

THE PATRIOTISM OF MIND AND THE PATRIOTISM OF HEART AT MIHAI EMINESCU. MIHAI EMINESCU'S CONSERVATISM¹

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Abstract. The study addresses the issues of patriotism at Mihai Eminescu. It argues that too often and too superficially Mihai Eminescu's patriotism is dismissed as organic obsolete nationalism, sweetened romanticism, etc. In his times he was... before his time. During the communism, Mihai Eminescu was censured because it was considered that his works impeded good relations with USSR and Israel. Under the democratic European Union Mihai Eminescu is too much: too nationalistic, obsolete and too romantic and even too difficult to be promoted or taught. Nevertheless, the stand of the poet was, on the one hand, quite analytical and, on the other, quite up-to-date in his bio political perspective. At the same time, Eminescu's political thought is an interesting type of political conservatism with significant classical features and particularities, too.

Key words: Mihai Eminescu, patriotism, lyrics, Romanticism, bio politics, conservatism, ecophilia.

In our times, when Romanian values are hastily overlooked and dismissed it is refreshing to return to the soulful patriotism of *Mihai Eminescu, the national Romanian poet*. Eminescu is intrinsically linked with Romanian identity, as its bright morning star. Mircea Eliade captured exactly this aspect when he stated in the Foreword to "Errantry Edition" to the *Poems* of Mihai Eminescu: "Eminescu is all that remained untouched from our Romanian waters, skies and land".²

We have chosen this subject because it contradicts the contemporary, general, popular culture trend. Too often and too superficially Mihai Eminescu's patriotism is dismissed as organic obsolete nationalism, sweetened romanticism, etc. In his times he was... before his time. During the communism, Mihai Eminescu was censured because it was considered that his works impeded good relations with USSR and Israel. Under the democratic European Union Mihai Eminescu is too much: too nationalistic, obsolete and too romantic and even too difficult to be promoted or taught. Nevertheless, the stand of the poet was, on the one hand, quite analytical and, on the other, quite up-to-date in his bio political perspective.

In what it concerns the analytical perspective of Mihai Eminescu on patriotism, we shall discuss briefly Eminescu's definition of patriotism as combination of warm heart and cold mind. He said:"But especially because the Austrian influence presents itself as intricate fabric of causes and effects, and as consequence each individual in our country lives under this pressure, hence, the more we love our country and our people, the more we should endow our mind with a cold impartiality and not heat up and incite thought, because then we could easily falsify the sight of this faithful guide and get wind up with vehemence in the darkness, fighting phantoms. Very warm heart and very cold mind are required from a patriot, called to straighten his people and the

¹ This text is composed by a first part presented at the 2012 ASR conference Mihai Eminescu, the Complete Man of the Romanian Culture", followed by a second part, presenting other ideas characteristic for the Eminescian political thought.

² Mihai Eminescu, *Poesii. Editie de pribegie [Errantry Edition]*. Foreword by Mircea Eliade, edited by Mircea Eliade, Paris, 1949.

fanaticism of the love for country, since the most fervent fanaticism could coexist with a cold mind that supervises activity...”³

The Mortal and the Immortal Eminescu

Murdered then and now again, Eminescu magically lives again with each consciousness and soul which embrace his writings (Mircea Eliade). While the Romanian Dissidence kept a cult for Eminescu, given the efforts of personalities such as Mircea Eliade to care for editions of Eminescu's works, in Romania, Bolsheviks forbid Eminescu, within the desperate efforts to eliminate all national values and replace them with the new, global, Komintern agents' and Sovietic values. The efforts to block volumes IXth and Xth from the poet's *Works* including parts of his political and journalistic writings were epopeic and worthy of a better cause. His patriotic views were not well seen by two empires – the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian ones – and these empires not happy with the prospect of Great Dacia might had been involved with his early death at 28th of June, 1883.

He was the first Romanian journalist who had to endure disinformation and political reprecussions that we now recognize as rather totalitarian practices.⁴ Eminescu was marginalized then and still is today. Occasionally, though, great patriots speak up: Nicolae Iorga considered him „the integral expression of the Romanian nation” and Petre Tuțea remarked: „Eminescu is the absolute Romanian – a lyrical sum of the great Romanian princes”. With Eminescu, Romanian nature, history and spirituality found a proper voice. Therefore, in this patriotic perspective, Eminescu may be rejected by cosmopolitanists, socialists, universal republicans, nihilists etc., but not by Romanians. In this patriotic perspective, Romanians rather identify themselves with Eminescu.

„Hunted by humanity, let me my whole life fly
Until I feel from weeping my very eyes are dry;
Let everyone detest me no matter where I go,
Until from persecution myself I do not know;
Let misery and horror my heart transform to stone,
That I may hate my mother, in whose love I have grown;
Till hating and deceiving for me with love will vie,
And I forget my suffering, and learn at last to die.

Dishonoured let me perish, an outcast among men;
My body less than worthy to block the gutter then,
And may, o God of mercy, a crown of diamonds wear
The one who gives my heart the hungry dogs to tear,

³ M. Eminescu, *Diverse (Critici, vederile sale politice)*, Iași, Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin, Colecțiunea Șaraga, available at www.dacoromanica.ro, p.47, checked April and May 2012.

⁴ We see now a timid national revival manifested in a renewed interest for Eminescu and the dismantlement of the prison of lies and disinformation surrounding his life and work in Romanian publications (Nicolae Georgescu, *Mihai Eminescu's Illness and Death*, 2008, 2012) and blog comments (<http://victor-roncea.blogspot.ro/2009/06/rezistenta-lui-eminescu-la-crima.html>)

While for the one who in my face does callous fling a clod
In your eternal kingdom reserve a place, o God.”⁵

Mihai Eminescu, activist for the rights of Romanians

The poet was where his heart was, an active member in several organizations fighting for the human and political rights of the Romanians from Transilvania, such as: ”Românismul” (that rejected bringing Carol I as king on the Romanian throne), ”Oriental”, ”România Jună”, ”Societatea Carpații” (where Ion Slavici was member, too). His motivation was purely patriotic and this is the secret of his industriousness writing.

The dimensions and sources of the patriotism of Mihai Eminescu

Both the dimensions and the sources of Eminescian patriotism are found in the feeling of communion with the Romanian natural, cultural, historical and social Romanian space, and the ethical feeling of involvement in the diversity of Romanian matters requesting answer. For instance, Eminescu’s nationalism did not mean lack of tolerance or proffering blindness to the problems generated by the Romanian melting pot. Patriotism for one nation should not mean the contempt for other nations, nor their eradication. He wrote: ”A state so poor and poliglot as ours, where the existence of nationalities is granted by the law and being this way nationality granted lawfully, naturally would follow that the state helps that nationality in developing its culture,- such a state, I would say, should be glad that confessions lift such a huge task of the state’s shoulders and they attend to their own culture by their own means, for the state should help and encourage these confessions in their patriotic tendency. With us, though, just the opposite happens and they are denied of official support in their problems experienced with their confessional schools, and even more, they are imposed unbearable subsistence conditions...”⁶

Patriotism should mean knowing and understanding the contributions of the national heroes. „But the Romanians who took part in the 1848 movements are despised, the leaders – their commanding officers – even the decorated ones, are constantly insulted by the Hungarian journalistic society and labeled as ill patriots, the invalids who are still alive and their orphans on the street are at the mercy of the people – and, while for the so-called Hungarian martyrs of 1848 requiems are still held, with the presence of the public authorities, the people who took part to the funerals of the martyr Iancu, who was by anything inferior as character to any Hungarian martyr, not only were labeled as traitors by journalists, but they were also persecuted by public authorities.”⁷

⁵ M. Eminescu, *A Dacian's Prayer*, translation by Corneliu M. Popescu, available at http://www.poezie.ro/index.php/poetry/202426/A_Dacian's_Prayer, consulted April-may 2012, November 2012.

⁶ M. Eminescu, *Diverse* (Critici, vederile sale politice), Iași, Published by ”Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin”, *Colecțunea Șaraga*, available at www.dacoromanica.ro, consulted April-November 2012, p.29.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p.27. Translation by Henrieta Anișoara Șerban.

These examples underline the patriotism of mind at Mihai Eminescu sprung from the feeling of brotherhood with nature and deep roots into an indestructible mix of nature, history and culture the respect for Romanian history and the aspiration for a future that resonates with the greatness of fiber of national identity.

Patriotism and nationalism are consonant at Mihai Eminescu with biopolitics

But the case of Romanian poet does not emphasise the actions of political power to better control the biological dimensions of reality as much as the living roots of the Romanian people in his own Romanian history, culture and nature. There are two important dimensions. The first envisions a situation of Eminescu's patriotic nationalism in its epoch, as a progressive position of the times, preoccupied with nation states as the future of Europe. The second implies a precise definition of the bio political concept of Mihai Eminescu that can be described by the following quote: "Indestructible organic links bring us all together in a community of destiny where we cannot be something else than what our forefathers were... Romanian nationality will disappear with the last material Romanian." It is not accidental that the motto from Mihai Eminescu to the edition of Gheorghe Vornica to Eminescu's Biopolitics was "This country should be really Romanian or it is not worthy of existence at all". Eminescu's biopolitics was characterized by a sum of main elements: the state was seen as a living organism, he spoke of a "biological patrimony" of the nation and in this perspective the health of the population was at once an ethical, political and economic problem and these two were profoundly related to the reform of the country and its parting of the ways with the statute of agricultural country. Eminescu saw the importance that the country encouraged the development of industry.

Nowadays, biopolitics is again up-to-date subject in political philosophy and political science. In France, Michel Foucault reopens the discussion on biopolitics starting from biopower. The latter term is coined by the French author. He explains it: "By this I mean a number of phenomena that seem to me to be quite significant, namely, the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, in other words, how, starting from the 18th century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species. This is what I have called biopower."⁸ The biological fact cannot escape the sphere of governance. The core characteristic of political process is to react to, to manage, limit and reorient the cultural practices, the discursive practices and the whole context of resistances, revolts and great insurrections of conduct. Before Foucault, Eminescu noticed that "an absolutization of the biopower to make live intersected with the absolute generalization of the sovereign power to make die."⁹

⁸ Michel Foucault: *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, 2007, p.1.

⁹ Jessica Auchter *Thanatopolitics: Language, Naming, and the Right to Memorialize* (2010) available at.

Eminescu fought all the difficult causes of his time

He embraced the cause of Romanian nationalism, and found himself against the great powers of the world, and, embracing the cause of Romanian nationalism, he was nevertheless a supporter of the preservation of the culture and cults of minorities, he was against the political behaviour of the minority elites, but not against political participation of minorities as such, he was against corruption, he was for the industrialization of Romania, he sustained the freedom of speech and the freedom of journalism¹⁰, etc. His words are still live and pungent: "Bribery is capable to penetrate anywhere in this country and, for a bribe, the upper levels the administration are ready to sell the blood and wealth of an entire generation. People who have committed serious crimes are walking the streets, occupying high office, rather than spending their life in prison. Public functions are often in the hands of wicked men, hit by court ruling. Those who make up the bulk of the army of political fiefs are the budget-eaters, the so-called businessmen of all kinds, which, in return for their individual benefits, give their leaders rather blind obedience. Justice, subordinated to politics, has become a fiction. For example: a man is involved in a quite scandalous business and he denounces himself. This man is kept in office conducting the investigation of the dubious matter himself; the party clings on his rehabilitation, and chooses him in the Senate. Parties, with us, are not parties of principles, but personal interests' parties that trample promises made to the nation before elections but somehow pass, nevertheless, as representatives for the legal and honest will of the country. The cause of this strict organization is monetary interest, not the community of ideas, organization equal to that of the infamous Mafia and Camorra, which smell of jail from afar".¹¹

At Eminescu, patriotism is active and constructive criticism. Eminescu's patriotism of mind is still interesting and up-to-date as a form of the historically situated being. Eminescu is a patriot who inherited the aspirations of the work of the 1848 Romanian revolutionaries and considered himself unified with these heroes in thought and feeling. His creative intelligence harbored a myriad of ideas and projects for the strengthening and development of Romanian nation as a type of spirit: all these were proof of the cold mind governing the tremendous "fanatic" feelings from his patriotic lyric. Here is the tumult of feeling as in *Satire III*:

"Patriotism ! Justice !... Such guardians of our State
 Despise the laws as nonsense that they themselves create.
 As sly as artful foxes they will the benches throng
 frenetically applauding our country game and song ;
 Then meeting in the Senate each others praises speak
 This heavy-throated Bulgar, that long and hook-nosed Greek.
 Each claims to be Romanian, whatever mask he wears,
 These Bulgo-Greeks pretending that they are Trajan's heirs;
 This poison froth, this dung-heap, this foul and filthy brood
 Have they indeed inherited our nation's masterhood ?!"¹²

¹⁰ Mihai Eminescu unmasked the repressive measures taken by Brătianu government against the journalist Emil Galli.

¹¹ <http://comunitate.ziare.com/blogs/6533/12157/eminescu-despre-romani>.

¹² <http://www.estcomp.ro/eminescu/popescu.html>, translation by Petru M. Popescu.

While in the patriotic lyric he had certain politically incorrect accents, they are much less dramatic when we consider them with the weights and measures of the epoch of national configurations. The times were inflaming for the national causes. And national causes were luringly romantic at the time. The process of national construction is intrinsically linked with processes of inclusion and exclusion, and with the dichotomical symbolic mechanisms "us" versus "them". The cold mind was rather in the projects as in the project of Great Dacia and in the meetings from Carpathian Society. There, Eminescu aware of the necessity to raise public consciousness in the question of national unity, designed with sociological and journalistic intuition public opinion strategies implying the formation and use of opinion makers. They were the Transilvanian students attending their studies in "Romania" (Romanian provinces Moldova and Muntenia) who would have naturally supported in front of their relatives, friends and acquaintances back home the idea of union (a Great Dacia).

The meaning and the misfortune of being Romanian were to fight against reputable foreign interests in securing the national ideal. The romanticism of the national ideal called for the hot heart, while the transposition of the national ideals into reality called for national projects and a cold mind to pursue the ideals, both realistically and strategically. But Eminescu points out that both are necessary. The energy and determination set in motion for the country need both the fueling stamina of feeling and the reality check of reason. Eminescu heralds *Wake Up, Romanian*¹³ in 1866:

*Wake up, Romanian, you priest of freedom,
Do not weep on the ashes of your old genii kingdom,
It is high time, time you rose for Justice's flag,
It is high time for stepped tyrants, it's time to scrag.*

Mihai Eminescu's Conservatism

Mihai Eminescu's conservatism represented a political creed and a journalistic approach of a great thinker. Arghezi said that Eminescu wrote with the quill soaked in the Morning Star. As a conservative political thinker, Eminescu wrote with a quill soaked in patriotism. The entire register of the characteristics of Mihai Eminescu's conservatism are, in fact, triggered by patriotism.

Vasile Stancu wrote: "If, from the point of view of his literary work Eminescu belongs to all Romanians and to the entire humanity, from the political point of view, he became an integrant part of the conservative movement, found at the stage of becoming a political party, with all his being and all his thought. The first contacts with the conservative movement he has at "Junimea" Society in Jassy, attracted by the sound culture of its members, among which we can enumerate Titu Maiorescu, Costache Negruzzi, P.P. Carp and others, intellectuals of German formation by their

¹³ Mihai Eminescu, *Poezii inedite*, Petru Creția edition, *Manuscriptum*, 1991, nr. 82, year XXII. Translation by Henrieta Anișoara Ţerban.

studies in Austria and Prussia. However, even the liberals recognized the superiority of the conservatives inviting the intellectual elite, noticing that since Eminescu and until Octavian Goga all the glorious personalities of our culture seemed to be situated outside and against the Liberal Party.”¹⁴ Yet, worldwide, not only in Romania, the fate of conservatism is related to big the names of humanity: Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Junger, Martin Heidegger, Thomas Mann, Julius Evola, Mircea Vulcănescu, Mircea Eliade, Lucian Blaga, Nae Ionescu. And these conservative personalities were all wildly different from one another, too. Non idem est si duo dicunt idem... The content and limits of “tradition” varied from author to author.

Eminescu’s political platform was journalistic. He was among the first to understand and emphasize the role of the press as political agora. We consider that an important part of Eminescu’s activity, maybe as significant as the part dedicated to poetry, prose, theatre and philosophy was devoted to political journalism. Mihai Eminescu was also one of the greatest first Romanian journalists.

The historical narrative of his journalistic activity is both remarkable and short. Mihai Eminescu published first at the newspaper ”Curierul de Iași” where he debuted in 1876, while in 1877 he became editor at ”Timpul”, in Bucharest.¹⁵ Since 1880 he activated there as editor in chief and political editor, until 1883. In June 1883 he was brutally imprisoned in a mental institution, after publishing an article entitled “For the freedom of press and the freedom of journalist”, where he protested against the infringement upon the right of free expression and where he unveiled the repressions against the journalist Emil Galli by Brătianu’s government.¹⁶ Under political command, Eminescu, paradoxically, although he activated as a conservative thinker and not as a socialist, liberal or even communist actor, becomes the first political prisoner in Romania. In order to understand the role and the place of Mihai Eminescu in what concerns conservatism in Romania and in Europe we are going the present the conservatism of the 19th century in a nutshell.

On the conservatism of the 19th century

Looking back, we can assess both the bright revolutionary tradition and the huge and frightening impact that the French Revolution had on societies at the dawn of political modernity. As well as after the fall of Napoleon many countries returned to the anterior manner of government, similarly, after the excesses that followed the French Revolution, Europe was simply cast right back to its state before 1789. This was owed naturally to the numerous revolutionary changing that evolved and degenerated, thus fearing the almighty kings in front of the even remote possibility that such events could ever be repeated. The date of the failure of the French Revolution into terror is also the ”date” of birth for conservatism.

¹⁴ Our translation, after Vasile Stancu, „Omul politic și doctrinarul conservator Mihai Eminescu” article available in Romanian language at <http://www.condeiulardelean.ro/articol/omul-politic-si-doctrinarul-conservator-mihai-eminescu-i-eminescu-si-junimea> accesat la 9 iunie 2013

¹⁵ As a saddening and significant detail, he had to borrow money from Slavici to be able to arrive at Bucharest.

¹⁶ See also, www.cersipamantromanesc.wordpress.com/tag/eminescu-patriotul/

Establishing and maintaining law and order were the refrain and the gilded key words of conservatism, set in practice, in discourse and also implemented by the rulers of the European countries. Edmund Burke, a glorious figure of the conservatism of the 19th century, said that the revolutionary forces were too abstract and even too philosophical in France to become reality. In order to repress any revolutionary influences conservatism was often associated in Europe with the legitimacy of the censorship of the press. This was maybe the most important act undertaken by the European governments to underpin the existing order and the traditional status quo. This conservative politics and philosophical attitude underlined the cultural values such as tradition, religion, as well as the stability of politics and society.

Eminescu's conservatism is typical for the 19th century and yet a specific one

Mihai Eminescu assumed his patriotism as crucial defining value and sacred creed, which is clearly apparent both in his patriotic poetry and in his engaged journalism. His fight for Romania was led on a daily basis in the pages of the newspapers. His critical attitude overcame the narrow vision of what was currently named political liberalism in Romania, as well as the vision of the most advanced conservative thinkers of the epoch. His writings had the foundation of philosophical, political and political economy knowledge. In this respect, maybe Eminescu was the first political thinker in Romanian with such a horizon and, especially, with a political economy foundation for his political thought. Eminescu wrote in one of his articles: "But wouldn't this ruin the people? It is of no consequence to them. But isn't it altering the inherited justice of the national character, or is it crushing the common sense, or is it wasting into the empty wind the treasure of wisdom and customs that people inherited from their much abler elders than this current generation? What are all these for the liberal? The world should perish, long live Manea! Any a priori idea issued in the narrow brains of a curious man, any paradox, is just right to fire the imagination of the masses and lead it on the certain path that does not end in the good living, toward work and truth, but to the rising of a new class of people upwards, an obscure social stratum, about which one does not know either what it wants, or which are its traditions, or if it is capable to rule a state or not."¹⁷

His journalistic writings were dripping of pathos and force, while the presence and the centrality of feeling were sustained by unparalleled logical rigour. We can read in various sources that Maiorescu identified at the time the following interesting aspects: "Eminescu was noticed as soon as he entered into redaction by the universe of ideas of culture that he has accumulated alone, by his logic and by his verve". Among the discursive characteristics generating force were remarkable especially the "deep knowledge of the autochthonous tongue", but also, a specific and "uncanny soulful warmth", both, conservative characteristics in Romanian perspective, because they were consonant with a Romanian intellectual tradition of sensitivity and sensibility.

An illustration of conservative sarcasm: "Tradition? This is nothing. The old righteous and common sense traditions of the people are seen as prejudices. The

¹⁷Translation in English from Eminescu's political thought apud <http://irinamonica.wordpress.com/tag/idei-conservatoare/>

manner of existence of the state, its monarchic form, for instance, are things about which [the liberal] might be indifferent; their value is only relative and it has only as much value as it attains in contributing to the accomplishment of the personal ambition of a man or of a group of men who see in the state a modality to gain a fortune, a name, to reach higher positions and dignities in state.”¹⁸

It is then clear – and not amazing at all – that Eminescu invigorated any public debate. As an especially critical spirit, he was famous for the accurate and logical identification of the main inadequate aspects of the Romanian liberalism of Western import. At the same time he was famous for the severe criticism of all the political life in Romania, which he saw with displeasure as purposeless demagogic discursiveness. In this perspective his journalistic articles captured the painful irresponsibility of the political actors, their dubious affairs, the demagoggy and their verbosity deprived of the foundation of ideas or ideals deeming that Romanian ruling class unfit for the never ending traditional richness of Romanian people illustrated in their complex popular creation. These popular ideas of universe and universal, of the sacred and genesis, the spiritual facet of nature, or of the communion with nature were only a few among the traditional themes capitalized by Eminescu in his immortal work. “What gives this red government almost the character of a foreign government, as oppressive as the rule of the Moskáli Russians or the Turks since it is as much deprived of respect for tradition and past as it is far from any knowledge of the nature of Romanian state and nation, seen, both of them, as experimentation terrains.”¹⁹

A radical and incommode spirit, Eminescu was the unwanted leader of the Conservative Party, and a leader who placed all the other leader of the party, by the power of comparison, in an inferior position. At the founding of the Romanian Conservative Party Titu Maiorescu described the leadership of the Party as following: “There are ten leaders of it, and the 11th, Mr. Mihai Eminescu, redactor at newspaper *Timpul*.” This newspaper was the publication of the Party and it was only natural that the position of editor in chief to be an extremely important position in relation to the hierarchy of the party, too. Nevertheless, the importance that Mihai Eminescu had was even greater than that of an editor in chief: he was a remarkable philosopher and ideologue, whose radicalism threatened to ruin the image of the party.

Only as an example... he used to say intriguing things, such as: either this country is to be truly Romanian, or it is not worth existing at all.²⁰

The classical conservative attitude of the 19th century considered dangerous any radical change, as dangerous as any of the revolutionary philosophical ideas. For Edmund Burke, society is similar to an organism where the individual components, that is, the physical persons, perform various roles and they are thus not entirely independent components of the state body, or in relation to one another. Hence, it was also a governmental duty to educate people in this respect. People are not adequate to a stable society by nature, outside the education they receive amidst a specific society, because they are led by plural and contradictory desires and passions orienting them always toward an irrational behaviour, toward violence, anarchy and egoism. In order

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibidem.*

²⁰ Mihai Eminescu, motto at Biopolitica lui Eminescu by Gheorghe Vornica, Ed. Colegiul Național „Ștefan cel Mare” Suceava available at www.dacoromanica.ro

to educate people, governmental institution should act first as a servant and only second as master, offering people multiple modalities of suitability and education, for instance, through school, church and family. Since society is such a complex construction, and government does not know with absolute precision everything, such as the impact of any decision on the population, as a consequence being recommendable that government does not intervene, for instance, in financial matters – prizes, salaries, fees etc. The conservatism of the 19th century was invented mainly due to the lack of trust in the human nature and it cultivated a purpose of maintaining historical continuity within the traditional frames to reject the abstract theoretic argumentations that further orient the philosophical discourse of the era, including that of the revolutionary movements.

For Eminescu, not any revolutionary movement is bad. For example, the revolutionary movements around 1848 in Europe (revolutionary nationalist movements) are positively valued, at Eminescu, most likely due to their patriotic dimension. "But Romanians who took part in the 1848 movements are despised, their leaders – their officers – even the decorated ones are unceasingly insulted by the Hungarian journalistic society, which they label as bad patriots, the invalids still alive and their orphans on the streets are left at the public mercy – and, while for the so-called Hungarian martyrs of 1848 there are still requiems taking place, organised with the assistance of the public authorities, those who took part into the funerals of the martyr Iancu, who was not in the least inferior to any Hungarian martyr, only the journalism deemed them as traitors and they were pursued by public authorities".²¹

The conservative conception of Mihai Eminescu is based on a biopolitics perspective of organic nationalism. Interestingly, while in contemporary political thought biopolitics was reintroduced in the philosophical discussions by Michel Foucault in correlation with liberalism, at Eminescu the biopolitics perspective correlates with the conservative core idea of preservation of tradition. For Eminescu also, the state is an organism. In his vision each ethnicity/nationality has its role as each member has a purpose within a body. All the more as the external threatening factors are reputable, the body should gather all its strengths: "A state so poor, and so polyglot as ours, where the existence of nationalities is guaranteed by law, and being a guaranteed nationality, by itself would follow that the state has to aid in the development of their culture these nationalities, - such a state we'd say, should enjoy fact that the confessions take such a burden from its shoulders and by their own means care to the culture of their believers and it should with all powers to sustain and encourage these confessions in their patriotic tendency. With us, though, quite the contrary happens and not only they are denied the official intervention into the difficulties of the confessional schools, but also they are imposed unbearable conditions of subsistence...".²²

Patriotism is consonant with biopolitics. As we see in the quote above, the nation as a whole is a diversity enriched and empowered by diversity. As following, we understand that the biopolitical body of Romanian nation should benefit both from

²¹ M. Eminescu, Diverse (Critici, vederile sale politice), Iași, Stabilimentul Grafic Miron Costin, Ed. Colecția Saraga, p.27 www.dacoromanica.ro

²² Ibid., p.29.

passion and wisdom."But especially because the Austrian influence presents as a very intricate fabric of causes and effects, so that each individual in our country lives under its pressure, for this reason the more we love our country and our people the more we should empower our mind with a cold impartiality and not overbid the thought, because we could easily falsify the sight of this quite faithful guide and we should not vehemently agitate it into the darkness, fighting ghosts. Extremely warm heart and very cold mind are required for the patriot, called to straighten his people so that the burning phantasm does not stop the brain to remain cool and assuredly unfold its activity..."²³

His patriotic conception is a continual dimension in the writings of this great thinker. The progress is in fact a process of maturation, of natural becoming according to the harmonious rhythms of nature, tradition etc.

Also, Eminescu understood the liberal rights, and the role of the liberal institutions, only the indiscriminate import of European institutions, often inadequate, he considered damaging. Thus, as known, in June 1883 he was imprisoned in a mental institution after publishing the article „For the freedom of press and of the journalist”, a protest to the infringement of the right of free expression, unmasking also the repressive emasures undertaken by Brătianu’s government against journalist Emil Galli.²⁴

Eminescu was active member in many organizations fighting for the rights of Romanians in Transylvania: *Românismul* (who was against bringing Carol I in the country as king), *Orientul*, *România Jună*, and *Societatea Carpații* [Carpathian Society], where Slavici was also a member. Eminescu, editor in chief at *Timpul*, insisted that the Transylvanian students of Romanian nationality, attending higher education institutions in Romania to act during holidays as Romanian agents orienting public opinion toward the Great Dacia."²⁵ His insistence was also present in a writing that triggered an investigation ending the existence of Carpathian Society. His activity as a journalist made him all the more dangerous, as it had the necessary leverages for action: his ideas were expressed brilliantly in a very important newspaper, *Timpul*, which Eminescu had transformed in a national daily.

Due to these preoccupations, and his passionate patriotism, the conservative Eminescu was considered a radical, potentially dangerous to the state.²⁶

²³ *Ibid*, p.41.

²⁴ See cersipamanromanesc.wordpress.com/tag/eminescu-patriotul/

²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ See http://www.reporterul.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3566%3Amihai-eminescu-adevarul-despre-moartea-marelui-poet&catid=58%3Afemina&Itemid=385&limitstart=2 From Dniester to the Tisza / All Romanians complained thus, / That they cannot permeate / Thicken foreign dominate. / From Hotin and until the Sea / Come on horseback Moskáli / From the Sea to Hotin / Always on your way to win./ From Boian to Vatra Dornei/Catepillar's all you see;/ As the foreign feeds on you /Unrecognizable know you brew. / Up the mountain, down the valley, / Enemies are up you alley, / From Satmar up-to Săcele / Only obstacles you drill. / Oh, poor, poor Romanian! / Moving backwards, no elan, / Nothings goes, nothing advances/ As you are out of hand, / A stranger in your own land. / And from Turnu to Dorohoi / The enemy floods annoy / And they settle against us;/ As they come the way of iron / Songs vanish as dandelion / Birds fly all away / Strangers shadow light of day;/ Only thorns remain / At the Christian's door of pain. / The country's bosom undresses, / The woods – Romanians' brethrens / Lean before axes / And his springs get dry/ Impoverished poor country cry! // Who endeared the strangers, / Let dogs his heart, in labours, / Let empty their house, / Let misfortune had his race! / Stefan, my lord, / Do not remain at Putna / Let to the Archimandrite / All care of candlelight, / Leave the care of Saints / To the holy parents / They do care bells to draw / Day and night, as they know / Until God will endure / To save

Conservatism, ecophilia and deep ecology, as trace

Nowadays the imperative of nature preservation is not perceived as conservative, but rather, paradoxically, as revolutionary. The conservative Eminescu loved nature as himself. Throughout his poetry and also in his vision of genesis nature felt what he felt. In his political thought nature was also Romanian as the authenticity of “Romanian-ness” was provided by a concrete, “real” and specific nature, whose continuity was thus a guarantor of authenticity, legitimacy and strength. *The woods – b with Romanian -/ Bows before axe / And his springs dry out / Poor in poor country! /*

The aspects of the Eminescian love of nature are extremely numerous and they justify the phrase *ecophilia* in relation with the standpoint of the poet. Tom Regan reformulates the principles introduced for the first time in ecological thought by Arne Naess in his study entitled “The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic.”²⁷ The first principle of deep ecology in this phrasing of Tom Regan captures an aspect of love of nature in itslef present also at Eminescu: *The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.*²⁸

Deep ecophilia is the trace of deep ecology, a characteristic of Eminescian creation. The following ideas offer the content of the phrase “deep ecophilia”. Nature is guarantor of equilibrium and happiness. Nature is the depositor of divine origin of everything. In fact, we interpret Eminescu’s ecophilia his deep feeling of union with nature, from the Derridean perspective of *trace*. There is a powerful trace of all that nature represents, in the poet, in his literary creation and in his entire existence. The perspective opened by Derrida seems to us enlightening also in the case of Eminescu: “Ecce animot, that is the announcement of which I am (following) something like a trace, assuming the title of an autobiographical animal, in the form of a risky, fabulous, or chimerical response to the question “But me, who am I?” and that I have bet on treating as that of the autobiographical animal. Assuming that title, which is itself somewhat chimerical, might surprise you. It brings together two times two alliances, as unexpected as they are irrefutable [I am animal]”.²⁹

A Christian Orthodox conservatism

Mihai Eminescu's Christian conservatism brings the ideal solution to meet the society's Orthodox Christian conservative ideal, that is, tradition, stability, harmony and the education of the whole society in the spirit of traditional values through family,

his people pure! / You ascend from your grave, / Let me hear you the horn calling, so grave, / Moldova gather and save. / When the horn you call once / You gather Moldova's sons, / When the horn you call twice, / The very woods mobilise, / If you call them the third time / All enemies turn to grime / From border to border/ Endeared by crows / And gallows!

²⁷ Tom Regan, “The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic,” *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1881), pp. 19–34.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ “The Animal that Therefore I am”, by Jacques Derrida, translated by David Wills *Critical Inquiry*, winter 2001, vol.28, number 2, available at criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/.../v28n2.derrida.html

school, and especially the church. The central role of the social model, in preserving tradition, within conservatism is fulfilled for Mihai Eminescu by the Orthodox ideal of Christ. The following text brings a sensitive illustration:

"And, the flowers of spring knock again at the gate with soft fingers, and where five hundred years ago the herds of shepherd Bucur were lost in the horizon of a plain, today, thousands of young green gardens contrasts with the brilliant white walls and towers of the houses and churches; the endearing rhythm of the bells call out the sad old legend proclaiming that Christ is still in his tomb today, because tomorrow it will rise from the lily-white shroud, lifting his radios forehead to the heavens. Sad and comforting legend! Behold almost two thousand years since it raised the peoples from the darkness, shaping entre peoples on the principle of loving one's neighbour, two thousand years since the biography of the son of God e is the book that educates humanity.

The teachings of Buddha, Socrates' life and the principles of the Stoics, the path of virtue of the Chinese La-o-tse, although similar to the teaching of Christianity had not had so much influence, as they did not raise so much man as Gospels did, that simple and popular biography of the gentle Nazarene, whose heart was pierced in dare moral and physical pain, and not for him: for the good and salvation of others. A stoic would have also suffered the torments of Christ, but he would have suffered them with pride and contempt of his fellows, Socrates drank the cup of poison, but he drank it with the carelessness characteristic for the civic virtue of antiquity. Neither recklessness, nor contempt: the whole suffering and bitterness of death worldwide pierced sharply into the sensitive Lamb's heart broke and during the supreme moments, love sprung in his heart and he ended his earthly life asking the Father for His heavenly forgiveness of his persecutors. Thus, he was sacrificing himself for his fellow man, neither out of pride, nor out of the sense of civic duty, but out of love; then he remained the highest form of human existence, that kernel of truth that dissolves deep disharmony and harsh struggle for existence haunting the whole nature. (...) The human being must have before him a man as type of perfection after which to shape his own character. As modern art owes its resurgence to the ancient models, thus the increasing of the new world is due to this prototype of moral man, Jesus Christ. Following him, any Christian tries to shape his own life, trying to fight his earthly instincts and impulses in his self ... "³⁰

Mihai Eminescu embodied passionately a very complex and paradoxical and romantic personality who can be better labelled as a conservative. His political program never ceased to be a literary one, his so-called barbarian veneration run as deep as a classicist respect for ancient models, and as deep as his Orthodoxy, his patriotism never ceased to overcome xenophobia, although he criticized many nationalities, his genius brought to life universes and he never ceased to be an uncomfortable human being.

³⁰ Mihai Eminescu, *Deșteaptă-te, Române /Awake, Romanian*, 1866, original text reproduced in the volume *Poems*, original edition, Peter Cretia, Manuscriptum 1991, no. 82 year XXII.