
TALKING ABOUT THE “OTHER WORLD”. “OUR” CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND “MY” HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Iveta Todorova-Pirgova

51

IZVLEČEK

Razprava o “drugem svetu”. “Naši” konceptualni modeli in “moje” človeške izkušnje

Avtorica bo v članku pisala o “drugem svetu” iz dveh zornih kotov. Prvi zorni kot se nanaša na skupno dojetanje (v lokalni skupnosti) in pojmovanje prostora, strukture in prebivalcev “drugega sveta”, kot tudi na odnose med njegovimi prebivalci in tistimi iz “našega sveta”. Pogled iz drugega zornega kota se bo prav tako nanašal na iste ideje, vendar iz osebnega vidika. V drugem delu članka bo avtorica analizirala nekatere biografske zgodbe, ki govorijo o srečanjih z “drugo stranjo”. Interpretirala bo primere dveh vrst takšnih zgodb:

a) zgodb o poti na “drugi svet” v budnosti in spanju;

b) zgodb o sanjah, kjer nekdo iz “drugega sveta” pride povedat, kaj je tam videl.

Očitno je, da človeška bitja želijo reproducirati stare ideje in podobe, da bi humanizirala prostorske strukture in jih približala svojemu načinu dojetanja in čustvom. Na ta način osmišljajo prostor. “Senzibilen prostor” je lahko vtisnjen v specifične kulturne fenomene in je lahko povezan z osebno usodo.

Ključne besede: verovanja, “drugi svet”, čudeži, zgodbe, izkušnje

Key words: beliefs, “the world beyond”, miracles, stories, experiences

What we designate as notions, beliefs, concepts or images in folklore is part and parcel of the conceptual model of this type of culture. However, a fundamental specificity of the model is the fact that its basic ideas are not formulated in any particular way and that they have no derivative written correlates that are products of the culture itself. These ideas underlie the numerous folklore phenomena and the mechanisms through which they operate. They have various faces and assume diverse appearances, insofar as they are shaped by different types of cultural situations. Their primary meaning always goes together with a host of additional meanings required by the people, who use them in one case or another.

The research concepts of folklore beliefs, notions and images are the outcome of an analytical folklore structure, created by comparing and generalising invariant cultural

forms. This is done as a part of the endeavour to describe theoretically the folklore conceptual model and to grasp the recurrent, i.e. the typical in the reasoning and behaviour of the individual, who carries the folklore culture. And from a particular point of time onwards a paradox, maybe a natural one, occurs: the link with that individual is severed, and the object of the culture that is observed and analysed is alienated from its subject.

That is how we acquired numerous descriptions of “the world beyond”, classified as “inherited knowledge” or “traditional ideas”, which can be most generally qualified as “reflecting” both the idea of the horizontal division of the world into two parts (“here” and “there”) and its vertical division into three parts (“here”, “up” and “down”). Moreover, it can be said that “the upper world” (Paradise) and “the lower world” (Hell), combined in the generic idea of “the world beyond”, are inhabited by the souls of deceased people, by various demonic characters, as well as by saints, angels, God and Satan. They are partially, yet elaborately described in different folklore texts: stories, legends, songs, etc. They are projected in ritual practices and painted on diverse objects.

In an attempt “to impart a human face” to the folklore analysis, I am willing to seek **the projection of the world “beyond”** - in a specific type of texts - those known as **biographic narratives**. I have been driven by the following specific motives: on the one hand, to seek the dimensions of the human presence in the concrete presentation of definite cultural conceptions, and, on the other hand, to view their marginality in the context of cultures of varying orders. For they are topical even nowadays, when folklore culture is no more the dominant type of a culture and they can still be heard in our contemporary cultural surroundings.

Biographical narratives per se are “texts, where the link between the entities and objects of folklore culture seems to be most immediately and clearly manifested. Moreover, they are valuable both with the information on the cultural processes and phenomena they carry and with the representation of the specific culture carriers - as narrators and/or characters in these stories”.¹ They constitute a real-life story, which is a product of the respective type of a culture, yet they seem to highlight its specific characteristics externally.

What are the major peculiarities of the biographic narratives recounting stories about “the world beyond”?

These peculiarities can be derived from **the specificity of the event that is narrated**:

- a. a narrative about a visit (dreamt about or real) to the “world beyond”, or
- b. a narrative about a meeting (meetings) (again dreamt about or real) represented as a personal experience.

It becomes immediately clear that we are talking about an event of a peculiar dual nature. On the one hand, it is unusual (and in some cases perceived as a miracle)², and on

¹ Elchinova, M. The Autobiographical Accounts as a Self-Representation (Avtobiografichnijat Razkaz kato Samopredstavjane) - In: Journal of Bulgarian Folklore, 1994, N 6, p. 17.

² Georgieva, A. When God was walking the Earth (Kogato Gospod Hodеше po Zemjata), Sofia, 1993, pp. 13-14.

the other hand, it is a fact in someone’s biography, a part of someone’s fate in life. This seems to explain the existence of numerous dual characteristics of this type of narratives.

We can therefore regard this type of stories as texts with intertwining “inherited knowledge (acquired through education in the community culture)” and “personal experience” (gained through its individual rationalisation in the context of the unique human destiny), elements of the conceptual model and the ideas generalising the individual life-time experience of the respective narrator. It is also possible to trace the individual history of the phenomenon that is being described within the specifically selected strategy of self-presentation of the personality.³ The narrative is both a sign and human presence, insofar as it refers us to the more general ideas, allowing its adequate understanding, and at the same time it involves us in the process of their personality socialisation. It can use both the language of symbols and the language of everyday life in order to make “the world beyond” both comprehensible and accessible to the listener in sensory and imagery terms.

Summing it up, **the event that is recounted is both a miracle and personal experience.** And this also determines the specificity of the way in which it is discussed.

I shall dwell on **two types of biographic narratives dealing with the “world beyond”**:

1. Narratives about transfers to “the world to come” - either in a dream or in one’s waking hours.
2. Narratives, where someone “from out there” comes to recount what he saw.

At that I shall focus less on the very description of the “next world” and more on the effects of the occurrence on the person and the community they belong to.

Perhaps it is important to begin by noting that most often the first type of stories cannot be told to everybody. A singular event frequently involves singular personalities. I use “singular personalities” to mean people of extraordinary talents and skills. These abilities of theirs distinguish them from the other members of the community, but at the same time they constitute a significant means for maintaining the community integrity. For the participants in most of the transfer narratives are those called “living saints”⁴ sorceresses, magicians, fortune-tellers, etc. The “living saints” are often healers and clairvoyants as well, but they are even more than that - they are more directly bound up with the religious doctrines and the miracles related to their lives and activities and they have their correlates in the passions of most of the Christian saints⁵. The consequences of the transportation to “the world beyond” are very important both for the community and for the individual person. On the one hand, the narrative reinforces certain knowledge about the “the world to come” acquired by them and confirms or modifies the rules of the relationship with it. On the other

³ Elchinova, M. Op. cit, pp. 22-23.

⁴ Izmirlijeva V., P. Ivanov, St. Stojna from the Village of Sushica (Sushishkata svetica Sojna) - In: Journal of Bulgarian Folklore, 1990, N 3, pp. 75-95.

⁵ This is especially of Christians because the Muslim versions of the same phenomena are a little different.

hand, the belief in what has been experienced and the awareness of its significance affect considerably the life of the person taking part in this singular event. Quite often the transfer itself is the way in which they acquire or reinforce their magic healing power; at the moment of the transfer a specific contact with the personal patron saint is created or confirmed.

Here are some instances of concrete transfer stories:

Example 1:

God endows a man with a healing talent by transferring him to “the next world”

54 In his young years a now old man once “died” and ever since he has been casting spells. This is how it happened:

He died and his soul ascended. While he was up there, he saw how a priest was summoned, how his body was laid in a coffin and how his wife lamented for him. And all the time he lay motionless in the coffin. There were a lot of flowers in the coffin. Candles were lit for him and people came along to eat and drink for the peace of his soul. Meanwhile his soul went to Heaven. There was a lot of light and young children in white clothing there. Then Christ came up to him and told him to go back to the earth for He would endow him with the gift to cure people of “any pain”. The old man followed his advice and went back. And as he rose in the coffin, everybody was scared, but when he told them what had happened, he won their deep respect and they came over to him from all kinds of places to ask his advice.⁶

Example 2:

Saint Spas endows a woman with the power to cure people by transferring her to “the world beyond”

An old woman already knew a lot of incantations that she had learnt from two sorceresses - one of them came from her native village, and the other one from her husband’s village. But she had not put her skills to practice yet.

Once, as she fell asleep, she dreamt of a high ladder. She started climbing it. There was fog on both sides of her. As she reached the highest point, she suddenly saw intensive light and St. Spas appeared before her. He told her that it was Paradise, but that it was not yet the right time for her to go there. He instructed her to go down again, because he would endow her with a “power” and from that day onwards she would be able to cure people. She came back and, indeed, as she woke up she felt that she could apply her knowledge. She believes that the power helps her work magic - “I have already brought death to three people, but I shall bring death to all of them, for they hate me!” She thinks that St. Spas and St. Mina are her patrons and makes a personal vow on their days. She kneads ceremonial bread and gives out pieces of it believing that this will bring her success. Moreover, in her view, St. Spas is not Jesus Christ but some other saint, while St. Mina is a female saint.⁷

⁶ Todorova-Pirgova, I. Magic Rituals (Bajanija i Magii), Monograph research and described rituals, is being printed.

⁷ Todorova-Pirgova, I. Op. cit.

Example 3:

Acquisition of a talent and a possibility to see "the world beyond" bestowed by Allah and the angels

The gift can be conferred on you both when you are asleep and when you are awake. The angels come. If you look this way, and if you have read the Koran or other things a lot, you will see something - like an animal or a human being. If you know a lot, if you believe in Allah and if you have a good heart, something comes here, out of the wall. As you turn back and look over your right shoulder, you will see it. It shows if the person will recover from the illness or not. It shows everything to you.

(What is it you see?) An angel. But it is not Jibrail (Gabriel). Some other angel, sent to you by Allah. It comes and says to you, "I am so-and-so. You are a faithful person. I shall be helping you. You believe in Allah. If you are in trouble, prey to me and I will come." You remember what it looks like and then you know. And you do whatever it tells you. It whispers things to you, but only you can hear them. It can be seen as a shadow on the wall and a voice can be heard. And whatever it says, you tell to the person that has come to you - about a disease, or about something that will happen to them, about everything. Good or bad. If it is bad, it says, "Don't tell fortune to this one." If it will not work, it tells me that I should not try to heal the person at all. There are some people that come to me to hear about their fortune (the old man tells everybody's fortune according to the Koran); but others say: "Forget about it, they are lying to you. Don't go there." It tells you. You know immediately. And you do not tell anything to such a person, and you do not cure them. It appears like this, when matters are more important. Not every time. If it is about trifles, it doesn't come. These are subtle things, very subtle things that cannot be done by everybody. It says, for example, that you should not tell a person the day of their death. You know, but you do not tell...

They can appear when you are awake, too. Most often it shows up as a human being. It looks like a human being and it tells you: "You will do this and that. If you have great difficulties, you will call me" (How will you call it?). With a prayer and it will come immediately, it will come right away. Even if it is away, at the other end of the world, it comes. It is a spirit. As you call it, it immediately comes out of the wall. Like now, you are looking at this sick person, aren't you?! And you cannot understand what he has. You say a prayer to it. You look aside, and you can see it in the wall. And it tells you. The shadow comes out and only you can see it. The others cannot. You ask it nothing, because it already knows what you are calling it for and it tells you.

If the believer is an imam, a nice, kind-hearted imam, he can call it in the mosque. It immediately appears on the wall. It can come out of any wall and say what it needs to say.

(And can the believer go to "the world beyond" while alive? - I. T.) The person can sometimes be taken there by the angels while asleep. If he believes strongly and he is a man of Allah, this is possible. They show it to him as a picture - it is very beautiful, a real miracle, just to look on and wonder... There was someone here, who was telling how he went there and what a wonder it was - greenery, waters, beauty ... and light all over ... So

one can go there, but then he comes back, for the right time has not yet come for him. But this is not something that anybody can do. It is ... well, it is not for everybody ...⁸

Example 4:

Acquisition of a healing gift bestowed by Allah and a glimpse at the “world to come” in a dream

She saw the actions as her grandma performed them. She is the sixth generation of sorceresses in her family, but the prayer was told to her by Allah himself in her sleep. He appeared to her one night, wearing a white shirt and a black mantle, he stood there, all wrapped up in something green. He told her that from that night onwards she could cast lead in the form of bullets to cure frightened people and tell fortunes over beans.

56

Prior to that moment she had problems with her eyes and she frequently fell asleep unexpectedly. Then, after her very first case of lead casting, her unexpected dozing off vanished, and later on, gradually, after each new person, for whom she cast lead, her eyes improved. Allah appeared to her when she was 50.

She happened to see what was out there just once. She could not remember who had taken her there, but she was asleep and as she woke up suddenly, she found herself at a very beautiful spot. There were beautiful people in white clothes and a lot of greenery around her. She realised she was in Paradise and she thought she had died and she had gone there for good but she woke up in her bed. She became aware that Allah only showed it to her and then brought her back, because she had more days to spend on Earth. She believes that Allah cannot be addressed by just anybody with the request to show them Paradise but only selected people can do so. Allah chooses them by himself. It depends on the will of Allah rather than on the will of people.⁹

Example 5:

A visit to Paradise by reverend Stoina

“As the nun fainted, they say she went to Paradise, where God is. It was a lot of people there. Big tables. There was a lot to eat and drink before them, and those who had done evil things were looking on at the end of the table and there was nothing in front of them.”¹⁰

The narratives about dreams related to the topic under review also reinforce the inherited knowledge and the community-shared notions and beliefs. However, they also provide an opportunity for a secondary interpretation, which can lead to a change in the details of certain types of ritual practices. To put it differently, this type of narratives are one of the sources of variance in local ritual tradition. In this case reference can be made most generally to:

- dreams related to “the world beyond” which consolidate knowledge or ritual practices and

⁸ Todorova-Pirgova, I. Op. cit.

⁹ Todorova-Pirgova, I. Op. cit.

¹⁰ Izmirlieva V., P. Ivanov, Op. cit, p. 80.

- dreams, related to “the world beyond”, which change some elements of knowledge or ritual practices.

Examples of the first type of dreams:

Example 6:

Giving out clothes during a funeral for the wedding of a lass and a lad in “the world to come”

A boy died and his mother dreamt that her son instructed her to find bridal clothes and decorations. Then she was to go to a certain village and take them there, because there was a bride for him there. “A bride will come over to me”, he said. The mother did so. As she reached the end of the village, mentioned by her son, she saw that a lass had died and that her funeral was on that same day. The mother left the finery for her, because she realised that the lass and her son were going to get married in the world beyond. That is why her son had instructed her to bring them.¹¹

57

Example 7:

The news about baptising always reaches “the world beyond”

Now, an officer had a girl. And the girl died and they were about to bury her. But the officer fell asleep and dreamt that he went to the “other” world. And he reached a garden. It was a thorny garden and not a very pretty one. Many girls played there and he asked them: “Hey, haven’t you seen my girl play here? Isn’t she with you?” And they replied: “We are the girls that haven’t been baptised, and those that have been baptised are over there, in the more beautiful garden.” And he went on and on in his dream and he reached that garden. And he saw his girl there. And he asked her: “Why are you here, my girl, if you are not baptised? You are not baptised, are you? Yet you are here.” And she said: “Daddy, I am baptised. Granny had me baptised and she put my baptismal certificate in the trunk, on the bottom of Granny’s trunk. Go there, lift the lid and you will find it.” And he came back, and he went up to the trunk and opened it and found the certificate on its bottom. Yet, before that he thought that his child was not baptised. And then he had another child and he had it immediately baptised.¹²

Example 8:

A dream about “the world beyond”, which shows why at memorial services food and drinks should be given not to relatives, but only to aliens.

Now, the girl of my sister-in-law died. She was three. And as we give out food and drinks and clothes on the 40th day, after 6 months, after a year, and after a year and a half... my sister-in-law also served food and drinks. But whatever she gave out, she served it to her relatives. She gave clothes to the cousin of the dead girl, because the two children were of the same age. So far, so good. But one day her neighbour had a dream. She dreamt about my mother-in-law (she is also dead), who told her, “Parashke-

¹¹ Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, recorded in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria (hereinafter rec.) in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

¹² Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, recorded in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria (hereinafter rec.) in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

va, go and tell Pena (my sister-in-law) to open the gate because I cannot enter their home. I went to their house and I knocked and I knocked but nobody opened up. I cannot go in. Tell her that Kolcheto goes about half naked, that all she wears is a pair of torn trousers.” Thus she had this dream for two days and on the third one she went to the woman and told her what she had dreamt. But she said: “But I did give out clothes.” And the third night she had the same dream in the same way, and as my mother-in-law came, the woman told her: “Well, she gave out clothes for Kolcheto, why does she go about half naked and in torn clothing?” And my mother-in-law told her: “She gave them for her, but she gave them out to a relative and they do not reach her here. Let her give out clothing quickly, for Kolcheto goes about half naked and feels cold.” And ... I don’t know if she gave them out later or not ... I don’t know.¹³

Examples of the second type of dreams:

Example 9:

Pomana (a ritual involving giving out food, drinks and objects for the dead) can be given out until 5 p.m.

My grandmother used to say that pomana is given out only until noon. And everybody tries to do so - to give out everything till noon. But now I know that it can be done later - till 5 p.m. For this is what my father said. I dreamt about him as he died. My father came to me in my dream and he said: “Rahelo, you don’t have to hurry, because the Chief, that is God, calls us and gives us pomanas at 5 o’clock, it is at 5 o’clock that he gathers us to give us the pomanas. Whatever arrives till that time, he gives it to us.” Whatever you give out, it immediately gets there (in the world beyond). So... Because my father told me so and ...¹⁴

Example 10:

Why are clothes given out on St. Peter’s Day and not at Rousalya

A woman’s father visited her in her dreams. He had died in hospital merely in his underwear. And she dreamt that he was sitting in the world beyond with nothing on but his underwear. He was sitting under a tree and his clothes were at his feet. “Why do you sit like this, why don’t you wear the clothes I gave you during the pomana?” “Well, you gave me clothes but that was at Rousalya, and Rousalya goes about and kicks them at my feet. I cannot wear them and all the time Rousalya kicks them like this, like this. Why didn’t you give them to me on St. Peter’s Day, for on St. Peter’s Day St. Peter and St. Paul take us to the red apple and they dress us and then they give us the clothes from pomana.” So, you get it, don’t you? Clothes should not be given out at Rousalya, but only on St. Peter’s Day, so that the person can wear them. Because Rousalya kicks them, while St. Peter and St. Paul already give these clothes to be worn.¹⁵

¹³ Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N92, rec. in Krivnja, Razgrad region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova.

¹⁴ Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, I, rec. in Gumzovo, Vidin region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdačić.

¹⁵ Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, I, rec. in Gumzovo, Vidin region, Bulgaria in 1990 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdačić.

Both types of narratives (about transfers and about dreams) refer to the "world beyond", but their emphasis is different. In both cases the effects influence both individual and community being. The life of the individual man is changed (particularly in the cases of newly acquired talents and skills), but the destiny of the people, who benefit from them also changes. The impact on local culture is manifested both in the possibility for additional explanations and interpretations and in the change of the elements of the tradition in accordance with the newly acquired "direct" knowledge "from above".

In all cases, however, what is known as "a belief in the world beyond" is personified and related to one's life and fate. This fact sustains the viability of the belief and enables us to assess its significance for human thinking and behaviour since ancient times. The belief becomes an element of the personality culture and a regulator of the everyday and ritual behaviour. It is encompassed in the individual views about the world through its relationship with the personal biography.

The event that is recounted is not only important for the lives of the participants in it, but in a certain sense it distinguishes them from the community and in this case we observe how the community-shared views are reinforced by shifting the emphasis to individual experience and through it. Thus the self-presentation of the personality takes place through certain opposition to the community.

Thus the participation in the exceptional event links the individual with the community through the shared notion, yet, it separates him from it through the unique personal experience.

These two different accents balance up the personality/community dichotomy and convert the narratives under consideration into a natural semantic bridge linking cultures of various types. That is why we also find such narratives in the context of the modern urban cultural environment - they are once again vivid, effective and meeting the old human need to peep in the world "beyond". In a sense, even nowadays the participants in the events are extraordinary people - people, who are believed to have acquired peculiar talents and skills "from above".

An extremely illustrative example is that of the modern urban dwellers with extraordinary sensory skills, who often recount their experience with the door to "what lies beyond" that was set ajar: what they saw there and how this sight influenced their further healing or clairvoyant practices. Naturally the descriptions of the "next world" differ from those narrated in traditional rural culture but the narrative situation and the underlying semantic orientation are quite similar. For the principal ideas - the idea of space divisible in terms of meaning and axiology, the idea of life after death, the idea of a contact with the non-men "from out there" - remain unchanged. Words differ but their meaning is transformed only as much as it should be in order to be in harmony with the specificity of the culture in whose context these narratives emerge and exist.

Here are two examples as an illustration:

Example 11:*A visit to the “world beyond” with a spiritual leader*

“My Leader, for example, was born during the “Golden Age”, you may have heard about it ... It was the very first age during which people lived on the Earth. And it lasted for many, many years - many more than any other one that followed. And one day he took me there to see how people lived in his time, when he himself was a man like us. Currently they are all just energy substances but at that time they were people - like me and you. (How did he take you there? - I. T.) Well, it was very interesting. One afternoon, as I was sitting and thinking about some problems of mine, I heard his voice telling me that he wanted to take me for a walk. And all of a sudden I felt as if I was asleep and dreaming. It was a mental journey, you understand, don't you? (And what did you see there? - I. T.) Oh, many things. How can I describe it to you?! First and foremost, everything was lit up. Very intensive light. And people, coming towards me. They were all kind of lit up and tall, dressed in white clothes. And most of them were smiling at me. I somehow felt that they were happy to see me. And I still remember this feeling of happiness. A man and a woman came to meet me - later on he explained to me that they were his parents. They took me for a walk in some gardens but they did not talk to me. Everything was green and there were those wonderful flowers. There were some varieties that I had never seen in my life. They are probably extinct. I saw no houses, but probably they have some. We walked along a path along a river but there was not much time, because I had to go back.”¹⁶

Example 12:*Descriptions of the single Space, where the human world is but a small part.*

There are planets, such as the Earth, but there are also astral, mental and etheric planets. Astral planets turn around us and rotate in the direction from the Earth to the Sun. The souls of our dead dwell there. Mental and etheric planets are located on a higher energy level. We constitute heavy energy, while they constitute lighter, finer energy ... The planet Earth is alive, it is a living organism and it is also struggling to climb to the higher mental level. When our intelligence is upgraded and our energy becomes lighter, we shall help it move up ... Space has its centre and a periphery. We are located in the external coat, but it is also in the form of a spiral and we are in the first curves. The purest and most supreme energy is in the Centre, in the smallest curves - that is God - God the Father and God the Son.”¹⁷ - “The whole world consists of four Universes, each Universe is made up of 41 Galaxies, and each Galaxy comprises billions of planets and suns ... Everything is governed by the Big Mind - God.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Todorova-Pirgova, I., “Golden Age” in the Human History (“Zlatnijat vek v choveshkata istorija”) - In: Journal of Arts, 1996, N 4, p. 26

¹⁷ Archives of the Institute of Folklore - BAS I, N118, II (interview with the same person of extraordinary sensory abilities - Petranka Mariyanova Petrova - born in 1949, trade - zootechnics) recorded (hereinafter rec.) in 1994 by I. Todorova-Pirgova and D. Ajdačić.

¹⁸ A letter to the Editorial Office of the “Psycho Plus” newspaper from 1994.

- "Since last year I came to know several extra-terrestrial civilisations. It took place by way of telepathy ... There are 12 levels in the Universe, and our knowledge reaches as far as the fourth one."¹⁹

- "I dreamt that I was standing in front of the entire Universe. It is like an enormous colour circle, it vanishes in the distance and pulsates ..."²⁰

- "The Mother Planet is a living organism belonging to the common living Universe. It breathes, it gets energy and information from the Mother Universe." And "the Soul of the Earth is located in its centre and it is about 32 meters big. This is a shaft of energy of approximately the same size as that of the archangels, with just a few different characteristics. The Soul of the Earth has its own tasks, as well as any other creation of God ..."²¹

Obviously it will take a while before men can reconcile himself with a description of spatial structures that is indiscernible from a Newtonian perspective and in the meantime they will continue to reproduce the old images and ideas by means of which they make it more human and bring it closer to their perceptions; to make it a part of local cultural manifestations and to link it to important moments of their own personal fate.

BESEDA O AVTORICI

Iveta Todorova-Pirgova, dr., je docentka na Oddelku za slovanske študije na Univerzi Svetega Klimenta Ohridskega v Sofiji. Njene raziskave segajo na področje obredov, magičnih dejanj na Balkanu, religije, folklore, kulture in identitete.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Iveta Todorova-Pirgova, Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. at the Slavic Department at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky". Her research interests are in the field of ritual performance, magic practices in the Balkans, religion and folklore, culture and identity.

¹⁹ P. Dimitrova. *The Supernatural (Svruhestestvenoto)*. Sofia 1992 (a letter from Russe), p. 17.

²⁰ P. Dimitrova. *The Supernatural (Svruhestestvenoto)*. Sofia 1992 (a letter from Stara Zagora), p. 17.

²¹ A letter to the Editorial Office of the "Psycho Plus" newspaper from 1993 and "Seed from Universe knowledge" (Recorded by M. Jovanović and M. Reić). Belgrade 1993, issue #1, p. 88.
