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**Critica civilizației române moderne. Orizont antimodern în cultura română între 1848 și
1948**

Summary

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CRITIQUE OF ROMANIAN MODERN CIVILIZATION. ANTI-MODERN HORIZON IN
ROMANIAN CULTURE BETWEEN 1848 AND 1948

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The theme of the modernization of Romanian society is one that retains its relevance. Moreover, we could say it is the fundamental theme of Romanian history of the last two centuries. "Modernization" and "Westernization" have become synonymous terms denoting practically the same reality. The process which began in the first half of the nineteenth century has forever changed the face of the Romanian society. We could say, in truth, that it was an attempt to introduce a new civilization in the Romanian space.

Of course, there was also a reaction to this process. A widespread critical reaction, an anti-modern reaction. It is obvious that the topic is controversial. The ideologised, partisan approaches abound, or those applying to the period improper evaluation criteria. The difficulty of the attempt to reconstruct a mental universe of a specific era, with its own values and criteria is quite clear. We shall try to come as close as possible to the creation of this Romanian critical anti-modern spirit, not judge it in terms of the value criteria of the present, and not to condemn a priori the approach of the thinkers whose creative work we shall analyze. We consider it necessary to return the Romanian anti-modern critical spirit to its own context as much as possible, of course. It is ultimately natural to try to judge a spiritual approach by its own measure and its own intentions. This does not mean, of course, occultation of the negative aspects, slippages, errors, but simply trying to look at this spiritual universe from a different angle.

The empathic immersion in a world completely bygone that we shall try has, naturally, its limitations. In addition, it is about a current of ideas, as well as an emotional current of which we are separated by the barrier of historical catastrophes like World War II or the communist regime instauration. These events have destroyed the very world these spiritual creations belonged to, and therefore the apparent closeness to us in time is misleading. The spiritual, emotional distance is enormous. Consequently, it will take a true work of "spiritual archaeology" that will try to reconstruct the fragments which have come down to us as creations of the critical, anti-modern spirit in a coherent entirety.

Regarding the current state of research in relation to our theme there is a rich bibliography related to the "critical spirit" generally regarded, although not necessarily associated with the anti-modern reaction. We mention, among others, Garabet Ibrăileanu's

classic work "The Critical Spirit in Romanian Culture"¹, then the work of Mr. Alexandru Zub "From the critical history to criticism ..."², "*Convorbiri literare* and the critical spirit" by Pompiliu Marcea³, "From the self-orientation instinct to critical spirit focused on local tradition"⁴ by Peter Caraman or "The critical discourse" by Alexandru Piru⁵, Nicolae Isar "The Romanian Principalities during Enlightenment: (1770-1830), the culture of critical spirit, the genesis of the national idea"⁶. As for the anti-modern or related to conservatism critical spirit we mention the work of Ioan Stanomir "The conservative spirit. From Barbu Catargiu to Nicolae Iorga"⁷ where the analysis is applied to the conservative spirit related to political conservatism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, without including what we have called radical-conservatism.

We also mention the work of Oana Soare "Modernity and anti-modern reactions in Romanian culture"⁸. The work, greatly indebted to the work of Antoine Compagnon "The Anti-modernists: From Joseph de Maistre to Roland Barthes"⁹, applies the concept of "anti-modern" of the latter to the Romanian cultural space. In short, "anti-modern", understood by Compagnon in a rather diffuse way, refusing the doctrinal crystallization, infers the rejection of the Enlightenment postulates and distancing both from modernism itself, and from traditionalism. The "anti-modern" of Compagnon differs from the traditionalist in the sense that it has no more direct contact with the pre-modern tradition, but is defined by opposition to modernity. Soare applies this concept in the Romanian space to thinkers such as, surprisingly, Camil Petrescu or Vladimir Streinu or, in some sense, even to E. Lovinescu. Obviously, Maiorescu has a central position in Soare's analysis, as well as his relationship with Eminescu and Caragiale. Our view links the "anti-modernism" in the Romanian space to what we have called "radical-conservatism". The same differs from the conservative junimist liberalism and cannot be attributed even to Eminescu and Iorga: they were critics of the

¹ Garabet Ibrăileanu, *Spiritul critic în cultura română*, Bucharest: Editura Litera Internațional, 2011.

² Alexandru Zub, *De la istoria critică la criticism. Istoriografia română la finele secolului XIX și începutul secolului XX*, Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985.

³ Pompiliu Marcea, *Convorbiri literare și spiritul critic*, Editura Minerva, Bucharest 1972.

⁴ Petru Caraman, *De la instinctul de autoorientare la spiritul critic axat pe tradiția autohtonă*, Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, edition tended by Ovidiu Bîrlea, 1994.

⁵ Alexandru Piru, *Discursul critic*, Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1987.

⁶ Nicolae Isar, *Principatele Române în Epoca Luminilor : (1770-1830), cultura spiritului critic, geneza ideii naționale*, Bucharest:Editura Universității din București, 1999, 2nd Edition revised and expanded, 2005.

⁷ Ioan Stanomir, *Spiritul conservator. De la Barbu Catargiu la Nicolae Iorga*, București: Editura Curtea Veche, 2008.

⁸ Oana Soare, *Modernitate și reacții antimoderne în cultura română*, București: Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2013.

⁹ Antoine Compagnon, *Antimodernii: De la Joseph de Maistre la Roland Barthes*, Translation by Irina Mavrodin and Adina Dinițoiu, Buharest Editura Art, 2008.

Romanian space modernization, but not of modernity itself (the first truly "anti-modern" thinker is A.C. Popovici). We believe, unlike O. Soare, that the notion of "anti-modernism" in the Romanian cultural space differs substantially from that of Compagnon, marked by the peculiarities of the French cultural space: the tradition of an Old Regime remains as an indisputable cultural background, even if it is not experienced directly anymore. We shall see that the lack of such a cultural landmark and of a cultivated tradition in the Romanian space will make the Romanian radical conservative anti-modernists like Crainic, Nae Ionescu, Vulcănescu or Eliade to reach the idea of a conservatism turned paradoxically towards the future, to protect the future Romanian culture which was at that time in a potential-stage.

We can refer also to the volume coordinated by Sorin Antohi "Modernism and anti-modernism. New interdisciplinary perspectives"¹⁰ of which we mention the study of Sorin Alexandrescu "Modernism and anti-modernism. Again, the Romanian case"¹¹. Alexandrescu uses also the notion of Compagnon and tries a classification of the Romanian interwar intellectuals along the modernism-anti-modernism fracture line. He believes Crainic or Nae Ionescu were closer to traditionalism, while genuine anti-modernists in the sense of Compagnon would be Eliade, Cioran, Vulcănescu or Blaga. Our view is different in that the Romanian "traditionalism" is itself something completely different from the French, one that puts, as I said, emphasis paradoxically more on the future than on the past, in the absence of a cultural tradition equivalent to the Western one. We believe, therefore, that the takeover of a conceptual model indebted to the French cultural space is not appropriate for the Romanian cultural space.

We mention also the study by Adrian Jicu "The Anti-modernists Eminescu and Caragiale"¹² (as I said, we believe, however, that the two are critics of Romanian modernization, and not critics of modernity itself) or that of Oanei Soare "Paradoxes of a (false) traditionalist spirit. Was G. Ibrăileanu an anti-modern spirit?"¹³ Also, we can refer the volume "Looking back, the modernity" by Sorin Alexandrescu, where it is also treated,

¹⁰ Sorin Antohi(coordonator), *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, Bucharest: Editura Cuvântul, 2008.

¹¹ Sorin Alexandrescu, *Modernism și antimodernism. Din nou, cazul românesc.*, in the volume coordinated by Sorin Antohi *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, Bucharest: Editura Cuvântul, 2008, pp. 103-159.

¹² Adrian Jicu, *Antimodernii Eminescu și Caragiale*, în *Philologica Jassyensia*, Year VIII, No.2(16), 2012, pp. 65-75.

¹³ Oana Soare, *Paradoxurile unui spirit (fals) tradiționalist. A fost G. Ibrăileanu un spirit antimodern?*, în *Philologica Jassyensia*, Year VII, No. 2(14), 2011, pp. 141-151.

among other things, the theme of the conservative spirit and of the opposition to modernity¹⁴. The interest for the modern Romanian civilization criticism, for the anti-modern horizon, suscitated different views, the angles of analysis and historical sources being anchored according to the questionnaire of each researcher.

The process of modernization and Westernization of Romania that began in the nineteenth century and continued in the twentieth century was one of great complexity that could but cause a variety of reactions. The criticism of this process, in the different forms it took in that period, was fundamentally influenced by the context, paradoxical to some extent, of this modernizing process as by the preceding situation thereto.

In the first chapter we have tried to discuss the Westernization process, which could not have started except due to a direct contact of the society representatives and of the Romanian elite with the Western realities, and the inferiority complex deeply felt, for example, by a Dinicu Golescu confronted with such realities. The stunned reaction of the same, his admiration, the desire to transplant the achievements of the West into the Romanian space, would also characterize the "bonjour-ist" generation of students in the years 1830-1840, gaining a collective dimension. No reality in the principalities of those times seemed to be able to withstand the comparison made with the West. Everything seemed less, worth changing: language, political institutions, clothing, lifestyle. It is a normal psychological reaction at first instance, deeply influenced by the youth of the "bonjour-ists". The enthusiasm and little critical spirit specific for this age, and the size of the "conflict between generations" have certainly contributed to this. There was, of course, a "prehistory" of Westernization marked by the Transylvanian School phenomenon, which had important echoes also in the Carpathian space, especially in Wallachia (Muntenia) through personalities such as Gheorghe Lazăr, and, on the other hand, also by the mediated contact with Western ideas through the Greek filter, especially towards the end of the Phanariot period. The emphasis on Latin language put by the Transylvanian scholars and the artificial "purge" of the language of non-Latin elements, would constitute a vulnerable side to criticism. In the Principalities (especially in Wallachia) to this "Latinization" of the language has been added the "Frenchization" or the "Italianization" of language, which, in a first phase, would isolate from the rest of society the "bonjour-ists" which would become "forty-eighters".

¹⁴ S. Alexandrescu, *Privind înapoi, modernitatea*, Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1999

A key dimension of the Westernization process was given by the political situation in the Principalities in the period between 1821 and 1848. The influences of Western political ideas, especially of those during the French Revolution, were immediately associated with the desire to free the Principalities from the Turkish suzerainty and the Russian "protectorate", the latter often manifesting itself as more oppressive, especially after the adoption of the Organic Regulations. Therefore, while the old state of affairs was invariably associated with foreign ruling, it was hard to coagulate during this period, as in the one until to the Union of the Principalities, a critical current in the socio-political sense of the novel Western trends and ideas. They were synonymous with the desire for liberation from the Ottoman and Tsarist double yoke. Until around 1859 the priority remained the achievement of the Union and freedom aspirations, and it was clear that the status quo up to that point had been unfavourable to the appearance of a critical intellectual current of the westernization process. The boyars class opposition, intellectually non-systemized, seemed to reflect only the narrow interests of a privileged class, and could be equated, to the limit, even with complicity to foreign rule, although, in reality, things were certainly more complicated. The urgency of these political projects overshadowed the critical trends during this period, channelling them especially in the language and literature domain. According to Garabet Ibrăileanu, the first genuine manifestation of the "critical spirit" takes place not with Junimea, but right in this period, focusing, in truth, on the excesses of Latinism in language (and also on those attempting to artificially Frenchize or Italianize the language, in the latter Eliade Rădulescu excelling), or on the criticism of the mass of poor quality literary "products" arising from the desire to imitate the trends in the West at any cost. Representatives of this critique are, somewhat paradoxically at first glance, representatives of the "forty-eighty movement (pașoptism)" like Alecu Russo, Costache Negruzzi, Mihail Kogălniceanu or even Vasile Alecsandri, whose later association with Junimea turns out to be just not a simple coincidence. A precursor of this trend had somewhat been Gheorghe Asachi, a personality difficult to classify, with a confusing position between "old" and "new". Noteworthy is the emergence of this trend especially in Moldova, where the almost complete lack of elements of incipient bourgeoisie of indigenous origin, made the representatives of the gentry (boyars) (a class attached to the past, with a more developed sense of language, and for these reasons prone to manifest a more developed critical sense to the new than, for example, the representatives of Wallachian townspeople) be the only representatives of Westernization, one somehow protected from the imitation excesses in Wallachia or the Transylvanians' language excesses.

Even since the Revolution of 1848, one could determine the existence of a large rupture between the westernized intellectuals and the rural strata they basically wanted to help. To the instinctively - "reactionary" opposition of the "retentionists (tombatere)" was added the lack of reaction of the majority of the peasantry, who did not even understand what the fiery speeches of the revolutionists were about, as often they were peppered with neologisms that could in no way contribute to decrease such distance. It already became quite clear, after the experiences of 1848 (especially in Wallachia), that modernization would be a very long and difficult process, and adopting enthusiastic proclamations would not be sufficient for the modern ideas to become reality. Even inside the revolutionaries' camp, some of the former ardent followers of these ideas would evolve towards "reactionary" positions, an illustrious example being Eliade-Rădulescu, the shock of the contact between ideas imported from the West and the less encouraging realities, from that perspective, in the Principalities playing an essential role in this respect. Indeed, how can one make a bourgeois democratic revolution without bourgeoisie? It was clear that the first issue to be solved was the national problem, one presenting a broad consensus, and after that one could discuss also the social problem, which, actually at that time, summarized only the "rural problem" due to the very low number of ethnically Romanian bourgeoisie. Despite the attempts of Ibrăileanu to argue that "the forty-eighty movement (pașoptism)" was not a mere transposition of ideas "developed" on Western "ground" in the Romanian context, a context where they momentarily could not take off, it seems clear to us that these Westernizing ideological currents did not represent some real social and economic interests, at least at the time of the revolution of 1848 and the following period. It was basically only a thin layer of intellectuals coming primarily from small and medium gentry which substituted in an artificial way a local bourgeoisie, which only existed to a very small extent, especially in Wallachia. It is a common phenomenon for the Central and South-Eastern Europe where the "intelligentsia" takes over the role of a non-existent or poorly developed bourgeoisie in the modernization process. The peasantry was completely cut off from all these due to illiteracy and lack of any social consciousness. It would certainly be unfair to entirely consider the forty-eighty movement (pașoptism) a completely artificial movement, as later did its critics. What was genuine and representative was precisely the national dimension, the desire to remove foreign ruling, and here indeed, the ideas taken from the West were the only way these aspirations diffusely present since the Phanariot century could be articulated coherently, in truth, from the positions marked by the specific class interests of the boyars. Here the forty-eighty movement (pașoptism) articulated and voiced, in a new Western garment, a truly real longing, that of

shaking off the double foreign yoke, which was possible only with the help of the West, as it even happened after the Crimean War. Out of the programs and wishes of the Revolution of 1848, it would be precisely this, the national one, which would fulfil, the social side being a much more complicated one and depending upon realities very hard to change in a short time.

In the second chapter we have tried to analyse the intellectual critique of „Junimea”. After the Union and after introducing the institutional, political, cultural "forms" specific to a modern state without those finding correspondences in the realities of the Romanian society (at least at the time of their introduction) a natural step was the extension of criticism from aspects related to the language and the aesthetic to those of the entire socio-political fabric which was just forming. Once fulfilled the national desire that I have mentioned, the horizon was free for a major critical approach. It was the time of "Junimea", in other words, of the unrelenting criticism of Titu Maiorescu and his generation colleagues P.P. Carp, Theodor Rosetti, Vasile Pogor or Iacob Negruzzi. The Junimist Criticism of "forms without substance" was the first articulated form of Romanian conservatism, ideologically different from the somewhat instinctive conservatism of the big landowners, one marked by clear class interests which continued in the context changed after the Union, and after the introduction of new "forms", older tendencies specific to the Regulations and even Phanariot period (following the line of boyars' petitions in the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next, aiming at a factual ideal of an "aristocratic republic" in fact if not in name, trends that have partly found echo in the Organic Regulations, the result of a compromise between the interests of the Russian protecting power, of the suzeran Ottoman one, and of this privileged class) . Titu Maiorescu attacks on the socio-political level the new "forms without substance" introduced in the Romanian space after 1859, noting their lack of rootedness in Romanian realities and their character of pure "imitation" of the West. Deeply influenced by the European conservatism in general and the German one in particular, formed in the atmosphere of reflux of revolutionary and liberal ideas after 1848, supporter of an evolutionary view (one marked by the idea of "small steps", opposing sudden changes brought by appropriations such as transplanting "forms" devoid of any connection to the Romanian "substance"), Maiorescu and his Junimist colleagues regarded the transformations brought by the creation of the modern Romanian state from the perspective of European conservatism. Here we are touching a key issue, the great deadlock of Romanian conservatism, as understood ideologically. The European conservatism, whether we talk about the intransigent "reactionarism" of extreme catholic legitimists like Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald or later Donoso Cortes, or about the moderate conservatism of Edmund Burke, about the one in

the German space dominated by characters like Justus Moser, Friedrich von Gentz, Metternich's adviser, the Baron von Stein, Friedrich Julius Stahl et al, the European conservatism attacks rationalism in politics.

It was the specific tendency of liberalism to transform according to abstract principles a living, organic reality from the perspective of secular traditions, of a socio-political structure whose "irrational" forms from liberal perspective were validated by a living experience, were confirmed by a historical reality that had little to do with generous theory lacking historical sense and a deep connection with reality. It has been rightly observed at Maiorescu and the Junimists the exclusive negative nature of their critique, otherwise pertinent, regarding the introduction of new "forms" and the lack of positive alternatives for such process. The Junimists speak to satiety of "forms without substance" and rightly so, but avoided answering a crucial question: "what is the Romanian substance on whose behalf they attack the new introduced forms?". Their attack against "forms without substance" is not made on behalf of a native tradition that did not seem to be of any importance to them (the Maiorescian sentence against the Romanian past briefly send off as "Oriental barbarism" says it all), but in the name of a liberal-conservative European ideology with its benchmark in an idealized England, as the radical liberals revolutionism has its model in the France of the Revolution. Both versions miss local reference, an interpretation of the events following the modernization from the perspective of local traditions or internal value system, however precarious. Thus, viewed from such a perspective, Junimism appears as little anchored in Romanian realities as the so criticized radical liberalism. Proposing English answers to Romanian questions, the Junimists merely repeat in their own way the radical liberals fundamental fault: the lack of adequacy to local realities. The liberal-conservative Junimist project is mined from within by this inconsistency. They propose a value system imported from the English space as the radical liberals proposed theirs, indebted to the French radicalism. An ideological vision as the Junimist one, limited to privileging attitudes such as moderation, evolutionism or gradualism, one that leaves completely suspended the tradition theme, fundamental to any conservatism, was bound to generate after it attempts to consider this essential factor. Eminescu himself will not be an exception, trying to introduce this obscured element of tradition in his ideological view, one that will visibly differ from the Junimist paradigm.¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. Sorin Alexandrescu, *Privind înapoi, modernitatea*, Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1999, pp. 47-91.

Contrary to the model of European conservatism, here the critical spirit in its classic Junimist form did not manifest as an expression of authentic traditions, as a defensive reaction of the same, but initially having the same Western intellectual origins as the object of its criticism, has later autonomised artificially, becoming a reality in itself. As he spoke of the "autonomy of the aesthetic", Maiorescu could have also spoken with equal justification regarding Junimist key trends of "critical spirit autonomy". Thus, the "critical spirit" preceded, paradoxically, through junimism the attempt to claim and own authentic local (rural, of course) tradition.

Maiorescu and Carp were eminently pragmatic spirits, less interested in explaining such an aporia. However, what strikes us in their attitude remains the total absence of any positive references to any local tradition, a reference compulsory for any European conservative from the nineteenth century, be it even liberal-conservative.

The third chapter tries to analyze the fundamental political attitudes of Eminescu and Caragiale. The key issue left in suspension by junimism will be resumed in the political thinking of Eminescu, the first to try in a specific way to define this Romanian "substance" the Junimists had said nothing about. His association with the Junimists is rather contextual than one of substance. His passionate nature did not match with the cold scepticism, marked by pervasive irony of Maiorescu and the other Junimists. As for the Junimists, still, the starting point for Eminescu is criticism. A devastating, vituperating visceral criticism of the realities of modern Romania. The landscape painted by Eminescu in his publicistic writing is apocalyptic. It would seem that the only beneficiaries of modernization are the so-called "superposed classes", "budgetivorous", following the introduction of institutions that have no rooting in the Romanian space. For Eminescu the authentic Romanian "substance" resides in an idealized past, without foreigners, such as "Greek - Bulgarians", Jews, ("red") liberals, bourgeoisie (which was beginning to appear in his time), a pre-Phanariot past in which the boyars and the peasants lived together in harmony under the benevolent guidance of the Prince (Eminescu remained adherent of absolute monarchy, a strange position for that time). For Eminescu, the peasant is the authentic Romanian, but he does not fall into an excessive ruralism: he also speaks warmly on behalf of the craftsmen ruined by the early capitalism, of the guild members, in a word of what he calls the "productive classes" that he opposes to the "superposed classes", which produce nothing but piles of paper and endless meaningless verbal emissions. Eminescu's conservatism gets out of the thin, refined, and sceptical air, essentially Western of "Junimea" to step determinedly in the "street", among the "people", but is still far

from being exclusively rural. However, the process of "search for the Romanian substance" begins with him.

The Achilles' heel of Eminescu's approach lies still in the lack of solutions. To the degraded present and "superposed classes" he opposes only a paradisiacal vision of a past in which "social harmony" chaired by a benevolent Prince came to life. If the Junimist had left the matter of past and tradition completely suspended, Eminescu resorts in an authentic romantic style to the compensatory refuge in a mythical past. A critique of Romanian modernization should have also passed in advance through a criticism of modernity itself. Eminescu's determined reaction to the Romanian modernization anomalies is not doubled by a critique of the foundations of Western modernity itself. It is true that a nineteenth century dominated by the obsession of progress and by positivism did not facilitate such an approach. This is visible also in the absence of a religious foundation of his critique. His passionate nationalism certainly amounted to a deep religious feeling, but it was an insufficient basis to surpass a defensive, areligious position, tributary indeed to the vicissitudes of the nineteenth century. Eminescu remained a formidable critic of the Romanian modernization, but not one of the modernity as a whole. Only the interwar radical-conservatives will take this decisive step.

Caragiale, despite appearances, has much in common with Eminescu in his political view. As Ibrăileanu noted, the vitriolic, mordant attack against the slum with upstarting interests, against the same "superposed class" with its entire "political" fair, with all its demagogy stops at the village. The sketch, satire, comedy is limited to the motley city, the village being the only one in Caragiale's work considered worthy of being represented in drama ("Năpasta (the Misery)" or the short stories "Păcat (Sin)", "În vreme de război (In time of war)", "O făclie de Paști (A torch on Easter)"). The essence of his political view is concentrated in the writing "1907 from spring until autumn" which strikingly resembles Eminescu's articles. The worsening of the Romanian peasantry situation and the explosion of 1907 make Caragiale launch a frontal attack against a corrupt and parasitic "oligarchy", devoid of tradition and the only beneficiary of an aborted modernization. According to Caragiale, for the peasant classes (which he sees as the only bearers of the burdens of modernization) to breathe, it was necessary to liquidate this oligarchy, which is nothing else but the "superposed class" of Eminescu.

The fourth chapter highlights the intellectual profile of semantorism and populism, two rival movements, but marked by an almost obsessive concern for peasantry and of two original thinkers , C. Rădulescu-Motru and Aurel C. Popovici. The Russian influences

of the "populist movement (narodnicism)", mediated through the person of C. Stere are visible in the work of Ibrăileanu, one of the chief representatives of this current, may be noted best in the attempt somehow admirable and desperate to raise the material level of rural life (which the populism does not idealize in the past-ridden and naive spirit of *semanatorism*) while trying to keep the specificity and originality of the Romanian rural world. Without ideological excesses, Ibrăileanu's criticism is one worthy of notice, but this strange mixture of "rural socialism" and "rural conservatism" (in the broad sense of the word) at the same time, where the focus is always on the "rural" was an ideological hybrid, an impossible synthesis. The interwar "peasantism" will be nothing but a delayed and anachronistic reverberation of populism.

The determined shift towards the „ruralism” of the Romanian ideological conservatism may be seen more clearly in *semanatorism*. The landscape of idyllic village, away from the corrupting influences of a demonized city, reservoir of an ideal Romanian characteristic, of that substance that Maiorescu had not named, told little about the realities of the Romanian village (concurrent with the culmination of this trend the uprising of 1907 occurred) and much more about the fantasies and the nostalgia of uprooted intellectuals, caught between two worlds and not belonging fully to any. Although it was represented by characters like N. Iorga first of all, and other intellectuals like G. Coșbuc, D. Zamfirescu, Șt. O. Iosif, Al. Vlahuță or I. Chendi, the *semanatorism* is marked by a marked intellectual decline. The clear, logical, and biting style of Eminescu cannot be found anymore, nor the high conceptual level of the same. The tone is nostalgic and vituperating at the same time, this current being marked by a minor epigonic post-romanticism, by an excessive sentimentality and an obvious lack of solutions. We are facing a kind of epigonic *eminescianism*, though more ruralised, minus the poetic talent. But beyond these issues, the Romanian conservative spirit's movement towards "rural" is clear, for lack of another tradition worthy of being preserved, as I have mentioned.

The *Semanatorism* remains inseparable from the image of Nicolae Iorga. The great historian was also, in the early twentieth century, a passionate critic of the elites' separation from their own nation and their own language, the well-known protest demonstration of March 13, 1906 being significant in this regard. Iorga was a fierce critic of Romanian modernization, continuing Eminescu's attack against the beneficiaries of a traumatic modernization. The main focus of Iorga's criticism remains the split between elites and peasants. Iorga accuses, for example, the forty-eighters that they mimetically took Western ideological formulas inadequate for the Romanian realities, as evidenced in his view, by ignoring the fundamental problem of improving the situation of the Romanian peasants. From

this point of view, its model remains the reformism attentive to the fate of the peasantry of Kogălniceanu. Iorga's conservatism was one also favourable to peasantry, nationalist, transcending class barriers that had burdened the Conservative Party's doctrine and activity until the end. Like Eminescu, Iorga is only occasionally a critic of modernity itself. Although both firmly reject the legacy of the French Revolution, we cannot speak of a full rejection of modernity by any of them.

This important step will be made by an almost forgotten figure today, namely Aurel C. Popovici. A complex figure, a fighter against Hungarian oppression, the doctor from Banat was the author of a federalization plan of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a close friend of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. The importance of his thinking does not reside in this plan invalidated by history, but in his coherently anti-modern view that rejects not only the modernization in the Romanian space, but the Western modernity itself. A declared "reactionary", Aurel C. Popovici was a virulent critic of democracy. Nationalist, elitist and conservative, Popovici is the first intellectual who rehabilitates religiosity in the Romanian intellectual space before 1914. He is also the one who introduced in the Romanian intellectual space, alongside the moderate conservative Rădulescu-Motru, the distinction between "culture" and "civilization". A declared Christian, an impenitent reactionary, Popovici believed, beyond his federalist plans related to Austria-Hungary, that only the emergence of a new aristocracy can save the European civilization from total disintegration. Through all this, Aurel C. Popovici, even though little claimed by his ideological followers, is certainly the connection between the eminescian radical-conservatism and the interwar one.

C. Rădulescu-Motru may be considered the "last junimist", according to Lovinescu's expression, by his measured, rational urban criticism, lacking the semantologist imprecations from the "Romanian Culture and the Politicianism". However his political evolution over time from conservatism itself to the „peasantism” is enlightening for the definite shift towards the rural of the Romanian conservative sensibility, an inevitable one as I have said. Unlike Aurel C. Popovici, Rădulescu-Motru remained a moderate. Defender of the national culture, Motru has always kept the deference to the scientific spirit. The politics' criticism continues and complements the Junimist one; however, the major changes after the war will make Motru explore ever more the "national character" and become one of the supporters of a conservative "peasantism". After 1918 he would try to adapt his moderate nationalism to a period marked by radicalism, and not always successfully.

The fifth chapter is concerned with the specific of interwar traditionalism which we have called "radical-conservatism". This specificity consists in the addition of a religious

dimension to the idealization of rural areas which continue the semanatorist line (currents like orthodoxism, "gandirism" "existentialism", etc.) and was represented by figures like Nichifor Crainic, or Nae Ionescu. As I said, it was once more logical to happen. Along with rural tradition, the Orthodox Church has been and remains the only factor of continuity in a history marked by discontinuity. The profound changes brought in the European collective mentality by the great slaughter of World War I and some religious and spiritual revival that marked the period, have brought to surface this part of the Romanian collective consciousness. It was in fact the last "card" that the Romanian conservatism understood broadly had available. The profound influence of the Russian religious philosophy (Berdyayev, S. Bulgakov, P. Florenski, S. Struve), the closeness of the atheist Bolshevik danger, and the building of a Great/United Romania with numerous unorthodox minorities seen as a potential threat (there were also Romanian Greek Catholics) have certainly also contributed to this evolution. For example, Crainic is a partisan of an atypical conservatism aiming to defend against the stream of seemingly unstoppable modernization and westernisation not a venerable tradition with whose existence we cannot boast about, but the potentiality of a future authentic Romanian culture. It was, in a way, a solution to the great problem of the lack of urban Romanian tradition, and an idea of great importance throughout the Romanian conservative thinking, an idea expressed in the essay "Parsifal", written in 1924. Conservatism can also exist in the absence of a firmly contoured urban tradition like the Western one, for a national identity can subsist largely as potentiality, also. Precisely the defence of this potential, in other words the defence of the future of a culture against foreign forms imitation that could be harmful, becomes the benchmark of this future oriented conservatism. The virulent criticism against a Westernization that Crainic rather identifies with the French influence was made on behalf of a newborn Romanian culture, whose potential could be killed in the bud by Westernization.

Nae Ionescu will support similar ideas, but will base his critique of modernity on the critique of the "Protestant spirit", which he considers the creator of modernity and everything related to it: individualism, capitalism, bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism. It is also very important to note that his adherence to legionnarism is of a rather circumstantial nature. The anti-Semitic rhetoric, which never occupied the central point of Nae Ionescu's discourse would appear only after 1933. The original core of his ideas, as they appear in articles written in 1920-1930, shows that by the Christian, anti-democratic, anti-liberal and antiparlamentarian character of his ideas, Nae Ionescu was a radical-conservative or "revolutionary-conservative", but not a fascist. A fact true also in Crainic's case, or his

disciples, Vulcănescu and Eliade. The fundamental difference lies in the anti-modern radical-conservative religious foundation and in the immanent one of fascism or Nazism. The nation and race asserted as a fundamental value and the absence of a transcendent foundation make Fascism, in the broad sense, a modern phenomenon. Also, one can say with certainty that the religious revival after World War I in which we can also enclose the radical-conservative Orthodoxy of Crainic or Nae Ionescu, is a structural phenomenon different from fascism, because, as Mircea Eliade convincingly argued, the spiritual movements always precede the political ones. Fascism is the political counterpart of the intellectual vitalist movement after 1880 that culminated in Nietzsche and Bergson, and the religious revival of the 1920s would have been followed by a similar political movement only in the 1950-1960. The major mistake of Nae Ionescu, Crainic or Eliade will be that they will join legionnairism in the 1930's for complex reasons, confusing it with the political counterpart of the spiritual revival movement they belonged to. It was a dearly paid mistake, as we know.

Blaga's thinking is greatly indebted to that intellectual atmosphere of spiritual rebirth after the Great War, an atmosphere which we described while speaking of Crainic and Nae Ionescu. Differing again from these thinkers, Blaga does not accept being defined as an Orthodox Christian thinker. Although viewing with understanding the religious phenomenon, and netly distancing himself from atheism, positivism and scientism, Blaga considers himself primarily a "philosopher" and not a follower of a dogma. A fundamental antithesis, relevant to our theme, remains the one that Blaga makes between "major cultures" and "minor cultures". Without assigning a value judgment, according to Blaga, the Romanian folk culture would obviously belong to the "minor cultures", unlike the Western culture which would fall into the category of "major" ones. The essential criterion of differentiation would stand according to Blaga in the spiritual "age" of the two types of cultures. Blaga considers the Romanian spirituality incompatible with the Western spirit. Any cultural transfer (not technical, as we have discussed) is impossible. Westernization in the cultural domain means spiritual death. For Blaga, the metaphysics of the "Mioritic space" is closely related to the Village and the childhood of humanity, shrouded in myth. However, Blaga does not exclude the possibility that the Romanians make the transition to a "major culture", but one grounded in their own "stylistic matrix", and not in an indiscriminate imitation of Western civilization.

Mircea Vulcănescu will develop a true metaphysics of the Romanian way of being, which he will call the "Romanian dimension of existence." A critic of Western modernity, a declared Orthodox Christian, Vulcănescu will consider the Romanian spirit, as Blaga also does, inextricably linked to the Eastern feeling of communion with "nature", from which it

does not want to single out at any cost, as the Western man does, and which it does not want to dominate and transform it into a mere good to exploit "resource". Also for Vulcănescu, the Romanian modernization is a "removal from his own nature" of the Romanian spirit, a reversible process. The figure of Vulcănescu is important in terms of what we called Romanian interwar "radical-conservatism" because he is its unadulterated expression. Unlike Crainic or Nae Ionescu, Vulcănescu never joined legionnarism, and did not flirt with fascism, stating bluntly the major difference between the contemporary religious revival and the fascist or Nazi Leviathanic totalitarianism. He criticized all three sides of a modernity that he rejected completely: liberalism, communism, and fascism in the broad sense.

The sixth chapter analyzes the discourse of intellectuals with a complex attitude who cannot be easily enclosed in a specific current. Proponents of Westernization like Eugen Lovinescu and Ștefan Zeletin justified this phenomenon, with significant differences, on behalf of the need for "connecting" a retrograde Romanian space to the benefits of modern civilization. Both were firmly convinced that Westernization is an inexorable process, within historical laws. The major difference is that Lovinescu attributed the westernisation phenomenon to an ideological "contagion" that culminated in the Revolution of 1848, and Zeletin, faithful to a historical materialistic view, sees the origins of this process in the entry of Principalities in the world capitalist economy system by the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 due to the British traders' interest for Romanian cereals. Both theorists deny any basis to the traditionalist critics, hailing the destruction of the old patriarchal relations. For them, especially for Lovinescu, everything related to the Romanian history of oriental heritage (Orthodoxy, especially, but also the rural tradition) is no more than a factor favouring the historic immobility, and hampering the Romanian society's "progress". Echoes of this radical modernism will be found in an original thinker like Emil Cioran, but paradoxically combined with a "reactionarism" foreign to Lovinescu or Zeletin.

Starting with Eminescu, through semantorism and village idealization (also interesting, the populist attempt of "synthesis" between a form of rural socialism and conservatism) and ending with the interwar addition of the orthodox mystical dimension (through "gandirism", "trairism" etc.) to the already present ruralised one, the Romanian conservative sensitivity will witness a process of apparent ruralization and "peasantization". This was certainly unavoidable as the only authentic Romanian tradition, the only real form of continuity in the Romanian space was the rural-ethnographic one, however precarious it might have been. All this was the unavoidable consequence of trying to answer a question that

Maioreescu had left open: "what is the Romanian substance on whose behalf we criticize the artificially introduced western forms?". After some hesitation, the Romanian conservative intellectuals responded almost unanimously "the Romanian substance is rural, peasant, ethnographic", to which has been added, sometimes, the Orthodoxist dimension (the Orthodox Church remained closely linked to the same rural tradition in the Romanian space, so there is no contradiction in this regard). As the Romanian liberalism was "a form without substance", a creation of a radical intelligentsia which replaced an almost inexistent bourgeoisie (in fact, a widespread phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe), so it seemed to be Romanian conservatism. Contrary to the European conservatism model, with us, the critical spirit in its classic Junimist form did not manifest as an expression of authentic traditions, as a defensive reaction in their behalf, but having initially the same Western intellectual origins as the object of its criticism, later autonomised artificially. As he spoke of "aesthetic's autonomy", Maioreescu could also speak with equal justification regarding the key Junimist trends of the "critical spirit autonomy". The "critical spirit" thus paradoxically preceded through junimism the attempt to claim and own a, authentic local tradition (rural, of course). Naturally, the obsessive attack directed against the "lip service producers" and disembodied theories initiated by Eminescu has remained a constant. Also, the ideological descendants of Eminescu the virulent critics worsens, shaking even the spectre of a violent reaction. In no way is our intention to minimize or depreciate the attempt to build the Romanian intellectual conservatism understood as a continuum of ideas from junimism to the ruralised-orthodox forms of nationalism in the interwar period. The fundamental point remains that all these contradictions and paradoxes were nothing but a series of successive and somewhat daring attempts to respond to a situation paradoxical in its essence, of the discontinuity of Romanian history, a situation which, by the very absence of a political and cultural authentic tradition, made it impossible to have a Romanian conservatism according to the Western model. However, thinkers like Crainic, Nae Ionescu and Eliade (in the most articulated form) tried to give a coherent response to this aporia. For Crainic the stake for an authentic Romanian conservatism is not the past, but the future. Not tradition or lack of it are here the main problem, but the defence of the creative potencies of the Romanian culture from an early death by indiscriminately adopting elements of a civilization that not only is foreign to us, but which by its power of seduction that it emanates precisely now, at its twilight, is, Crainic seems to tell us, a mortal danger to us. Thus Crainic proposes an atypical conservatism that aims to defend against the seemingly unstoppable stream of modernization and westernisation not a venerable tradition with whose existence we cannot boast about, but a future potentiality

of an authentic Romanian culture. Unlike Crainic, Eliade hoped for re-spiritualization and re-sacralisation of Europe in which the Romanian culture had to play the role of a bridge between the East still dominated by a sacred horizon and the secularized and profane West. As I have said, this vision of the future Romanian culture melts into a superior synthesis the traditionalism-modernism dispute in the Romanian cultural space. The purpose of modernization and westernisation of Romania (limited to its elites) is the one, completely unintended by the Romanian Liberals and forty-eighters, of opening up to the Romanian elite the Western cultural instruments to facilitate this role of intermediary, of "retranslation" in a language familiar to the West the Eastern sacral benchmarks that the West could no longer understand firsthand. Thus, Romania should be, in Eliade's view, an outpost of Europe's re-sacralisation (its traditional rural civilization almost intact before World War II being a great advantage), a link to join the Indian movement led by Gandhi, marked by the "primacy of spiritual" with what appeared to be the yet confusing wave of re-spiritualization of Europe). For Cioran however, a future Romanian culture is inconceivable outside integration in Western culture, a crepuscular one, indeed. Any trace of our "Oriental" identity is nothing but "ballast", "rubble". Beyond the contradiction we have discussed above, all of the young Cioran interwar political reflection is marked by an acute sense of "lack of time". We must hurry to leave something behind, evidently within the European culture in which we need to integrate, as marked as that may be of decadence and twilight. The Romanian critical spirit, unlike the Western, was thus marked by a paradoxical conservatism turned towards the future.

The seventh chapter tries to show the ideological profile of the Iron Guard and his relationship with what we have called radical-conservatism. The relationship between some of the radical-conservative thinkers and legionnairism was an incidental one. The cause lies in the fundamental role of Corneliu Zelea-Codreanu's personality in everything that meant the Legionary Movement and in the fact that his way of being and thinking, his idiosyncrasies overwhelmingly influenced the Movement he was leading. In addition, the Legion was clearly tarred by the evident similarities with fascism and Nazism in the methods of fighting and external forms of manifestation. Undoubtedly fascist were the glorification of violence and crime; despite Codreanu's attempts to justify them, they were contrary to an authentic Christian view. Of course, in Codreanu's thinking there are many anti-modern features, similar to those present in Nichifor Crainic, Nae Ionescu, Mircea Eliade: rejection of liberal individualism, of modern materialism, the major role of religiosity and the Orthodox faith affirmation. Also, from a sociological point of view, we can say that terrorist and anti-Semitic derive of legionnairism owed much besides the general context of the age also to the fragility

of Romanian intelligentsia with a precarious status and uncertain of its identity. The major separation point was represented by the Legion's antisemitism due to the extremely simplistic trait of Codreanu's personality. Modernity and its evils were also vehemently denounced by the radical conservative thinkers, but for Codreanu it had to take a flesh and body political and ethnic enemy's face who had to be confronted by all means: the Jews. For him and the Legionary Movement, all the complexity of the Romanian anti-modern thinking was eventually reduced to anti-Semitism and attacks against politics. Of course, the vulgarizing and simplified character is specific to any political movement, but the subtle constructions of the Romanian anti-modern thinkers like Crainic, Nae Ionescu and Eliade and their views on the future role of the Romanian culture cannot in any way be reduced to the equivalence between anti-modernism and anti-semitism specific to Codreanu.

We believe that the originality of our approach lies precisely in understanding the Romanian anti-modernism (which we can also call radical-conservatism) as a coherent corpus of doctrine and distinct from the other ideologies of the time, including Fascism, National Socialism and even legionnairism. In addition, we believe our approach contributes to an understanding of the specific Romanian radical-conservatism considered as an attempt to solve the great problem that marked any Romanian conservative project: the lack of a literate tradition. The future oriented conservatism and defence of a future authentic Romanian culture potency threatened by the excesses of modernity were, in our opinion, the Romanian radical conservative thinkers' response to this major challenge.

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