

Nichifor Crainic and the interwar “New Spirituality”

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Abstract

After long periods in which there was more assimilating from other cultures, rather than creating, Romanian culture has experienced, in the interwar period, also the phase corresponding to the creation of important spiritual values. In that time, if we use a Lucian Blaga's phrase, there was a real “ontological mutation” in the field of culture.

Unrests, attitudes, propositions of cultural directions, whether, judged now, were providing solutions or just stimulating the environment of thinking, illustrate today the desire of men of culture of that time to produce values through which the Romanian spirit had to spread, through its contribution, in the universal spirit. But how could this happen? Everything that was done until then had to be left behind, forgotten? Or what had been forgotten was worth to be restored? Which was the undisputed landmark? What kind of spirituality was fundamental for it? The traditional one or the European one?

Nichifor Crainic in his essay “Spirituality”, in a first phase, and then, in the same year 1929, the investigation from Tiparnița literară, and seven years later Constantin Rădulescu-Motru in “Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități” emphasize the meaning of the concept of “Spirituality”, and in addition the great number of meanings of the term “new spirituality”.

Keywords: *“new spirituality”, Christian vision, Laic vision, Româanism, catechism.*

1. “Life in spirit and art in spirit”

As in many other situations, Crainic situates himself among the men of culture concerned about the issue of timeliness. From his register of thinking could not miss the conceptualization of the term “spirituality”, thing encountered in an essay with the same title¹, but also in other interventions² later in 1936, when

¹ Nichifor Crainic, “Spiritualitate” (Spirituality), *Gândirea*, No. 8-9, august-septembrie 1928, pp. 307-310.

publishing the volume *Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități* (The Romanism, The Catechism of a New Spirituality). In “Spirituality”, the thinker presents, from the beginning, the struggle of the young generation, to which he does not belong as age, but in spirit, if we follow a specification made somewhere by Mircea Vulcănescu. As Crainic noted, at the time, among the intellectual youth there was a visible uproar not seen before: “New problems torment the young scholars, problems unknown before, and they speak more earnestly and more passionate about a new direction, about a «spirituality», as a vague term, about a return to religion, more precisely.”³ In those years, as Crainic noted, there was an antagonistic spirit among the mature generation, who survived the war, indebted to the political idea of an achievement of a national unity or to the positivist mentality, and the young generation, seeking its own *spiritual itinerary* (Mircea Eliade⁴) and a “master of the new spirituality” that Crainic didn’t have in his time. Under these circumstances, the youth had to be led in a spiritual direction, to take into consideration the “religious thought” arisen from the mystical living. Mysticism is, for Crainic, a cardinal point from which he will not deviate: “From our part, we confess shamefully our orientation martially condemned by the pre-war and anachronistic mentality”⁵; For Crainic the Orthodox spirituality is a postulated future of the Romanian culture,⁶ not a “fashion to loan, an imitation of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke,⁷ as Lovinescu considered. Rilke’s conception was completely different from the orthodox one. Crainic himself made this delimitation: “And one can see that Rilke’s religious poetry, having its roots in the German religious poetry and with its God image, specific to the German philosophical Protestantism, has nothing in common with our Holy Orthodoxy”⁸.

To the question “What is spirituality?” Crainic showed as a spiritual view that the human existence in all its complexity must be subordinated to “the spirit that dominates everything.”⁹ Ontologically speaking, Crainic outlines “spirituality” being “our piece of existence morally polished, purified and continuously expanded by the flame of the universal spirit. Our existence and, with it, the

² See “Mistificarea «românismului»” (The Mstification of «romanism») and “Spiritualitate și românism” (Spirituality and Romanism), *Gândirea*, 1936.

³ Nichifor Crainic, “Spiritualitate” (Spirituality), *Gândirea*, No. 8-9, august-september 1928, p. 307.

⁴ See the series of 12 stories published by Mircea Eliade in *Cuvântul* (1927).

⁵ Nichifor Crainic, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 310.

stylized image that is art. Spirituality is life in spirit and art in spirit, and as the dedicated and practical form of spirituality is the Church, the new orientation is life and art in the Holy Spirit. If the elite of the younger generation will be touched by this conviction, its way will mean also a return to the contact with the people's soul – that soul which our ancestors were identifying with the religion.”¹⁰

According to Nichifor Crainic the concept of “spirituality” has a theological meaning, obviously dogmatic, and can not be “an abstract and philosophical concept, which can be understood today in one way and tomorrow in another. It (*spirituality, n.n.*) is a way of living that is the sublime way of living as a man in God.”¹¹ Therefore, spirituality “has its model in the Son of God incarnate in man”¹² and is *teandric*. By this dualism is illustrated, on the line established by Dionysius the Areopagite, that spirituality “is composed of a divine element, – the grace or power of the Holy Spirit – and the human element in its purest form.”¹³

This “mystical fusion” should result in “a *life* saved from sin, perfect, deified.”¹⁴ *Spirituality*, according to Crainic, means “human life assimilated in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵ Through such a cooperation, *divine-human*, which is joined by the act of mutual love between God and man, “human nature does not lose its character of human nature, but transforms and illuminates itself to understand the things and to work by after the divine model, remaining in human or creation condition.”¹⁶

As interpreted by Crainic, spirituality is manifested not only individually, but collectively: “Spirituality is at the disposal of man and at the same time of nation. [...] Nations are units of the human nature.”¹⁷ “The Spirituality of a nation, said Crainic, can be interpreted by its historical actions and from the institutions it created in the sublime aspiration to Divinity, to life in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸

2. The “New Spirituality” in Tiparnița literară

Romania after World War I politically reunited by reuniting all the provinces inhabited by Romanian people, but this ideal was not entirely achieved. The

¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

¹¹ *Idem*, “Mistificarea «Românismului»” (The Mystification of Romanism), *Gândirea*, Fall XV, No 7, September 1936, p. 357.

¹² *Ibidem.*

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 356.

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 356-357.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 357.

¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

existence of a truly united Great Romania was conditioned by a full unity by creating a Romanian consciousness, thing that was in charge of culture achieve it. Thus, “the planned renewal after 1918, through the action of an agent called culture, will mean something very “natural”; the Romanian national State was elaborating the drafts of cultural evolution, practically the Romanization of school, of the elite and of culture as a whole. It is an extremely tense socio-cultural process. Generations and cultural visions clash, ideologies contrast. They strongly speak about a “new spirituality”¹⁹. In this context, as Ion Dur observes “some theoreticians” of the moment claimed the right to make notional boundaries”²⁰. Initially, there were “two landmarks”²¹: Crainic’s article entitled “Spirituality”²² and the literary magazine survey *Tipariņa literară*.²³ It followed in 1936, a third, which has as promoter Constantin Rădulescu-Motru.²⁴ Among the following we will refer to the second moment mentioned above.

Above all, we will analyze what Nicolae Iorga, C. Rădulescu-Motru, Octavian Goga, E. Lovinescu, Lucian Blaga, Nichifor Crainic, Radu Dragnea, Șeban Cioculescu, Sandu Tudor, Ionel Jianu, Mircea Vulcănescu, Mircea Eliade, Mihail Sebastian, Mihail Polihroniade and Vasile Băncilă said about the “new spirituality” that started the investigation led by *Tipariņa literară*. In this way it will be easier to integrate Crainic’s conception on this syntagma with multiple meanings.

In a summary presentation we will show what each participant understood by the “new spirituality”.

Nicolae Iorga did not believe in the existence of a “new spirituality” and considered that “the human soul is a unit in the middle of a nature, which always repeats in a new way its things of an eternal age.”²⁵

C. Rădulescu-Motru as Iorga did, argued that, for him, “spirituality is in progress, not from today, or yesterday, but from the early beginning of the evolution of the universe.”²⁶ And regarding the existence of a “new spirituality”,

¹⁹ Ion Dur, “«Noua spiritualitate»” (The New Spirituality), in *Cariatide*, Psihomedica, Sibiu, 2007, p. 19. The term “new spirituality” is assigned to Petru Comarnescu who made in the literary magazine *Tipariņa literară* (1928, no. 2 and 3) an investigation with the same title.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 19-20.

²² See *Gândirea*, Fall VIII, No. 8-9, aug. – sept., 1928, pp. 307-310.

²³ See *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, nr. 2, 30 nov. 1928, pp. 42-47.

²⁴ See *Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități*.

²⁵ Nicolae Iorga, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 42.

²⁶ C. Rădulescu-Motru, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 42.

Motru said that this manifests itself under two forms: “A new spirituality? Of course there is. There are even two. One hunted by the opportunism of the individual self, spirituality that fits its ascension. And another, which is brought in people’s life through the deepening of consciousness: spirituality which remains for eternity...”²⁷

Goga observed that “a new soul is created”²⁸ and “we see a descent in ourselves, which announces problems of consciousness”²⁹ and he was willing to interpret the “new formula the changed time, to which I would like to give my last waste of energy.”³⁰

Eugen Lovinescu saw that in terms of a “new spirituality”, “From different parts of the younger generation seemed to come, however, mystical cries and Orthodox urges, where there is very difficult to discern sincerity, possible to be, the spirit of imitation or simple budgetary aspiration: Only time will fix the nature of this “new spirituality”, whose expression, we can say it by now, is “old”³¹. For Lovinescu, the article “Spirituality”, signed by Crainic and also the Manifesto (Crinul Alb) “White Lily” (published in the same number as the essay just mentioned) which is written by Sorin Pavel, Ion Nestor and Petre Marcu-Balș (Petre Pandrea) don’t seem to have the right indications, especially because of the violence of language, of a real “spirituality”.³²

Lucian Blaga, also participating in the investigation, spoke firmly: “The new spirituality exists. It’s so obvious that I personally feel that I am existing through it. *I exist* to the extent that this new spirituality exists.”³³

Crainic’s answer, at this investigation was, in fact, the exact reproduction of the last paragraph of the essay “Spirituality”, published one month before the issue of the investigation in *Tipariņa literară*. So, for Crainic, spirituality means “Subordination of the entire complex of human existence to the spirit that dominates everything” and “life and art in the Holy Spirit,”³⁴ having its source the

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Octavian Goga, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 43.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ Eugen Lovinescu, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 43.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ Lucian Blaga, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 44.

³⁴ Nichifor Crainic, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 44.

doctrine of the Orthodox Church. Spirituality was the way in which man could achieve “the alliance of the transience with the eternity”.

Radu Dragnea, further on, on the thinking line said that there was a new spirituality, and the “Content of the new spirituality was the orthodoxy,”³⁵ superior to the doctrine of the group *Semănătorul* and: “If talents and thoughtful minds will descend to the acts of culture all the artistic and metaphysical consequences arising from the new spirituality, the Romanian culture would only have to score a big bonus. Where are the old people to understand?”³⁶

Serban Cioculescu disputes the existence of a new spirituality and denies there was an old one,³⁷ and through the war, ended a decade ago, then there was a milestone, marking the end of the cycle of the Romanian culture and the opening towards the Western culture: “We are heading to Europe. This is my belief.”³⁸

The answer of Sandu Tudor has an apocalyptic meaning, of a great lucidity, for what was to happen to the Romanian people, who went through the gauntlet of the Iron Guard, royal and military dictatorships, war and, finally, the establishment of the Communism. “Let us not lie ourselves. There is a spirituality of the Dark one, very similar to that of Christ. It approaches stronger than ever.”³⁹ Necessary, in this case, was not a “new spirituality” but a “vigorous and harsh penance”.⁴⁰

Ionel Jianu was pointing out the active power of mysticism above the culture created especially by young people: “About life, young people from today do not understand just satiety, but creative suffering, frantic living of heights which a human soul can ascend”. From I. Jianu’s remark is to be remembered the way in which has to be understood the pure mysticism, that doesn’t lead the human being to the obscurity of existence: “Because mysticism is the longing to existence of the absolute. This does not mean obscurantism or the irrational. On the contrary. In its area, reason is almighty.”⁴¹

Mircea Vulcanescu, specific to its style, gives a systematic response to the investigation. At first, he explains the fact that “The term «spirituality» is an equivocal term. It can mean completely different things, namely: 1) *inner life*, 2)

³⁵ Radu Dragnea, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 44.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Șerban Cioculescu, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 45.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ Sandu Tudor, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 45.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Ionel Jianu, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tipariņa literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 45.

culture and 3) *spiritual life*.”⁴² Mircea Vulcănescu “reaches to the conclusion that, however, says Ion Dur, the true spiritual life is the «holly life», the other two meanings occurring in history along with some ambiguities: for the interior life, the soul was mistaken with the spirit, in culture they have substituted one to another, indistinctly, the world of values with the spiritual world.”⁴³

Mircea Eliade noted that “The acts of the young people show a new spiritual direction. Its exposure, authenticity and meaning we discussed it elsewhere,”⁴⁴ meaning in the *Spiritual Itinerary*, to which referred also Ion Dur.⁴⁵

Mihail Sebastian said that “the new spirituality” was having an uncertain destiny, and Mihail Polihroniade was pointing out the fact that there was a “new spirituality” with contradictory characteristics.⁴⁶ “As for the new tendency to consider the new spirituality as mystical – M. Polihroniade argued that – I think it’s premature. Until now, I see some personalities who say mystical, but I see no mystic.”⁴⁷

The last answer, very consistent, is given by Vasile Băncilă,⁴⁸ who stated that there was a hint about the beginning of a new spirituality, but no clear evidence.⁴⁹ However, the new spirituality was manifesting especially through young people, and claimed to be an “authentic thinking and a personal experience.”⁵⁰ New spirituality, in V. Băncilă’s opinion, has the shortcoming of being or having a “social extension”⁵¹, but has “generous start”.⁵² And at the end, V. Băncilă was pointing out that “The new spirituality seeks to deepen its sense of metaphysical and social dependence. It looks for an attitude through which to integrate organically in the complete reality. To receive the light that comes from active discovery of transcendent values, finding itself, at the same time, engaged in the most intimate meaning of the social-historical reality. Between both these

⁴² Mircea M. Vulcănescu, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tiparnița literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 46.

⁴³ Ion Dur, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), in *Cariatide*, Psihomedica, Sibiu, 2007, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Mircea Eliade, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tiparnița literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 47.

⁴⁵ Ion Dur, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ Mihail Polihroniade, “Noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tiparnița literară*, Fall I, no. 2, 30 nov. 1928, p. 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ See “Despre noua spiritualitate” (The New Spirituality), *Tiparnița literară*, Fall I, no. 3, 1928, pp. 71-73.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

areas, the new spirituality wants to pass the first meridian, wants a deep unit. The start, in this regard, is done.”⁵³

As seen from the responses given to this investigation, Rădulescu-Motru and N. Iorga have shown reserved concerning the recognition of the existence of a new cultural or philosophical spirituality, and for them, orthodoxy did not mean just a path to follow. Iorga was interested in the recognition of his personal merit and Motru in being allowed to live quietly in “the eternal spirituality”. Among those who were reserved regarding the “new spirituality” there is also E. Lovinescu, and Serban Cioculescu. The first leaves time to decide whether or not there was such a spirituality characterized rather by a “stylistic mysticism”, and the second was for an opening of the Romanian culture to the West. Among those who doubted such spirituality was also a priest, Sandu Tudor, who revealed the fact that, back then, “the signs of the true confession” was not present. In the category of those who were reserved about this was also Mihail Sebastian.

On the other side, Octavian Goga, Lucian Blaga, Nichifor Crainic, Radu Dragnea, Ionel Jianu, Mircea M. Vulcănescu, Mihail Polihroniade and Vasile Băncilă agree with the manifestation of a new cultural spirituality, which according to some of them have deep mystical marks, as a result of cultural visions arising from orthodoxy. As mentors of the “new spirituality” are mentioned Nae Ionescu and Nichifor Crainic.

After the investigation was published, several years later, C. Rădulescu-Motru brought back into discussion the theme of the “new spirituality” along with the issue of the book *Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități* (*Romanism, the catechism of a new spirituality*) – 1936, which will open a polemic Motru–Crainic. Deferent by their content, the types of spirituality proposed were claiming, however, the same Romanian ethnic background.

3. *(In)compatibility Romanism-Orthodoxy*

Regarding the accomplishment or non-accomplishment of a fusion between the *Christian idea* and the *ethnic idea* or between *psychological factor* and the *ethnic factor*, a dispute occurred in which were involved, especially, Crainic and Motru. Crainic believed that we cannot talk about an authentic Romanian spirituality if, in achieving it, do not contribute simultaneously, through synergy, the *Christian idea* and the *idea of ethnicity*. Motru, however, had another opinion. Even if he wasn't denying the contribution of Orthodoxy in the Romanian culture, Motru was considering that a Christian Orthodox spiritualization widely had no

⁵³ *Ibidem.*

justification and proposed, in order to revive it, the *energetic personalism* formula, from which was taken out the religious component. Thus, “personality” both individual and Romanian collective, could be completed through the fusion of *energy* with the ethnic background.

For Crainic it is obvious that spirituality has a theological meaning, as I’ve said before, and disagrees with the “laicization” of its meaning, like C. Rădulescu-Motru did: “There is no *worldly spirituality* as opposed to religious spirituality. Otherwise, we play with words like illiterates, like dilettantes or even like some philosophers.”⁵⁴ Unlike Crainic, who had a perspective on the Orthodox spirituality connected to Orthodoxy, C. Rădulescu-Motru was thinking and acting as a philosopher. What bothered Crainic most about the doctrine of *Românism* promoted by Motru was the statement that *Românism* and *Orthodoxy* must be separated: “So, Romanism worldly spirituality totally different from the Orthodox spirituality. Between them there is an incompatibility of nature. In other words, the Romanian people could not, can not and will not be Orthodox.”⁵⁵ And this alliance, said Motru, would be harmful: “Romanism and orthodoxy can not be merged without affecting each other, because one’s nature of spirituality is completely different from the other. [...] Their fusion, like some of them claim, can not be in the future, unless one or the other betrays its calling.”⁵⁶ Motru’s concept compared with that of Crainic is modern and adapts after the theory of energetic personalism.

Another criticism Crainic addresses to Rădulescu-Motru is that although it defines spirituality, initially in the Christian sense, after that, he denies it and the author of *Românism* said that: “We take spirituality in a broad meaning to bring it closer to the history of human culture. For us, spirituality is the complex of ideas and feelings, especially the complex of symbolic ideas through which the society of an era explains its belief in a perfect and eternal order which it is bound to make in its lifetime on earth.”⁵⁷ Such a change of plan is perceived by the doctrinaire of

⁵⁴ Nichifor Crainic, “Românismul dlui Motru” (Mister Motru’s Romanism), *Gândirea*, Fall XIV, No. 7, September 1935, p. 392.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Românismul, catehismul unei noi spiritualități* (The Romanism, The Catechism of a New Spirituality), Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1936/1992, p. 95. The role of the orthodoxy, on one hand, and of Romanism, on the other hand, are presented by C. Rădulescu-Motru as follows: “Orthodoxy can’t go further in the service of a nationalist spirituality without losing its character of religious spirituality; and Romanism can not move forward based on the orthodoxy without paying the price of its abdication from its role of promoter of progress in the economic and political order of Romania.” *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 16-17.

Gândirism as being “arbitrary and confusing”⁵⁸ and “leading from mystical to mystification”.⁵⁹ In this way, “According to Mr. Motru, we should admit that the Romanian people and its spirituality do not date only from 1936, with no historical precedent and having a new and unprecedented nature in our history. [...] But this is nonsense; a nation can not have two or more natures. It is nation as it has one permanent nature.”⁶⁰

Criticizing Motru, whom he considers “however a man of an unquestionable intellectual uprightness”⁶¹, Crainic said that he was “secularizing the meaning of the term of spirituality”⁶² thus creating a “lack of understanding”⁶³ / “ciumpăvire de înțeleș”.

Although Crainic was misjudging Constantin Rădulescu-Motru saying that he “*doesn't know too much about spirituality*”⁶⁴, even if the author of *Românism*, was reviewing the meanings of the concept of “spirituality” in the introductory chapter, both from the theological and spiritual perspective. So, in the Christian view, Rădulescu-Motru was pointing out that: “The Church of Christ sees spirituality as the power of the Holy Spirit to unite, mystically, through its presence, the human being with the holly light and love [...] The Christian church sees spirituality as an introduction to the work of deity. As the Holy Spirit is one and only, the Christian spirituality is also one and only.”⁶⁵ However, Rădulescu-Motru builds his speech, beginning with the next paragraph, from a historical-philosophical perspective, which didn't match with the theological concept of Crainic, who leaving from the Christian meaning of spirituality, reveals the fact that the mystical union made by the Holy Spirit between the “human being and

⁵⁸ Nichifor Crainic, “Mistificarea românismului” (The Mystification of Romanism), *Gândirea*, fall XV, No 7, September 1936, p. 357.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 359.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 357.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 358. Crainic was wondering with indignation if “After this lack of understanding, spirituality becomes «a complex of ideas and feelings» or «a complex of symbolic ideas»- For which purpose? For the society of an era explains its belief in a perfect and eternal order that has to be achieved in life, says Mr. Motru. Very good! But this perfect and eternal order in the religious language has the same definite meaning. For him even this expression is submitted to the act of secularization.” *Ibidem*, p. 358.

⁶⁴ N. Crainic, “Românismul dlui Motru” (Mister Motru's Romanism), in *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁶⁵ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

light and love of God”⁶⁶ “is the essence of our religion as an expression of man’s relationship with God or of the fusion of the transience with the eternity.”⁶⁷

In another article – “Spiritualitate și româanism” – in 1936, Crainic was ascertaining: “Mr. Professor C. Rădulescu-Motru shows himself, especially for some time now, as a determined opponent to orthodoxy.”⁶⁸ In this case, it was, according to Crainic, a campaign of “militant philosophical atheism”.⁶⁹ On this occasion, call into question the meaning theorist *Gândirism* concept of spirituality⁷⁰ to justify the indivisible relationship between *Orthodoxy* and *Romanism* because – he says –, “Orthodoxy and Romanism are given together, the merger history of our teandric nation. [...] A separation between Orthodoxy and Romanism as Mr. Motru fiercely preaches it would mean nothing more than the fall of Romanism in that atheist *vacuum* of atheist people.”⁷¹

The visions of Crainic and Motru, one theological and the other scientific, though different in means, they were united in purpose. Their aim envisaged creating a philosophical structure – *Româanism*, resulting from the union of a spiritual archetype with one of ethnic nature, through which to produce a “jump” into eternity through history.

4. Conclusions

Discussed and disputed, the interwar “new spirituality” engaged in its problem-solving philosophers, theological thinkers, literary critics and young researchers in the vivid movement of ideas. Recognized or not, this trend of thinking and living created, in our country, the unprecedented cultural development.

⁶⁶ C. Rădulescu-Motru *apud* Nichifor Crainic, “Mistificarea româanismului” (The Mystification of Romanism), *Gândirea*, fall XV, No 7, September 1936, p. 356.

⁶⁷ Nichifor Crainic, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

⁶⁸ Nichifor Crainic, “Spiritualitate și româanism” (Spirituality and Romanism), *Gândirea*, Fall XV, No. 8, October 1936, p. 377. Crainic was making this statement having as guidelines the last three books of C. Rădulescu-Motru that he summarized as follows: “in the energetic personalism the religious mystics is depicted as some morbid phenomenon; in Vocation the directive of the magazine *Gândirea* is revealed as a «compromise of the idea of orthodoxism»; in Romanism the attack gets a final and unbearable accent: Orthodoxy should be excluded from the content of Romanism. «Catechism of the new spirituality» addressed especially to youth and scholars, advises to give up to orthodoxy as to something incompatible with the «new nationalism».” *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ Crainic recalls largely the meaning of spirituality repeating mostly what he said in the “Mystification of Romanism”, but to support, this time, the argument according to which “Orthodoxy and Romanism are given together, in teandric fusion by the history of our nation”.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

Reached at that time, even subject of investigation, the “new spirituality” became the clear sign of a change, at least, in culture, although some denied it. Moreover, the “new spirituality” has become the vital element which influenced cultural life. Lucian Blaga, in the above-mentioned investigation, stated “The new spirituality exists. So much that I personally feel existing only through it. *I exist* to the extent the new spirituality exists.”⁷²

For Crainic, the whole human existence required a subordination to “the spirit that dominates everything” and “life and art in the Holy Spirit,”⁷³ having its source in the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. Spirituality was the way in which man could achieve “the alliance of transience with the eternity”.

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