Religion and National Identity in Eminescu's Articles and *Fragmentarium*

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L'auteur étudie les considerations de Mihai Eminescu sur la religion, avec l'accent sur ses opinions au sujet de l'influence des faits religieux sur l'esprit collectif.

[365] State: Man's relation to the finite and the race. Religion... Man's relation to the Universe, to the infinite. He allows the infinite power that works within him to pass through the sifting capacity of sight and escape into a tangent: becoming religion and metaphysics. (manuscript 2255 in Fragmentarium, Bucharest, 1981, p. 226)

1. Mihai Eminescu's articles and *Fragmentarium* jottings dedicated to the religious sphere, as it is known, quite of a parsimonious weight, are dominated by the incidence of the "socio-political reflections", of an immediate idealist audacity. Although they will gradually convert into a realist philosophical vision regarding the weight of this segment of religious ontology within humanity's social dynamics and within the Romanian cultural and socio-historical flow.

A review of Eminescu's *fragmentarium* shows that the poet was mainly attracted by the way in which the ontophany, as the ossified result of religious experiences, was bridging the gap from practices to religion. It seems that Mihai Eminescu was preponderantly attracted by the sinuous path where the individual sacred thing transposed itself into trans-individual, later coming back to the religious symbol and to the magic/cataphatic thought.

This perspective urged us to put forward the idea that in the case of approaching religion as a principle of social energy conservation we could talk about Eminescu's fascinations of generality, the universality claimed by "religious ontology".

As it is obvious from the - *Culture and science* – miscellanea no. 2255, religion, as "element of people's spirit" belongs to its culture, understood by Mihai Eminescu as "the sum of his whole spiritual life" (*op. cit.,* in *Fragmentarium*, Bucharest, 1981, 27) and appears/manifests itself when it is possible to talk about a "common interpretation of the sacred"; a socio-cultural exercise that tends to limit/circumscribe dogmatically the religious experience of the individual.

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The moment of detaching religion from "pure religiosity" (*op. cit.*, p. 28) is important because of the fact that, through it, a certain tentative of/towards secularization is made. Taking into account that, historically speaking, the access to sacredness is lost from the society as a whole, the religious community will try, through various forms, to stop "the degradation of the sacred into the profane".

From the "significant rationality's" perspective, we can say that, with regard to what concerns Mihai Eminescu, the one from "fragmentarium", the religious experience, practiced within small communities, will be accepted as "hermetic semiosis" while among the great nations, the only valid interpretation remains the one given/conformed by tradition. The ancient Greek or Roman's loss of tradition is an equivalent phenomenon, in Eminescu's option, with the dissolution of knowledge in a broader sense.

Bringing forward the interest shown by Mihai Eminescu towards religion and religious matters, we point out the correct employment of the tools used by him in the "deductions" of the phenomenon's dialectics: "dogma" as means of a religion's operating system; "the cult" as an offer of adequate knowledge of the dogma and "the church", assumed socio-historical and cultural as an institutional form of setting up the cult and the dogma.

The unilateral approach by the hermeneutical interpreters of Eminescu's thought of such matters, for instance (especially) those regarding the relations between religion and the political power and/or the relationships between religion and national identity, requires them to be revised with the texts (namely: the drafts) "on the table". Especially considering that, as it could be observed from the following lines, the relation between religion and national identity needs to be reviewed in the light of the effects produced by the Junimea society's progressive cultural and socio-historical conservatism. G. Călinescu was also advocating an "explication in line with progress" (see *Mihai Eminescu, studii şi articole*, Iaşi, 1978, p.160), recommending a hermeneutical shift of emphasis upon the phenomenon's dynamics and a more temperate caution in promoting "the verbal leap over facts" (see G. Călinescu, *Eminescu şi clasele pozitive*, 1946, *op. cit.*, p.147).

As D. Vatamaniuc was also pointing out (see *Fragmentarium*, Bucureşti, 1981, p.16), Mihai Eminescu was constantly interested by the dialectics of the socio-historical phenomena and by the philosophy of history; following them in their perpetual changes, decoded as slips out of the state of equilibrium, regardless of the cause that determines their intensity; describing, later on, their amplitude through the permanent equation of restoring the maintenance path of a necessary state of balance and of social entropy.

In the manuscript no. 2255 (*Cultură şi ştiinţă, op. cit.* pp. 27-28), Mihai Eminescu displays his perspective on "integralism" thinking that, in the case of "public or national culture", only those "common elements" remain which, not being anymore "the work of solitary people", they belong to a nation's "educated spirit". In addition, in the integralist option of Eminescu's thought, this "educated

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spirit" is a cultural composite made up of "manners, religions, the way of seeing the world and, especially the language, which is the mirror of these" (*op. cit.*, p.27).

2. Religion, as a proven/practiced cultural expression or, in the poet's terms, as a common social language of national individuality, circumscribes itself to the "spirit of the people" in which equally recognizable are those cultural signs that claim "morality from man". It is our duty to reiterate that, in this case, "culture" was perceived by Mihai Eminescu both as "a distinguished source of morality" and as "own reason of sentiments (beliefs)" (*op. cit.*, p.28)

Imputing him the "integral nationalism", "xenophobia" or even "anti-Semitism" leads to the erroneous assumption, of course, that the so-called "dictatorship of Eminescu's thought" transmutes (in his own version) the issue of religion from a *datum*, into a *fatum*. The imputation comes on the basis that the national spirit, in Mihai Eminescu's view, "unfolds itself in an ontic direction" as it is religion in the present case. Romanians have always identified religion with "nationality", regarding thus as "foreigners, all of them who do not belong to the Romanian people's customs" and even "less pure" or "lower than us".

Rejecting *de facto* any form of "conversion", Mihai Eminescu was convinced that we would have to take into account "the differentiation's intensity"/the accents, when we relate ourselves to a people's religious culture. And, most of all, in the spirit of Eminescu's thinking, we should take into account some "grade differences" within the equation between theology and religion. Along this line, Mihai Eminescu was putting forward the idea of placing naturally "the general and objective goal" within "the national spirit" seen as "an ethic, religious state and so on" (*op. cit*., p.30); phenomenon totally different from "the reactionary mood" that Eugen Lovinescu was bestowing upon him.

In fact there are known the reactions, *pro* and *contra,* next to "unearthing Eminescu's lost journalism" and, most of all, the accusations aimed at the noxious concoction dose of "Junimea criticism" and "national mysticism" (see Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane,* vol. I, Bucharest, 1981, p.13-14; 40 *and so on*) out of Eminescu's elixir pushed/decanted to the last limit.

"The synthesis" about Eminescu's journalism centered on religious themes, put forward by Teodora-Sorina Coca in *Publicistica lui Mihai Eminescu,* proves that Eminescu's journalism stirs interest even on the threshold of the third millennium. *Publicistica lui Mihai Eminescu. Adevărul creştin (*see *„Art Act Magazin",* no. 77, 22 july 2010*),* the exegete's assertion is placed, strategically, under Eminescu's critical perspective regarding the alienation of the religious background as it is identified within the primitive Christianity's inclusion and manifestation area.

"The Christian religion, as it was, had to make concessions, in order to be received by the superior classes. Thus it ceases to be Christian. From here onwards starts its falsification and its transformation into a religion which, like all the Oriental ones, was only the subjective rooting of a given social status; and the belief that God has provided theology in order to justify the division of all things and people as they are" (*op. cit.)*

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Several articles are revised on this occasion such as *Din istoria mănăstirilor închinate* where the poet shows his interest towards the Orthodox religion and supports the laudable initiative of an abbot of "Candlemas" Church. Archimandrite Chiriac, pilgrim through the Romanian Principalities, to collect books in order to establish a library at Koutloumousiou hermitage, finds in the *Timpul*'s gazetteer an effective support, who encourages his readers to send in books and money, as donations for the projected library. Eminescu's cultural missionary task transpires also from this association between the need of knowledge and fate with the due insistence of the role played by the church and cultural-religious education in the process of formation and upbringing of the national spirit. In his *Cu timpul au început a se recunoaşte...* he pleaded for the primacy of "the Romanian language" by emphasizing the exquisite role of words and of the language contained in the religious books in strengthening the spiritual part. For such a well administered treasure in this "non-translatable part" of a language will plainly stand Mihai Eminescu, as in the above named article, but also in other less known miscellanea.

Because this "non-translatable part of a language forms its true ancestors' dowry, while the translatable part is, in general, the treasure of human thought. As in a village all of us enjoy certain things, which are for everybody and owned by nobody, lanes, gardens, squares, in the same manner there are, in the republic of languages, beaten tracks for all – although his own real property someone has it at home; and within its home, Romanian language is a good housewife and has a lot of good things" (*manuscript* no. 2255 in *Fragmentarium, ed. cit*. p. 678).

In the same article it is underlined the struggle of the Romanian scholars, both laics and clerics, the effort of neutralizing through Romanian teaching "the venom of the Calvinist books", printed and spread with a subversive religious goal. In counteracting the attempt of attracting the Romanian people towards the "Reformation" there is Eminescu's assessment for the "Romanian Church's" cultural and religious effort and the illuminated Romanian gentlemen who involved themselves in maintaining the "right ancestral beliefs" through the translation of religious books in a Romanian language "that preserves the right meaning", which they have "sanctified" it and have introduced it in the formulas of worship and state administration. Teodora-Sorina Coca also emphasizes Mihai Eminescu's capacity of handling and manipulating religious concepts and terminology. "The articles on religious subjects" are based on: knowing the titles, the church's ranks, knowing the provisions and agreements between government and Church, the position of the Church within the state's apparatus, the historical path of our country, the canonical rights of the Western Church, cosmogony theoretical thesis and, of course, in depth studies of the Old and New Testament" (see. Teodora-Sorina Coca, *Publicistica lui Mihai Eminescu. Adevărul creştin,* in „Art Act Magazin", no. 77, 22 July 2010).

A separate discussion deserves also the "religious story" *Serbarea de la Putna întru memoria lui Ştefan cel Mare*, a text that stands out both for its literariness and the emotion of connecting to the sacred. But above "journalist's duties", a scent of

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an uncensored love of nation and language comes forward out of the religious articles. The same scent is found among Eminescu's other drafts about which the poet was convinced that "confused as they are" they "*must* stand before the eyes of any Romanian man of culture" (see C. Noica, „Ce cuprind caietele lui Eminescu", in *Eminescu sau gânduri despre omul deplin al culturii româneşti*, Bucharest, 1975, p. 30-47).

3. What is needed, however, to be reviewed unbiased, beyond any wickedness regarding the fact that Eminescu's ideology transpires in "some xenophobic or fascist manifestations", during the early twentieth century (see Eugene Lovinescu, *op. cit*. p.14), is the blockade imposed upon the national and cultural-religious perspective, especially when it is imposed fallaciously whenever the opportunity arises.

And of such "opportunities" we are not short of. We can spot them out once we proceed reviewing the "Eminescu's file", in the light of an "intellectual ease", as "people's hero"; file prepared by Marius Chivu, in "Dilemateca" no. 9/2006 and reprinted in "Dilema veche", no. 367/24 February – 2 March 2011, accompanied by a series of portraits adapted to the mocking spirit, out of which could not be missing, of course, a close-up photograph of Mihai Eminescu as a "communist hero".

Based on the assumption that "Eminescu barely survives his own myth", Marius Chivu, sees in Eminescu, grosso modo, a "Jack of all trades": "Supporting almost all the political, moral or literary causes of posterity; claimed by all forms of nationalism: Orthodoxy, Iron Guard movement, Proto-chronism and, at present, the New Right; Eminescu was able to be - as Nicolae Manolescu stated - "emblematic in our century for all currents of thought."

In Marius Chivu's opinion, in "Eminescu's critical reception" file there are three important moments:

"First comes, Maiorescu's article of 1898, following the first edition of poems, where the critic imposes the image of a Schopenhauerian spirit, of the genius totally abstracted from the daily routine. The second moment corresponds to the posthumous poems publication in the Perpessicius edition and Calinescu and Vianu's studies of the 30s, followed by Ion Negoitescu's interpretation, printed in 1968, which establishes the value of the posthumous poems and the image of a visionary romantic.

And, of course, the third moment, equally "important of Eminescu's reception".... *incredibile dictu*.!...: appears in *Dilema* no. 265/1998. For the first time, and so far the only one, there was an attempt at the deconstruction of the poet's personality cult and the prejudices found in the collective imaginary, reopening the discussion of the literary myth, the reassessment and revitalization of critical thinking as well as an indirect invitation to rereading"... *E fructu arbor cognoscitur!...*

But in spite of the seizures and/or labeling of all kinds, Eminescu's journalism and other works advocate, agonistically, for the (re)establishment of some formulas

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of "national solidarity through tradition", including religious, that could be placed under the banner of patriotism as a feeling of genuine emotion: "I love this good, gentle, affable people, in whose name diplomats cut out charters and wars, portray emperors that it could not even dream of them" (manuscript 2257, in *op. cit.*).

Moreover, the phrase "general culture" seemed to be, at the time when Eminescu was spreading his philosophical thoughts and tension through drafts, in aesthetic deficit against the antique's culture, for whom art, as a form of individual's expression, was in "the closest relationship with religion and the state" (*op. cit.* p. 35)

In this way could be explained, for example, Mihai Eminescu's over commented reaction towards the surplus of "icons from Russia". What was for some an expression of the obvious Russian expansionism, for Mihai Eminescu was only a "disorder" fuelled by recessionism and exacerbated from a political point of view. The situation, in Eminescu's opinion, was due, exclusively, to the lack of a Romanian icon industry, a real fact without any connotation of foreign policy. If the evidence of the "Muscovite danger" could be, at that time, a real threat, the "causes" that could have concurred to the weakening of the states were of a different kind: economic and social. "But through a more developed economic and cultural status and having the required welfare level, then the external attempts to tempt them (the Romanians) through icons and portraits would not have any success" concludes Mihai Eminescu in *Iconarii d-lui Beldiman*.

Concerned about the reasons that prompted Mihai Eminescu to pledge for the icon as a form of art and for the establishment of a cultural project to encourage talented icon painting artisans who possessed also an obvious artistic culture, Valentin Marica (see *Eminescu despre icoană ca artă* în *NOI, NU!,* Attitude and culture magazine,Thu rsday, January, 29th, 2009) was referring to the "timeliness" of Eminescu's opinions regarding the diversion of our Eastern, oriental spiritual flow from a an authentic cultural landmark into a "drainage swamp of all the useless things belonging to the European overproduction". Mihai Eminescu's two articles: *Iconarii d-lui Beldiman* (November, 13th, 1888) and *Iar iconarii* (20 November 1888), fuel Valentin Marica's plea for the poet's involvement in the practical issue: the revival of Romanian industry "with worship objects" icons, in particular, with which laity often comes into contact. We should remember that Mihai Eminescu was also warning that such an "ugly reality" was, at that time, offset by another one, apparently "favorable" from a politico-economic perspective, by launching into use the icons painted at Gherla. These "Romanian products" over-impregnated with the "naïve language", though regarding its artistic value the poet had "his doubts", leading to the idea that "where the local culture appears though as a pure personal purpose", "it has not (even there) the purpose to fulfill man's individual *moral call*, to increase his value", but merely "to pass distinctly" as something individual, "a pleasure and a luxury" (see *Fragmentarium*, *ed. cit.*, P. 35)

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On the other hand, Constantin Cubleşan was reactivating the members of the Gândirea group's perspective referring to the fact that the "controversialist Eminescu's" categorical position was, in fact, that of an unwavering defender of Orthodoxy and national existence as spiritual basis of our affirmation in the world.

Influenced by the subject in question, Eminescu's argumentation not only proves its historical and political relevance, but also the opportunity in the sense that the "religious icons", introduced because of the identity's denomination and due to the religious rite, are incomparably more pernicious through their spreading, rather than the political icons. If "political influences are in general changeable and ephemeral, religious and denominational influence often persists for centuries" and can determine the "deepest conviction of a nation's conscience". Because in Mihai Eminescu's opinion, "religious icons persist as long as people hold onto the inherited religious denomination and thus, in the past, in the name of religion, the Russians invaded the Romanian principalities and the Balkan Peninsula (...) The causes which could weaken the Romanian state's security are of a totally different nature: economic and social" (*Iar iconarii*, in "România liberă", no. 3357, 20 November 1888).

Moreover, according to Mihai Eminescu, "the true lawyers of the church are the arts: a Gothic dome, an aria by Palestrina, a painting by Raphael, or a statue by Michelangelo, is a good orator, who uses man's good inclinations" These masterpieces make an atheist "feel infinitely small compared with the infinite time and the causal chain." (*manuscript 2306* in *Fragmentarium*, p 64). Mihai Eminescu shows concern about the way and especially how the church speculates this state of affairs, confiscating a sentiment, such as religiosity, for its own use, fact which determines his well known critical reaction against such a strategy. Familiarized with the cathartic effect produced by the arts, the poet had long been convinced that the icons painted artistically have a major sensitive impact, polishing not only "the soul's", but also the "eye's civilization" too, which is used to "accustom itself" with "correct forms". Thus, the spiritual accessibility religiously mediated by the icon is endorsed by its artistic/plastic value. Thus this makes Mihai Eminescu speak about "bearable icons", given that this vernacular production may exceed aesthetically the Greek products of the Orient or the Russian ones of the years 1840-1850, of a "phenomenal ugliness." Therefore, the icon, in Eminescu's acceptation, must conquer through transfiguration, through the "cathartic" effect produced by the painter's art, entirely different from the manner of serial "reproducing" of "mummies and skeletons, which have resemblance with stiff and conventional faces out of the old Egyptian's paintings, which invaded "the Romanian icon market".

What Eminescu rejects is "the empty and barren formalism", "the steady persistence into old habits and often evils", "the lack of ideals", and the transformation of the religious art into an instrument of "social utilitarianism"; that such hijacking situations incarnate towards the "specific" and "historical" evil which, as seen in the current case, favored the "spread of ugliness". For if political

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influences are fleeting, the "religious influence" determines "the most intimate and deepest conviction of a nation's conscience" fact which determines Eminescu to plead for resizing the local iconographic background, aware that a "more developed" economic and cultural status could be reconciled with a problem of religious spirituality, against which artistic exigency and pure spiritual feeling are required.

4. Such "reactions", listed as marks of "extreme nationalism" or, worse, outbursts of "Nazism" are required to be corrected and then relocated onto social philosophy coordinates regarding the effects of the seizure and diversion (alienation) of the religious sentiment among Romanians. Nothing more or less than the Eminescu's positions, as they transpire from the "private notes", such as the type of relationship between the "natural state" - in his attempt to become "a living and stable organism", "a kind of an automat", concerned exclusively with the consolidation of a certain "form" and of a "particular own way away from any controversy" - and the means of achieving this goal: "religion or more plainly, the divine right". (*manuscript 2257*, in *op. cit.* p.223)

We mention that, in Eminescu's retrospective on religion (poorly researched or addressed in a truncated manner), the "divine right" is similarly to "the painted plan of a house, whose buildings precede it", the forms of religion being "the purple cloaks with which is cover the life's deep mess". With the mention that through its "folds" transpires "a glimpse of reality, and unfortunately the wrinkles themselves shine more than anything else" (*op.cit.* pp. 223-224). As it is historically confirmed, in Eminescu's vision, the isolated states, *rectum* "natural state" tend to be "perennial". But in contact with foreign peoples, "the natural states die", as "mummies unravel themselves into ash in contact with external air". But as long as they are "enclosed within a nation", they "create the air that they need", they "create for themselves the religious atmosphere, where they can vegetate". Hence the "nature's double game": first "the conditions, which encounter themselves in order to create an organism", and second, the tendency of this organism once emerged to create itself "the conditions needed for its existence". Only the impassibility of creating them makes it disappear, says Mihai Eminescu (*op.cit.* p.224)

The dynamics of Eminescu's opinions on religion as a natural phenomenon is also visible in his allegations related to "the ossification" of state systems through hereditary classes. "Heredity is equal to perennial-nation", says Mihai Eminescu.

To be as convincing as possible about the subtlety and timeliness of Eminescu's opinions regarding the relation between religion and natural state, we will focus our attention on a text dating from the time of his university studies. The text is important in order to understand his critical views about the ways religion manifests itself and/or in connection with the representatives of the church; the severity of this perspective being recognized in the lecture *Influența austriacă asupra românilor din Principate*, presented under the Junimea's auspices in 1876 and published, the same year, in *Convorbiri literare*.

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Eminescu reacts against the intention of creating a Roman-Catholic metropolitan see in Bucharest. He regards this decision as being clumsy, given the complicated, tensed political situation of the time. This incident gives him the opportunity to display his beliefs/fears related to the danger of the state "falling under the domination of a power which divides it into infinity" (*manuscript* 2255, in *Fragmentarium, ed. cit*., p. 226).

Connoisseur of the "Kulturkampf" effect, unleashed by the struggle between Otto von Bismarck and the Catholic Church regarding the church's place and power within German society, the poet brings back into question the history of the political rivalry between the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburg amid the "struggle for civilization". It seems that, in Mihai Eminescu's view, this rivalry, extending itself in/towards Mitteleuropa, engulfed Romania too, serving thus as motive for the intention of setting up a Roman Catholic metropolitan see in Bucharest. An action with a dual purpose: of spreading Catholicism in Romania and the Balkans (deed which the Austro-Hungarian Empire could take advantage!) and putting Charles I of Hohenzollern (a Roman Catholic) into a "delicate situation", on the grounds that he came from southern Germany (mostly Catholic) as the Prussian Hohenzollerns, the majority of them, were Protestant. Thus denounced, the purpose of a Metropolitan Catholic establishment in Bucharest exposes its true political nature. This decision is extended also to Bucharest in order to "establish the Hohenzollern dynasty's position in Romania". It is one of "the measures through which Austria-Hungary, especially Hungary and in particular the Hungarian people, want to secure a dominant influence upon the peoples of the Orient". (*art. cit*.)

As far as they were concerned, as Mihai Eminescu states, "the Romanians welcomed the Roman Catholic Prince. Though the Romanian people's hope was, and it is, that the dynasty founded by this Prince will not be Catholic, but Romanian, meaning Orthodox; for seventeen years, however, throughout the country it was never felt that we have a heterodox Prince" concludes the journalist without hesitation. Through the establishment of the Catholic Metropolitan see of Bucharest, *the political spirit of the Romanian people* had to change because "today it is possible to challenge the throne from a denominational point of view". The "Kulturkampf" effect stands out through the effort of Eminescu, the journalist, to point out that "always, the Papal see has regarded Catholic princes as agents of Catholic propaganda", approach which, as far as we Romanians are concerned, would be exercised, in most cases, with a certain violence, "the Romanians felt the most of it"; first of all, as an attempt of denationalization, causing them to act act accordingly.

In an editorial in *Timpul* (no. 112, May, 20th, 1883) Eminescu brings back to the spotlight those historical facts which confirm the justified fears of the Romanians, most of them Orthodox: "our ancestors were persecuted by the Catholic kings of Hungary not because they were Romanians, but because the Pope had threatened them with excommunication if they were lenient with the

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schismatics. A great number of Romanians left the northern mountains, under Bogdan Dragos Voda, their homeland, Maramures, because a Catholic king wanted to impose upon them the Catholic confession. Our Transylvanian Romanian brethren have suffered for centuries the greatest oppression precisely because they were not Catholics. The Hapsburgs, taking dominion over Transylvania, managed in a short time to dismantle the Orthodox Metropolitan see of Alba Iulia, the holder of it being though appointed by the Metropolitan of Bucharest. Through this act, they would have produced confessional disunity between the Romanians in Oltenia if the Belgrade Pact had not compelled them to withdraw" (*art. cit.*).

Mihai Eminescu rereads the Romanian natural state's destiny through a double lens: a Bismarckian one, on the one hand, and a traditionally conservative one, on the other, being convinced that "after a century and a half", the Catholics followed their "commenced work", banking, politically, on the Eastern Carpathians Romanians' division. Torn between "two churches: one belonging to the people, the other to the Court", claimed by "two heads of the Church, one the country's spiritual father, while the another the Royal Family's one and of the other foreigners settled in the country", placed as a bridge over the "insurmountable abyss" between "the people and the dynasty" the Romanians certified their status as victims of historical conjunctures.

The Junimea society's conservators were certainly aware of Otto von Bismarck's initiatives, as a response to this Catholic threat by triggering procedures and legislative initiatives designed to reduce the power of the Church and to eliminate its capacity to indoctrinate the German subjects by putting schools under the state's supervision. Thus, in 1871, the imperial government adopted the laws that forbade the use of pulpits by priests to discuss politics, leading to the expulsion of the Jesuit order from Germany and the elimination of religious teachers from state schools. As of May 1873, "the Falk Laws" extended the state's control over the clergy through the regulation of priests' ordination, empowering the civil marriage and investing some state institutions with disciplinary powers over the Church.

It seems that some of the conservative Junimea society's legislative projects were not foreign to the "Kulturkampf" breeze, whose priority was the secularization of society due to the fact that, in public life all citizens should accept the State's prerogative and not the Church's.

Eminescu's notes readdress "Europe's case" which "through the arrival of the Germanic element", organized in natural states, would have been "prone to such organization forms of states with castes" if it had not come into contact with an "element" -brought by the "bearers of the Christian religion"-, firstly "international" and secondly, "unable to form castes": the democratization of the *milites ecclesiae* recruiting process within the secular society or in other words, "wherever they were founding them" (*ms*. 2255, in *Fragmentarium*, ed. cit., p. 224)

Catholicism freed Europe of castes, concludes Mihai Eminescu in the sense that where "the decision factor belonged, indeed, with the private universities"

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"children of all classes" will be accepted. But in a paradoxical manner, the church's autocratic organization was basing its system of clergy's recruitment on a "core of democracy preserved through celibacy".

The danger that the universal church might fall under "the domination of a power which divides indefinitely" is interpreted in the light of the Junimea society's pattern as follows, "the Church, which, through its concessions made to Feudalism has renegaded the Christian law's spirit, born out of the Roman Empire culture's super fluency, The Church, which was Christian only by its name, The Church, which in order to create the necessary atmosphere for Feudalism, became a Germanic paganism, through the mere fact of celibacy had destroyed Feudalism, and itself". (*op. cit.*, p.224)

Obviously, Mihai Eminescu admits that the Romanian Church had its own merits in supporting and encouraging the fight for independence of the Romanians living in provinces ruled by foreign forces. In an article, mentioning Mircea Eliade's *De la Zamolxe la Iisus* (see "Ziarul lumina", the first Christian daily newspaper in Romania, the issue published on Friday 15 January 2010) and based on the "negative image" of Nichifor Crainic's *Gândirism*, the editorialist George Enache was obstinately pleading that Eminescu believed in the role of the Orthodox Church as an identity element in the history of Romanians and in the moral value of religion in general. This explains the fact that the perspective upon Christianity was never part of Eminescu's discourse "autonomously, but only as a component of a wider discussion, namely national (Romanian) identity and the nation's traditional values" (Orthodox Christianity, the national language etc.).

Eminescu's conservatory attitude stands out from his accepting the state and society as "nature's products"; the poet understands the state as similar "to bee states" in which "the fate of young generations is similar to that of swarms etc." At a closer look, he sees that this "body" is dominated by its natural tendency "to ossify in forms, in shadows of laws – as Mureşanu would call them" which will become independent after reaching maturity. Or, in Eminescu's thought, owners of "stable forms, always the same, through which consecutive generations pass, just like will-less matter, through all forms of existence."Moreover, by analogy, just as "a body contains ideationally its embryo form", the "society" seen from all viewpoints of its development is "contained" in social-historical forms. "Its future stages, legislation, law, religion" etc. depend, according to Eminescu, to a social complex whose vital "organs" have "their respective energy," "their own way of secretion." Religion, "as clothing for institutions", born instinctively, is related to the "public spirit", "public opinion" and the "feeling of belonging together" (*ms.* 2255, in *Fragmentarium*, p.225).

5. Labeling Mihai Eminescu a supporter of a specific religious system would be hazardous, because he places himself amidst the stream of a transdisciplinary religious ethos, without categorically rejecting any of its tributaries.

The error that is unfortunately still alive is related to the "cult" or "cultural" "complexes" of various interpreters who assimilated Eminescu so that he was

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viewed as a pagan, Orthodox, Catholic, materialist, Buddhist, Pythagorean, Stoic, Eleatic etc.

Nichifor Crainic agrees that Eminescu's poetry and thought were temporarily confiscated by doctrines and ideology; he argues that Eminescu's poetry is penetrated by a religious vein, easily identifiable in the cosmogony of *Scrisoarea I* which "is not philosophical, but religious or mythological." Even if the cosmological tableau "is not identical to the one revealed in the Bible," Crainic maintains that "a religious breeze is blowing through it. Any cosmological myth has a religious breath" (*Creştinismul din poezia lui Eminescu*, in *Spiritualitatea poeziei româneşti*, Bucharest, 1998).

Nichifor Crainic was determined to prove that Mihai Eminescu was a poet of Christian inspiration. Even though, quantitatively, the position of Christian texts in Eminescu's work is not dominant, the feeling of religiosity prevails.

Referring to the poem *Rugăciune unui dac*, Nichifor Crainic emphasized that besides the "hemistich" *El zeilor dă suflet*/He gives gods a soul, a note through which Eminescu colors the prayer in a "Dacian" manner, "all the other elements of the fragment, ideas and words, are Christian:" "*În vuietul de vânturi auzit-am al lui mers/*His pace I distinguished in the wind's roar is a Psalm verse; and *El este moartea morții şi învierea vieții*/He is death's death and life's resurrection is a hymnal fragment from the Easter service" (*op. cit.).*

Convinced that when "Eminescu's genius opens completely seduced by his exotic readings, his understanding of the celestial orders assumes the pure gown of Christian spiritualism," Nechifor Crainic sees *Luceafărul* as a "grandiose Christian poem":

"Its plot develops on two planes, one earthly and the other celestial. It is man's ephemerality before divine eternity. They communicate with each other and intersect in the fire of love's passion, for passion, short by nature, but eternal because of its intensity, seems to inhabit the intersection between heaven and earth. In fact, there are two simultaneous loves in Cătălina's soul, one of the body and one of the spirit. They fulfill each other. It is the human soul that is thirsty for the ideal in the other world."

The solution proposed by Crainic was to be fully accomplished in the interpretive solution proposed by Edgar Papu or Constantin Noica, exegetes who maintained that the Romantic themes are just an "adstratum" of Eminescu's work, a tribute to the literary fashion of his time, and the essence of his work was a Christian "spirit" which could be revealed through careful analysis of his oeuvre, in the case of Edgar Papu's exegesis, or an illustration of Constantin Noica's Romanian ontological model of the being.

This attitude is contrary to Pompiliu Constantinescu's vision of the pre-Christian background of Eminescu's poetry. Pompiliu Constantinescu was convinced that "Eminescu's genius goes deep to the positive and negative roots of both life and death, of creation and chaos, of instinct and intelligence, voluptuousness and asceticism, of the relative and the absolute, of the blind «will» and lucid reflection.

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That is why he cannot be Christian, but pagan, for he knows no sin, which is a brake in the safety of existence./.../

The vision is cast in Buddhism, Platonism, demonism – without Christian elements – for Eminescu does not preach consolation through mercy, the illusion of the afterlife, the resurrection, or God's love./.../ (Pompiliu Constantinescu, *Eminescu, poet păgân*, în „Manuscriptum", nr. 1/1977, p. 72)

Aurelia Rusu proves that Mihai Eminescu is not a "materialist"; she argues that the poet uses the materialist perspective just for to demonstrate "the existence of the immaterial substance." Eminescu concludes that "Because materialism is monist, it is also more idealistic than any pluralism: *idealism and realism; moralism and pluralism – there are the true antitheses*" (*ms*. 2275, in *Fragmentarium*); he is thus convinced that "there is no antithesis between idealism and materialism" because they both admit a single *cosmic unity*" (*ms*. 2255, i*n* Aurelia Rusu, *Eminescu – ipoteza atomilor*, Libertas Publishing House, Ploieşti, 2010).

The currentness of Eminescu's perspective upon religion, as it emerges from the *Fragmentarium* may be identified in newer research in the philosophy of religion (see Aurel Codoban, *Sacru si ontofanie. Pentru o nouă filosofie a religiilor*, Polirom Publishing House Iasi, 1998).

These exegeses – that insist upon ontophany as final result of Christian religious experience whose divine mediator is Jesus Christ, of the same nature as God and who, as Son of God, preserves the divine person replacing the "principle" of pre-Christian religions – cannot avoid Eminescu's thought with references to God's cosmic legitimacy.

This is true because Mihai Eminescu used to see God as "an atom, a mathematical point; the common point where all the powers of the earth melt, to build the body of laws, a cosmic system." (in C. Noica, *op.cit.*)

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