

ABSTRACT

Our approach aims at revealing the comparison between two European Romantic spirits: the English George Gordon Byron and the Romanian Mihai Eminescu and analyses the transfer of ideas and spirituality from the former poet to the latter. Some of the main characteristics of the Byronic hero, a world traveler and a rebel against the social order are embodied by Eminescu's heroes, the melancholies are the main constituents of their similar Romantic profiles. Their emotions and meditations about the world around them, their bitter doubts and melancholy are the main constituents of their work. Time, space, life, death, myths, the search for one's own self, meditation, revolt are common themes, and both Byron and Eminescu integrated them within a system of obsessions and relations which confers a timbre with polyphonic nuances upon their literary approach, attitude and manner. This paper wants to be a unitary study, which is enriched by a new reading of the poems and a different approach of the texts.

The most illustration poems of this early years (1866-1873) are "The Epigones", "Mortua Est", "Angel and Demon", "Emperor and Proletarian". These poems exhibits the overwhelming influence on Eminescu's poetry of Lord Byron. In "Evening Star", "Ode in ancient meter" and the five Letters he frequently used metaphysical, mythological and historical subjects. Eminescu defined himself as a Romantic, in a poem addressed "To My Critics" (Criticilor mei) and this designation, his untimely death as well as his bohemian lifestyle (he never pursued a degree, a position, a wife or a fortune) had him associated with the Romantic figure of the genius. Byron was not a happy man. His whole life was spoilt by his passionate temper and excesses. He made satires which offended many people because they were really unkind. But when his great poem "Childe Harold" was published everybody complemented and praised him. But soon, he offended again the public by one of his poems and he was greatly blamed. He left England never to return in life.

Byron represents the universal reaction of the 19-th century against the ideas of the eighteenth. It is the influence of the French romanticism that has its repercussions in England, too. Walter Scott began the reaction, but Byron's revolt was more comprehensive. He rejected the whole manner of thought of his predecessors! The first half of the 19-th century is the age of

Byron. In language which was intelligible and persuasive, under shapes and forms which were suggestive and inspiring, Byron delivered a message of liberation. It has been said that Byron could only represent under various disguises that Childe Harold and The Corsair, Lara and Don Juan are variants of a single personality who sins and suffers and yet, is to be pitied for his suffering. Byron is regarded as the herald and champion of revolt. His quarrel with mankind, his anger against fate, were perfectly genuine.

Not many people in Europe or elsewhere in the world know that Eminescu, the last Romantic of Europe, is Romanian. Eminescu is famous not only for his masterpieces, but also for his philosophical meditation and rebellious works. Just like Byron, Eminescu is not a passive spectator of the reality. Their literary works are often characterized by a rebellious, non conformist streak. To some extent the hero of their poems had a degree of autobiography. The poem becomes a vehicle for the author's beliefs and ideas. Disillusioned with his life of revelry and hedonism, Byron's poetry is a reaction to the broader contemporary feelings of melancholy and cynicism felt by the post-French Revolution generation.

The Eminescian work, unique and bright in a historical synthesis is of our people's national traditions and of culture concentrated into a brilliant personality with a profound, social and philosophical thought, and a special sensibility.

Eminescu has been regarded as one of the great European poets, comparable to Byron or Lermontov, despite only living to the age of 39.

It is through this latter approach that Eminescu has come to epitomise one expression of the Romanian identity. Today, many Romanians consider Eminescu to be the 'National Poet' of Romania and an integral component of Romanian culture, just as Shakespeare or Byron offer an association with national identity in other cultures. Therefore, although Eminescu concentrated on the essence of being Romanian his system of existential perceptions can be transferred into a universal context.