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DOCTORAL THESIS
CLERICAL WRITERS OF THE 20th CENTURY

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SUMMARY

The subject of this doctoral thesis is the spiritual, moral and bookish experience highlighted in the works of some authors who left their mark in a special way on the Romanian literature of the 20th century. We are talking about the Transylvanian writer Ion Agârbiceanu, Gala Galaction, and the hierarch writer Valeriu Anania. We will also refer to the monk-writer Sandu Tudor who became known in Romanian culture thanks to his inspired poems, and as a promoter of religious traditionalism, or to Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, diplomat, journalist, poet, novelist and a Romanian Orthodox priest, who capitalizes on traditions, rites and customs in his works, expressing reticence about the modern technical world.

From a methodological perspective, our research involves a careful analytical investigation of the literary works, using the appropriate critical tools. Thus, I drawn upon to the content analysis method, to the method of interpretation and synthesis, but also to a historical-chronological analysis of the biobibliography of the writers. Moreover, it has been performed a comparative analysis of the lyrical, narrative and dramatic discourse, the case studies being mainly focused on the works of Ion Agârbiceanu, Gala Galaction and Valeriu Anania.

The analytical approach undertaken in order to write the doctoral thesis "Cleric writers of the 20th century" proposes the approach of literary texts, with the scope of highlighting the points of convergence of the authors interpreted from the perspective of their aspiration towards transcendence, but also from the angle of the literary value of the works. Our approach starts from sketching the portraits of the previously listed writers followed by the approach of the most relevant aspects of their works, with an emphasis placed on the relationship author - divinity - work, without which there cannot be a authentic hermeneutics, and which ultimately signifies the search for self-perfection. The research culminates with the interpretation of the common features identified in the works of the aforementioned authors. The prior documentation consisted of reading the texts under analysis, as well as the fundamental critical resources, the indicated directions being then deepened by studying some relevant texts. I proposed and argued a series of working hypotheses based on the principle of intertextuality, taking into account the already existing opinions about the chosen topic, corroborating or emphasizing them, where appropriate, and trying to propose solutions for new interpretation.

The analysis of the important works of Ion Agârbiceanu, Gala Galaction, Valeriu Anania, Sandu Tudor, Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu has as its starting point the genuine religious experience.

which we analyzed with a critical, philological, and theological tool, the two fields constituting authentic sources of distinct exegetical perspectives, in a perimeter still too little developed in our specialized literature. The writers' relationship with transcendence, with the absolute and the impact of sacred revelations on their writings and on the readers represent as many aspects worthy of investigation, which the doctoral thesis aims to analyze.

The motivation for choosing this subject takes into account several aspects, among which there should be mentioned the existence of an image of the divine, a foundational-seminal logos in the works of the three writers, the topic of human dignity, and the theological influence which can be found in their literature.

The doctoral thesis is structured in five chapters. The first chapter is an introductory survey of the late 19th and 20th century religious literature. It records the ecclesiastical activity of Miron Cristea, a scholar passionate about literature whose writings wanted to provide answers to the people's daily worries of life and to the most provocative questions about faith in Divinity. The complex personality of Father Daniil Sandu Tudor has been also approached in this analysis is linked to the missionary school Rugul Aprins ("The Burning Pyre"), which was a symbol of an unceasing prayer. The substance of Daniil Sandu Tudor's "Akathist Hymn" implies artistic craft and grace that ennoble the human soul. Nicolae Steinhardt, Nichifor Crainic, Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu shine through the light of the grace that was instilled in them in realizing the connection between theology and culture, fascinating through the sensitivity and sobriety of their work where freedom was considered a gift given to humanity.

In the second chapter, the work of Ion Agârbiceanu was approached. Here, relevant subjects and ideas are captured around the moral idea, between good and evil. In the short stories, the reason for the inner turmoil of the characters is captured, which preserves an evangelical connotation and substance. Agârbiceanu's work stands out for its complexity, for exploring the moral side and psychological implications of the existence of the Romanian village. The writer's words are suggestive for his entire epic endeavor, while the characters impress with their traditional nuance and emblematic drama, while the short stories express, among other things, the narrator's solidarity with a humble humanity.

In the third chapter, Gala Galaction's work is analyzed as the work of an exponent of Christian morality who did not shy away in his creation from expressing the conflict between good and evil. Galaction lived with the fear of God and was closely concerned with the ordinances of the Christian life, the cleric being aware of his role in society, hence deriving the fundamental basis of the existence of a divine image in his work. The epic thread of the short stories depicts the inner drama of the characters, provoked by the forbidden temptation. As Gala Galaction is a seeker of truth in all his inner turmoil, his native lands strengthening, through their greatness, his faith in divinity. Precisely for this reason, it can be said that the author is the one who imprinted the initial

impulse on the destiny of these characters, whose existence unfolds in this rhythm dictated by a rigorously determined narrative scenario.

In the fourth chapter, the image of a true "clarifier of the holy word" who advocates for a theology of nuances is worth noting under the work of Valeriu Anania. The creativity of the theologian-writer Valeriu Anania unfolds in a diverse spectrum: poetry, prose, memoir, dramaturgy, translation and exegesis of the Holy Scripture. The theological meanings are captured in a remarkable way by the exegete. The writer Valeriu Anania valorizes, in short stories and stories, episodes and meanings of his own biography, in a kind of a masked confession. The author travels in space and time revealing his position as an angelic intermediary peregrine who overcomes existential difficulties through his inner strength. Throughout this chapter we will interpret the poetic creation as a suggestive celebration of the Christian ritual. The volume "File de acatist" is a testimony of a revealing artistic creation, which can be seen as a special moment in the inner development of Valeriu Anania, the man and the artist. "Istorii Agrippine" end the stage of the author's poetic creation. Consequently, in this chapter we will highlight the meanings of the poem, particularities of the vision and dimensions of expressiveness that give Valeriu Anania's poetry an aesthetic identity. A careful analysis will be dedicated to the "Anamneze" volume, which bears the signs of sacredness, revealing the most significant reflections of the poetic art of the writing cleric. In this chapter we will furthermore analyze the nuanced artistic imaginary of the Peregrine Apter, emphasizing the relationship of the protagonist peregrine with the history.

The contributions of clerical authors in the field of literature are consistent, that is why the selection of the analyzed texts was made carefully, in order to offer a greater chance of their understanding and interpretation. In the case of the cleric writer Valeriu Anania, the stories, the novel and the theater were closely analyzed, considering the metadiegetic level as the level of the events narrated by one of the characters. Valeriu Anania's novel offers us a diverse range of possible interpretations, through the agglomeration of events and scenes, some of them unsettling, reaching the dimension of the fantastic, the miraculous, in a way in which the author found it proper to explore.

The last chapter is a synthesis one, suggestively titled "Particularities and similarities", and it seeks to reproduce both the particular distinctions of the commented writers, as well as some possible analogies, similarities, correspondences between their works, because the reader's access to the meanings of the works can be facilitated through this integrative perspective of the particularities of the work of the commented writers and the similarities between their representative creations.

The creations of the clerical authors circumscribe a wide horizon in which one can observe an important imprint left by the existence of a divine face in their works. Ion Agârbiceanu was

constantly concerned with the symbolic image of the window that leads towards the healing light, the Transylvanian writer being an evocator of the beauty beyond the world. Gala Galaction's creation is a show of sound, color and feelings, in which the portraits of the loved ones and of the atmosphere of those times are outlined in a spontaneous and impressionistic style. We find here the same window open to the world and to the sacred mystery that illuminates the universe of childhood, an image that we find in Anania's entire memorial work. Valeriu Anania's thirst for the infinite and the sky is strongly felt, among other recurring themes such as love, death and resurrection. The text has an openness and a searching depth suitable for the man who is called to take care of the inner world first.

The motif of sin in the works of clerical writers is one anchored in the period of those troubled times.

This transparency of the works tempted us towards in-depth research aimed at understanding the internal and external sources that generated the appeal to the collective mind reflected in the works of clerical writers. The traditionalist orientation influenced and inspired the writing of the three prominent representatives that we will focus on. Beyond these, influences of romanticism and even naturalism can be identified, with reference to the mode of exposition and the motifs typical of these literary currents. The writers' belonging to different currents and literary orientations was argued through references to some features accepted by literary criticism, supported with significant examples from the works covered. At the same time, each of the writers appealed, more or less, to archaic, archetypal, mythological symbols and representations, to "paradigms of the intellect" that denote higher concerns of the common man, which can, however, be equated as philosophical concerns.

The literature of the 20th century can be perceived as an ebb and flow of the aesthetic, the excellence of the aesthetic being deciphered in the interwar era. The beginning of the 20th century was also a prolific period for Romanian prose, in which personalities from among the clerics of Romanian literature were active. It is a period in which a process of formation of a new artistic thinking, the content and direction of the ideological searches being influenced by the cataclysms of that period. The realistic type of representation and the artistic thinking was determined by the level of scientific and philosophical understanding of the reality characteristic of the 20th century, but also by the ideas about the complexity of the human personality, reflections that allowed a deeper understanding of the reality through literature.