THE THINKING *MAGAZINE AND ORTHODOXY*

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Abstract: *The Magazine Thinking, issued in Cluj, under the direction of Cezar Petrescu and D. I. Cucu (1921) had, at first, an eclectic program and after its moving to Bucharest (1922), Nichifor Crainic pleaded for some sort of literature which was supposed to cultivate the orthodox traditionalism. The members of the „group" were brought together by metaphysical sensitivity, considering themselves motivated by some messianic calling. The magazine enjoyed the collaboration of prestigious Romanian writers such as Tudor Arghezi, Lucian Blaga, Ion Minulescu, George Topârceanu, Camil Petrescu, I. Agârbiceanu, Ioan Slavici, Cezar Petrescu, Gala Galaction. By publishing some of the most important works of these valuable authors, the Magazine Thinking was known and appreciated in the respective period, being considered as a cultural manifesto of literary and artistic ideas not only religious.*

Keywords: *magazine, thinking, national.*

In Cluj, in 1920, there were a few young writers: Lucian Blaga, Radu Dragnea, Adrian Maniu, Gib Mihăescu, Cezar Petrescu, all of them having friendly relations with Nichifor Crainic, Al. Busuioceanu, Emanoil Bucuţa, Vasile Voiculescu and Ion Pillat, as some were working in the editorial office of the newspaper *The Will* (independent daily newspaper in Cluj, published between 18 August 1920 and 27 March 1922), which was placed on the position of some „national democracy", while others had met in the pages of postwar *Morning Star* (1919-1920) and *Lamurii* (1919-1928), both publications patronized by Alexandru Vlahuţă.

"Everybody was dreaming - Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu wrote - to bring out a magazine to stimulate the Romanian cultural life in Transylvania, prevented for so many centuries, and to give full expression, thereby contributing to strengthening the national unity finally achieved." (Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S.,1972: 76).

"The Junior scribes" those who came from the Kingdom and the Transylvanians, used to meet in the evening and to dine together at "a table always spliced" in the restaurant New York, which became „the headquarters of the Romanian media in Cluj" (Petrescu, C., 1935: 510): Lucian Blaga, Adrian Maniu Gib I. Mihăescu, Emil Isac, Radu Dragnea, D. Tomescu, D.I. Cucu, Cezar Petrescu, the painter Damian. These young people were determined "to knot the broken thread of the Transylvanian cultural traditions, taking into account the fact that the newspapers and the magazines in Hungarian and German languages were written by well-known publicists. The decision "was taken in the park in front of the lake as small as a plate", and the name was suggested by Cezar Petrescu, being also him who stated that the magazine *Thinking* would appear in a month. And it appears on 1 May 1921 under the direction of Cezar Petrescu, first as a literary supplement of the newspaper *The will*, and in 1922, it was moved to Bucharest, under the direction of Nichifor Crainic, who increased its number of pages and improves its graphic appearance. The magazine *Thinking* (literary, artistic, social) is a traditionalistic, orthodoxist and autochthonous one and it appears twice a month, between May 1 1921 and April 15, 1925 and afterwards once a month: June 1925 and July 1944.

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The editors of the magazine were: Cezar Petrescu (1921-1926), D. I. Cucu (1921), Tudor Vianu (1926), Nichifor Crainic (1926-1944).

On the cover of the issue 1-2/1923, it is mentioned: "it appears under the direction of a committee composed of: Lucian Blaga, Demostene Botez, Al. Busuioceanu, Nichifor Crainic, Adrian Maniu, Gib I. Mihăescu, I. Marin Sadoveanu, Al. O. Teodoreanu and Pamfil Șeicaru". Starting with the issue 7/1923, the committee was completed with Emanoil Bucuța, N. M. Condiescu, Liviu Rebreanu; with the issue 7/1927, the committee, called *The Grouping of the magazine*, also includes: Oscar Walter Cisek, T. Vianu, I. Pillat and so on; with the issue 12/1928, the committee is completed with: G. Breazul, G. Călinescu, Mircea Eliade, Zaharia Stancu and so on. G. Călinescu (1929), Zaharia Stancu (1941), Lucian Blaga (1943) and Tudor Vianu (1943) withdraw from "the grouping of the magazine" (Cf. I. Hangiu, 1987:158).

The magazine *Thinking*, founded in Cluj by a group of young people from all the regions of the country, led by Cezar Petrescu and D. I. Cucu, editors of the newspaper *The will*, in the first issue, does not speak of a literary, artistic or social program, but "it wants to be a friend for those disgusted by empty politics, for those disappointed by promises fallen from the first flight with broken wings" (*Words for the road*). In its first years, *Thinking* brings together prestigious collaborators - with lyrics: Arghezi (*Uncertainties*, no. 5/1921; *Inscription on a portrait*, no. 11/1923), Lucian Blaga (*Old Horns shake fruit*, no. 2/1921, *From heaven there came a ballad song*, no. 8/1921, *In the great passing*, no. 5/1923), Demostene Botez (*Sleeping*, no. 2/1921), I. Minulescu, G. Topârceanu, Adrian Maniu, Camil Petrescu (*Ascension*, no. 13/1921), Perpessicius, Al. A. Philippide, with prose: I. Agârbiceanu (*For post* no. 1/1921), L. Blaga (*The clock of sand*, no. 17/1922), Gib Mihăescu (*The latter*, no. 2/1921) Cezar Petrescu (*The black spider*, no. 3/1921, *The letters of a yeoman*, no. 8/1921) M.Sadoveanu (*Mărțișor*, no. 20/1922), I. Slavici (*The paths of life*, no. 11/1924) Al. O. Teodoreanu (*Autumn Manoeuvres*, no. 8/1924), Matei I. Caragiale (*The profligates*, no. 9/1927) Gala Galaction (*The roses from Sadova*, no. 10 / 1930). Three of the first-year collaborators oriented *Thinking* to orthodoxy and autochthonism: Radu Dragnea, Pamfil Șeicaru and especially Nichifor Crainic (Idem, *ibidem*, pp. 158-159).

Radu Dragnea, in the article *The immorality of impressionistic criticism* (No. 8/19220), disapproving those who separate literature of its social function, in fact, attacks the novel *Ion*, by Liviu Rebreanu, considering it immoral and insignificant for the Transylvanian peasantry, but positively assessed by E. Lovinescu (Sburatorul, no. 4/1920) and by T. Vianu (Romanian Life, no. 1/1921). Pamfil Șeicaru in the article *Inanimate Literature* (*Thinking* no. 9/1922), calls for a *Directive* and the answer is given by Nichifor Crainic who, beginning with the essay *Jesus in my country* (No. 11-12/1923) and ending with *The meaning of tradition* (No. 1-2/1929) formulates the doctrine of orthodoxy and of autochthonism to which most prestigious collaborators do not adhere and who cannot be confused with authentic literature published in the pages of the magazine (Idem, *ibidem*, p.159).

They write against the thinking doctrine in the magazines *Tradition* (traditionalist publication in the *Sower* lineage, which appears monthly in Turnu Severin: January 1. - April 1920, July 1924 - Dec. 1932) and *Literary printing press* (modernist publication appears in Bucharest in October. 1928 - April. - May 1931, monthly).

In the first years, *Thinking* maintains friendly relations with Tudor Arghezi, Mihail Ralea and Ion Vinea, who will become - later - ideological adversaries of the thinking doctrine. Nichifor Crainic led, in parallel with *Thinking*, the newspaper *The*

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Calendar (independent publication with the latest news from the country and from abroad, Bucharest January 25. - March 23, June 8. 1932-31 Dec. 1933), however, receiving support also from the press: *The Word* and *The Current*, newspapers led by Nae Ionescu and Pamfil Şeicaru, collaborators of *Thinking* as well.

From summarizing, first, the continuation of the lineage of *Sower*, when Cezar Petrescu showed that the magazine, in the "internationalist spirit" of the time, pledged to protect "the Romanianism" that the literature of the epoch "cast away" with a too "humanitarian generosity" (Apud Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S., *op. cit.* : 77.), up to the ethnicist and spiritualist stage, „the grouping followed an incontestably defensive impulse, as well, explicable from a historical point of view. They felt called to resist the high speed with which the bourgeois industrial civilization tended to crush the national cultural traditions, a whole existence done after some ancient patterns, destroying its millenary intimate connection with nature". It was also the result of some justified need to seek deeper reasons and expressions with universal value for the specifics of Romanian culture" (Idem, *ibidem*, p. 81). In this respect, an important contribution was brought by Lucian Blaga, aiming to familiarize the readers of the magazine with what was called the "style philosophy," namely the research of the living "the typological", "the physiognomy", by discovering the "unifying principles", existing in any of the human attitudes, assessed as forms "of the living" (after the conceptions of the German „Lebensphilosophy").

Nichifor Crainic, the son of a peasant from Bulbucata (Vlaşca), who studied theology at Bucharest and Vienna, has had a huge doctrinal activity, in order to give our literature an "Orthodoxist" orientation, although Eugen Lovinescu denied just its mystical predisposition. It is undeniable that this "mystical vocation" does not come from the volumes of poetry: *Native Lowland* (1916), *Smiles in Tears* (1916), *Gifts of the Earth* (1920) and *Fugitive Views* (1921), where Nichifor Crainic "starts also from Vlahuţă, whose example he syllogistically "develops" the current lyrical themes of the traditionalist program, the solidarity with the native soil and with the ancestors " (Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S., *op. cit.* : 311):

> Since little, oh, Dad, you bred me with the yearning / To interpret the broad yard of nature, / You poured in my heart the thrill of fallow plains in March, / When you were with a trill of a Doina in the mouth, / Under the arch of undulating heaven, / I learned to measure the gait/From the symmetry of ploughed furrows. (*The poet*).

In time, he gives up on the sowing passeisme, reproaching that "it didn't see the heaven of Romanian spirituality" and added: "Over the land that we learned to love from *Sower*, we see the azure canopies of the Orthodox Church arching" (Crainic, N., *The Sense of Tradition*, „Thinking", IX, no 1, 1929).

The main endeavor of *Thinking* was to open a metaphysical horizon to traditionalism and at the same time to push the different trends of modern spiritualism and irrationalism to a local expression (Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, *Romanian Literature and Expressionism*, vol. II, 1978: 59).

"So, it was not some simple liveliness of Romanian culture through Christian spirit that was aimed at", but Crainic supports the endowment with some "evangelical teachings" in the middle of which to be Jesus "in his country", saying his parables: "conceived during life from us", having in sight "a ploughman sowing the land, a shepard's stable, a Danube trawler, or a wineyard on the hills" (Idem, *ibidem*: 59). Therefore, an "ethnicization of the religious feeling" in accordance with the national soul was

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recommended. In the autochthonous Christian options, there would permeate "not Jesus on Golgotha, but Jesus from the cattle barn, not Jesus in Gethsemane, but Jesus in Cana of Galilee, not Jesus in the tempting wilderness, but Jesus in the parable of the sower, not Jesus cutting the intricate subtleties of the race of the scribes and Pharisees, but Jesus from the middle of simple, healthy people of nature and good as this one is." (Crainic, N., *Jesus in My Country*, „Thinking", III, no 11-12, 1923).

It can be seen how primitivism is a state which is appropriate to the conservation of "the ethnic substrate and blooming of the mystical thrill". (*Ibidem*).

Nichifor Crainic particularly presses upon orthodoxy: "We see that the substance of this church is mixed with the ethnic substance everywhere."

Wherever the thinker does not find "concern" for the church, he denies the quality of the Romanian spirituality. (...) He does not try to establish positively which the notes of the national specific are, but inducing them by speculative means, he imposes them to the artist (Călinescu, G., 1986: 874).

So, an undeniable traditional artist must "embrace the religious concern"(G. Călinescu).

In the captivating book, Nostalgia of paradise, Nichifor Crainic "lays the foundations of some orthodox aesthetics, of a metaphysical method, of course. (...) The man is God's creation, art is human creation, art is therefore the creation of God' creature, God's granddaughter" (Idem, *ibidem*: 874). As seen by Crainic,

Art in its high sense is not an imitation of nature, as it does not aim to remind us about nature as it is. Its purpose is the revelation of the mysteries from above in sensitive shapes", as the artist "is the genius inspired by divinity, the prophet, the communicator with Divinity (Idem, *ibidem*: 875).

But the opportunity which provides Orthodoxists an essential testimony about God's presence and approval is the *miracle*. That is why, each collaborator searched in their own experience a miracle that marked his life. Thus, M. Vulcănescu, believing that the painter Sabin Popp was a saint, regretted the latter's body was cremated and not buried, as the relics might have worked miracles.

Lucian Blaga, reflecting upon the contents of the literary works published in the magazine and upon the mentality of the collaborators showed that *Thinking* had, in its opinion, a „right", „which, calmer, insisted on a literary creed and on some traditional metaphysics and a „left" that „more tormented, laid the emphasis more on creation and on some freedom of movement" (Blaga, L., *The Beginnings and the Frame of Some Friendship*, „Thinking", XIX, no. 4, 1940). A large part of the exponents of the grouping „remained" strictly in the "dogmatic furrows of orthodoxy" another, however, has allowed themselves.

Under the reproving gaze of the director, some certain creative freedom towards Christian reasons, converting them into original myths and visions, following, perhaps without knowing, the exhortations to the heresies of imagination and popular thinking. (Apud Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S., *op. cit.*: 68).

In conclusion, we can say that prestigious writers collaborated within the magazine *Thinking* and with some ideological decrease, however, literary writings of national interest were published.

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