fall does not represent a catastrophic event, but a change of state. Their new human condition is a long sequence of lessons, adjustments, discoveries, failures and successes.

The author seems to suggest that one can discover the purpose of life only through perseverance, acceptance of failures, and the ability of turning failures into life lessons.

In time, once the two go through life together and become parents, it becomes more and more obvious that Adam and Eve truly are soul mates, sharing a love that is complete and

perfect. Through their love, the two manage to preserve some of the heavenly happiness they had prior to their fall. Therefore, they are happy and still innocent, while their mortality only makes them experience everything in a more intense way.

The fourth chapter of the present paper, **Recreating the primordial couple in Eminescu's perspective**, states that one cannot discuss the myth of the androgynous being as that of the prototypical couple as depicted in Romanian literature without taking into consideration Mihai Eminescu's major contributions to the theme. In the Romanian writer's works, the theme of the original couple is often used in various forms, as the writer follows how the lover try to find their way towards each other, and the stages they go through to fulfill their love. Their ultimate goal is to recreate in a symbolic way the androgynous being and to recover a lost paradise (of course, not all the attempts are successful).

The first sub-chapter, **Interdependent energies: masculine and feminine**, shows that in the literary works of Mihai Eminescu, love is often discussed from the perspective of a dual ego – one that is torn between love and reason. The two types of energy correspond to the way the author perceives the characteristics of the sexes. The masculine voice is that of reason, while the feminine one is that of sensibility. Eminescu manages to capture the complementarity of the two sexes, and the way they seem to harmonize when all the requirements are fulfilled. The man and the woman have opposing particularities, but somehow, all their differences find a point of perfect equilibrium. When both the woman and the man go through the necessary steps, everything that separates them transform, and their differences actually bring them together, because one has what the other needs.

The second sub-chapter, **Exiled in Paradise**, bring forward the fact that in Eminescu's works, the lovers can become one only after distancing themselves from those around them, attitude that is common among the Romantic writers. Therefore, he and she must give up on the city, for example, and return to a simpler life. While living in a community, the lovers must obey the rules imposed by the society, therefore they cannot truly express their love. Among others, their interactions can only be formal and limited, but once they embrace the life in a natural environment these barriers are canceled.

In Eminescu's vision, the natural environment symbolizes the recovery of a paradisiacal place, where everything is in perfect harmony, as every little detail is meant to create intimacy and to protect the lovers from outside intrusions.

The fifth chapter of this thesis, **Adam and Eve. A love that transcends death**, analyzes Liviu Rebreanu's novel *Adam and Eve*. The protagonists of the narrative glide between love and death as the two forces work to radically transform their lives. The lovers are deeply aware of the risks that come with trying to be together, but they would rather embrace death than give up on each other. Their love is one that goes beyond reason and pragmatism, so the lovers are ready to challenge the rigid social rules no matter the consequences. Their feelings are not influenced by status, politics or riches, as their love is a grain of the love shared by the two first humans.

The sub-chapter called **The myth of reincarnation. Roles** analyzes this myth that is at the center of Rebreanu's novel. Rebreanu, similar to Eminescu in some of his short stories, follows the changes of a soul that goes through several deaths and rebirths, exiting and entering the human life. Rebreanu focuses here on the one element that stays the same despite all the other changes – that is the irresistible attraction between two soul mates, as well as the ways in which love can shape one's entire existence.

We come to the conclusion that in the novel the myth of reincarnation has two major roles: first, this theory allows the writer to highlight the power of true love, that even transcends death, a characteristic of the two halves that form the androgynous being; second, as stated in the very beginning of the novel, the purpose to which the characters aspire is so great and so complex that one life on earth is not enough to reach it. Additionally, by using this myth in the construction of the novel, the author has the opportunity to take his readers on a journey through various times and places in the history of man.

In the second sub-chapter, **The revealing eye**, we show that in this novel the man and the woman that keep looking for each other through time and space are deeply connected to one another. The two soul mates can basically recognize each other in an instant, once their eyes meet. Their sight is one that reveals their true self, the constant that cannot be changed by death. From the very first moment they lay eyes upon each other they know who they are and that they must be together no matter what. They do not have to exchange words, because what happens between them is far superior, going far beyond the immediate reality.

This special ability of the protagonists allows them to see beyond what normally meets the eye, and reminds us of the symbolism associated with the third eye. This third eye is normally thought to symbolize intuition, wisdom, and spiritual enlightening. The two eyes perceive the surface of people and things, while the third eye, also known as the eye of the mind or the internal eye, has access to things that our senses cannot read. Therefore, we can state that the main characters in this novel are special individuals, connected to their inner self, capable of seeing beyond the material world.

The sixth chapter of the paper, **Searching for the perfect love in Mircea Eliade's prose**, focuses on two of Mircea Eliade's novels, *The snake* and *Marriage in Heaven*, as both of them are built around the theme of looking for one's perfect half. Eliade's vision, love has a strong gnostic function; love is the force that can generate major ontological transformations when all the required steps are taken. Also, love allows individuals to escape the passage of time, by symbolically recreating the androgynous being. We take note here of the resemblances between Eminescu's prose and Eliade's *The snake*, especially when it comes to the myth of the androgyne, that Eliade uses to depict the primordial completeness of the world.

The first sub-chapter, *The snake*, analyzes the novel that tells us the story on extra-ordinary love, in which the two lovers come from different worlds and together they start on a journey of discovery and self-discovery, that takes place on background that abounds in hidden symbols. The man and the woman start from different levels of spiritual evolution – Andronic is the master that comes from a mystical reality, the one who would take the role

of the guide, while Dorina is the novice, and she will embark on a confusing and even perilous journey in order to adapt to the man's world. In the end, the two will become one, and they will recreate the original couple and the privileged position they had before their fall.

The first part of this sub-chapter, *Dorina and Andronic. Lovers from different worlds*, we show that Dorina Solomon and Sergiu Andronic come from different worlds, and their experiences represent a journey towards each other, that has multiple meanings – Dorina is looking for love and the young woman will go through a series of challenges that will ultimately change who she is, while Andronic finally finds his bride.

We analyze here the characteristic of the two lovers, underlining the meaning of the girl's last name (wizard, warlock). Dorina is somehow different from the girls her age, because in a time when girls aspired to get married as soon as possible, she is interested in continuing her education, in discovering new things and expanding her knowledge, and less interested in starting a family. These details all show the young woman has qualities that suggest she is ready for out of the ordinary experiences.

Andronic is on a superior spiritual level, he is connected to the mythical dimension of the reality, but he is also a man looking for his soul mate. From the very beginning, it becomes clear that everything Andronic says has a deeper meaning, and his words can be interpreted from a double perspective. From afar, his speech might seem common, superficial, but in fact there are hidden meanings (that might elude a less perceptive reader).

Together, Dorina and Andronic are two halves that truly belong together, and their connection will become more obvious with every little step they take towards each other. In the same time, the lovers have something magical and fairy like, remembering us of Prince Charming and his Sleeping Beauty (seeing that some of Dorina's journey takes place in her sleep).

The next section of this sub-chapter, *Experiencing the magical reality through game, trance, dream*, analyzes the unusual experiences of the characters, city dwellers that will be confronted with challenges that will take them outside of their comfort zone. They will go through a series of events that allow them to take note of the sacred side of the reality: the game, the trance, and the ream, as these are mediums that open to the common individual the gates of an extraordinary world. Nevertheless, these experiences do not guarantee one's spiritual evolution, because the end result is extremely subjective.

The characters experience unusual things; they become confused, and have difficulties understanding what is happening to them. As the narrative progresses, they can hardly distinguish between what is real and what is imaginary.

The third section, *The snake*, analyzes the symbolism of the snake in Eliade's novel. The creature has a multitude of mythological significations – the snake is a symbol of wisdom, fertility, immortality, and of rebirth, but in the same time it symbolizes treason, deception, evil. Therefore it is a dual creature, characteristic that is highlighted by the fact that a snake's venom is both poison and cure.

From Eliade's perspective, the snake is a symbol of regeneration, and fertility, associated with the aquatic element. In his opinion, the snake is not an evil creature, and has none of the characteristics of the biblical snake.

The fourth section of this sub-chapter, *Another Euthanasius' symbol*, focuses on the references to Eminescu's *Cezara* that can be identified in Eliade's novel. The finale shows Dorina Solomon and Sergiu Andronic, sleeping naked, next to each other, on the island, while the sun rises. This depiction of the two lovers is an obvious reference to Eminescu's narrative, but there are other similarities too – such as the two male character, Ieronim și Andronic, set on a higher spiritual level, completely different from all those around them, aspiring to ideals that are higher than those of the common man. When it comes to the women, both Cezara and Dorina must go through a series of challenging experiences in order to be united with their partners.

The second sub-chapter, *Marriage in heaven*, analyzes the novel written by Eliade in extremely difficult conditions. The narrative consists of two profound and personal confessions – basically, two men that are in the woods, hunting, start talking about their one great love. Their confessions happen at night, a time that has special meaning, because the dark brings out secrets; the night and the darkness associated diminish one's sight, but it enhances the intuition. The love stories shared by the men do not have a happy ending, but it is obvious that these experiences impacted the lives of the two men. Once they have experienced such a pure love, they cannot back to who they previously were. It turns out they were talking about the same woman, but each of them remembers her in a different way. Ileana/Lena dies and they never meet again, but the men still feel nostalgic about her, aware that they have been granted a miraculous encounter. Mavrodin will try to save some of the magic by writing a book based on his one true love story.

The first section of this sub-chapter, *Lena/ Ileana*, analyzes the two sides of the same woman. The reader gets to know her only through the confessions of the two men, but it becomes clear that she represents a chance to a love so great that it might have helped them transcend their condition. To both Mavrodin and Hasnaș, the woman is an instrument of self-discovery, and an opportunity to get in touch with the mythical dimension of the reality.

The second part, *The ambivalence of the Eros*, analyzes the contradictory feelings Andrei Mavrodin has, as he is torn between the love for Ileana and the passion for writing. Andrei is a passionate writer, in love with his creative vocation, and he feels like he needs to stay alone in order to focus on his talent. He is both in love with the woman and with writing, so he feels that dedicating his time to one means betraying the other – being in a relationship means to him that he is betraying his destiny, but in the same time he feels he cannot give up on the woman. Julius Evola discusses this exact type up erotic ambivalence, in which the individual feels torn between love and what he perceives to be his purpose in life.

In our **Final assessment** we conclude that Adam and Eve as literary character do not get stuck in just one historical point. They manage not only to survive, but to reinvent themselves while remaining important. The myth of the prototypical couple does not lose its

meaning, but in time there are new and new layers of symbols added to it. Adam and Eve still carry a powerful message, that speaks about love and hope, mistakes and forgiveness, and that can still touch the modern man, no matter his spiritual attitude.