

The Romantic *l'entre-deux* as an Aesthetic Operational Category in *Wasted Genius**

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Abstract:

The present study demonstrates the character of *l'entre-deux* – the inadaptable – is an anthropological basis of Romanticism from both genetic and ontological perspectives, as well as a fundamental aesthetic category for the study of the 19th century. The notion of the maladjusted can be approached neither *in absentia*, nor as an absolute i.e., a subject for study established once and for all; this is the reason why the analysis of its essence and meanings requires a whole field of research, both in context and as individual instances of verbal art. This would not omit, on the one hand, the ideological, philosophical and literary context of the 19th century, when the notion was born and developed, and, on the other hand, the writer's personal outlook and way of expression. The artistic realization of the inadaptable can be found in Mihai Eminescu's literary works, particularly in *Wasted Genius*. This lyrical novel in the Wertherian vein reveals in what way the dialectics of the changes in the ideological and cultural paradigm generates various metamorphoses and hypostases of inadaptability in literature.

Keywords: *l'entre-deux*, the inadapted, problematic character, aesthetic category, anthropological basis, axiological assessment

Introduction

This paper makes a chronological and axiological presentation of the problematic character – the eccentric – in its most expressive manifestations, who, occupies an important position in the hierarchy of Romanian moral values.

The various representations of this category i.e., the *problematic* character in the 19th century Romanian prose, force us to remember that such maladjusted characters share an obvious objective basis: they live

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in a history (a conditioned time) and have the psyche of an individual forced to live under mutilating circumstances for his human and moral personality. Influenced by this relationship between the objective and the subjective, it was normal for the furor of dissatisfaction to become infinite, for the effort for the impossible to appear endless, and for the ethically generous impulses of the titanic attitude¹ to be justified. The specific physiognomy which the theme acquired in European literature, in works by Hölderlin, Novalis, Tieck, Jean Paul, Benjamin Constant, Sénancour, Chateaubriand, Foscolo, Puşkin, Lermontov, and in Romanian literature, in the novels written in the 19th and early 20th century, is enlightening for any of its researchers.

In order to analyze the mechanism of inadaptability and establish the paradigms of this Romantic notion along with the semantic form of the syntagms in which it comes to the fore, we have chosen the novel *Wasted Genius* by Mihai Eminescu, looking more closely at both personal and ideological instability of the inadaptable.

On the Approach to the *l'entre deux*

The approach to inadaptability, or the character of *l'entre deux*, as the subject for research and an instrument for analysis, as well as a genuine operational aesthetic category typical of the Romanticism may greatly contribute to the development of the theory of literature and a better understanding of the 19th century in general and Romanticism in literature in particular.

As underlined by Galina Aniţoi, the character of the inadaptable lost in the chaos of transition originates from the Romantic character, estranged from the society in which he lives and revolting against dehumanization (Aniţoi, 2007: 32). However, the inadaptable does not mean, in the understanding of both foreign and Romanian Romantic writers, an incurable eccentric, a madman closed in his ivory tower and therefore cut off from the external historical, social and political reality in which he operates. The inadaptability of the Romantic character is neither Bovarist, nor narcissist, but has a tragic, oppositional and existential dimension. The more the inadapted character moves away

¹ See Matei Călinescu, *Titanismul și geniul în poezia lui Mihai Eminescu. Semnificații și direcții ale etosului eminescian*, publishing house Pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1964; the critic provides a detailed analysis of Eminescu's creation in order to explain the semantic configuration of the syntagm *titanic attitude* and demonstrates the semantic realization of the Titanism by means of the syntagm such as *exceeding the limits, growing sentiments, liberation from social norms, rebellion, liberation of energies* etc.

from the hostile and suffocating industrialized capitalist regime, reacting against the progressive bourgeois class (*volens nolens*, contemporary to the character), the more his inadaptability confronts the principles of this modern mechanized and materialist society, subjecting them to examination and questioning. The inadaptable is not an accidental literary product that comes from nowhere and heads for nowhere. The network of the meanings of inadaptability does not present arbitrary semiotics as a unique model of semantic consistency. In this case, inadaptability would be impossible since there would be no fixed centre except for an anonymous source. In other words, inadaptability would be nothing else but an accidental deviation, pure responsiveness without any object, whereas the inadaptable would be just an expression of a lacunary or spectral identity. Inadaptability acquires and generates meanings since it addresses a centre, a social, moral or literary norm (Derrida, 1966: 104). The inadapted character is created by a society whose values are placed at one and only level of reality: that of reason and immediate benefits. Its political centre can hardly be called flexible and its ideology is just a fixed geometry, it gives begets an inadaptable figure who aspires to the absolute and the ideal, confronts the dehumanizing progress, defends national and rural mysticism and is committed to the Romantic movement, absolute love, and social justice.

We need to say from the start that the semantic field of this Romanticist posthumous novel, published by Ion Scurtu, for the first time in 1904², of interest to both researchers and readers today, does not overlap that of German and French novels, so familiar to Eminescu. When analyzing Eminescu's writings, we may notice a certain synchronism with the sympathies of a disillusioned generation (represented by such personalities as Hugo, Musset, Chateaubriand, Vigny, Lamartine), inadaptable and sceptical about the ideological and cultural changes, and with a deep sense of melancholy and anxiousness – a *mal du siècle* (see Thérenty, 2001: 62), even though it reveals itself in the form of a generalizing intertextual continuity. As for the relations of the Romanian poet with German Romanticism (Heine, Goethe, Hoffman), where inadaptability turns into its favourite aesthetical category, Zoe Dumitrescu Buşulenga brings them to the limelight and

² It was published with the subtitle *posthumous novel*, with an introduction and notes, Institutul de arte grafice, Bucharest. The novel can be found in manuscript 2255, 20 1 – 84 l, with supplements on pages 21 v., 24 v., 65 v., 84 v., in the Romanian Academy Library.

includes them in her interpretation of Eminescu's works. However, it should be mentioned again that the motif of maladjustment, integrated into a new synthesis, acquires new dimensions in the light of a moral and artistic experience of its own. Filtered through Eminescu's vision and sensitiveness, the theme does not return unaltered to its source. It is a scientifically objective necessity to establish a precise place for Eminescu's work in the ascending hierarchy of the Romanian novel (starting with the earliest attempts and finishing with the most impressive achievements of the interwar period). In the evolution of the Romanian novel, the countless novels produced until the end of the 19th century can be classified according to a few types. The characteristics of the modern novel, which make it so difficult to classify, appear late in our literature. The early years represent a literary apprenticeship and here we can establish three types of novel: historical, social and lyrical, and sentimental. Two types are mainly variations on Romanticism and Realism, respectively, without clear-cut boundaries between them, at least for a good while.

As a project, Eminescu's novel presents itself, in the author's own words, as a vast work of art, as an ample social-philosophical novel, an artistic transcription of the meditations of several Catilinarian characters, complex and contradictory human types. It is a novel of the misery of the present-day generation, of a generation fighting against uncertainty, within the limits of extremist revolutionarism and total skepticism, looking for the absolute in love and social justice. *Catilinarian nature (characters)* means, according to Eminescu, problematic characters, a concept which existed throughout the European Romantic creations, which was defined by Goethe, in his volume entitled *Maxims and Reflections*, as a state of mind of the epic or lyrical hero. Thus, the hero is characterised by maladjustment; a man tormented by chimeras, a misfit, a man who is suffering, according to the definition of the Weimar philosopher, but who is suffering from the condition of being a genius and who finally finds his salvation in creation, the only one which saves him from the torments in his soul (Petrescu, 1983: 198). The concept of a *problematic character* appeared in literature together with the novel *Problematische Naturen* by the German writer Friederich Spielhagen (1861), which Eminescu certainly had read. It is a novel focusing on the unfortunate fate of the 1848 revolutionaries in Germany, seen, against the historical background of the time, as *problematic characters*, Romanticist figures, maladjusted and maladjustable, representing political geniuses who, far from remaining mere Bavarian dreamers, are trying to change the face of the world through fight and sacrifice.

In his poetry, Eminescu presented in countless hypostases the soul of the artistic genius as a problematic nature, as well as that of several problematic characters that do not reach the height of the genius. In his novel, *Wasted Genius – Geniu pustiu*, on the Romanian background of the 1848 Revolution in Transylvania, Eminescu, like Spielhagen, invests his Catilinarian characters – i.e. problematic, with political genius, thus projecting them on a different geographical background and endowing them with characteristics of the Romanian soul.

In Eminescu's understanding, inadaptability in the writer's view is not contrary to adaptability: it is akin to deliberate estrangement, refusal to distort the character's individuality or personal integrity. Moreover, inadaptability presupposes the position outside the refused reality and the development of the character's own understanding of reality. In this connection we should also mention Kant's *sapere aude*. However, Kant's exit from the level of restrictive and reductionist reasoning does not mean the denial of reason or vagrancy in imagination or a delirious dream – it is the courage to come back to the discussion of the ideologically-based axiology, to introduce dialectical nuances into the reflexive and critical attitude that the inadapted adopts towards himself, towards his autonomy, towards everything that was presented to him as obligatory or universally true and, finally, towards the possibility to challenge the norms of the society in which he lives. To sum up, the inadaptable in *Wasted Genius*, mainly represented by the character called Toma Nour, oscillates between *inside* and *outside*, between the individual and collective mind, between private morality and the moral laws of a country, between darkness and light, as well as between the demonic and the angelic.

Literary history sees in Toma Nour, a Romanticist type by excellence, an ardent dreamer, Faustian and Byronian as he shows himself in his dramatic existence, a foreign heroic prototype found with Goethe, Chamisso, Novalis, Laube, or Gutzkov. However, whereas the inadapted character is often typologized and reduced to certain characteristics in the writings of the above-mentioned authors, Eminescu's characters elude any categorization or generalization. His marginalization – the result of inadaptability – cannot be explained by one single reason: his isolation is the consequence of some reconfigurations in the permanent dialectics between margin and centre, general and particular, skepticism and optimism, dream and reality. The physical portrait of the main character of *Wasted Genius* is also ambiguous and unstable, impossible to be included in one category; it defines an unusual human being that has the characteristics of both an angel and a demon:

He was beautiful – a demonic beauty. His pale face was strong and expressive, his brow serene like a philosopher's reflection. His wild black hair of a genius – bright, reached his well-built shoulders. His big hazel eyes were burning like black fire under his bushy eyebrows while his tight bluish lips looked extremely harsh. You might have thought he was an atheist poet, one of those fallen angels, a satan, not the way painters imagine him: wrinkled, hideous, ugly, but a beautiful satan, bright with beauty, proud of his fall, on whose brow genius was written by God and stubbornness by hell, a godly satan, who in Heaven drank the holiest light and got drunk on the most sublime ideals, soaked his soul in the dearest of dreams, only to fall on earth and be left with deception and sadness carved around his lips, as he no longer was in Heaven.../. His expression was generously powerful, though infernal (Eminescu, 1964: 107–108).

The quote suggests there is a strong connection between falling from Paradise and inadaptability. The oxymoronic attributes of the character demonstrate the impossibility to place him (in heaven or on the Earth), to define him within certain frames (social and asocial) and, finally, to make him *adapted* or *adaptable*.

The painter Ioan is just another hypostasis of Eminescu's ego, he is endowed with his own features and completed with autobiographical data. Being of a problematic nature, tortured by an imaginary anxiety, with a deep affective life, Ioan is himself sentimental and lucid. What dominates his complex character is the mixture of generous passion and cold lucidity. A misanthropist and humanitarian, compelled to constantly fight dramatically between faith and doubt, Ioan manages after a bitter experience to transform his pain and disappointment in revolt and moral strength.

Interesting and new is the organization of two narrative planes within the structure of the novel, which run in parallel and come into contact once in a while. One plane presents Ioan and Sofia's existence. The latter, a blonde angel, dies, which pushes her lover to total devastation. The desire to transcend the human condition through love, and the impossibility of achieving this, remains another topos of Eminescu's writing. The second plane presents the torment and infernal inner pain experienced by Toma Nour and Poesis. The unity of structure is threatened by this *baroque* presentation of parallel intrigues (there is actually a third plane – that of the narrator) (Călinescu, 1935: 285) but even so, it remains a productive way of deepening the individuality of the heroes, and their tragic destiny³. It is very possible that Eminescu learnt this technique from Shakespeare, whose work he was familiar with.

³ As far back as 1935, D. Murărașu, in his introduction to *Eminescu. Scrieri literare*, Ed. Scrisul românesc, Craiova, p. XLII-a, questioned this lack of unity in the structure of Eminescu's novels.

In the existence of the two heroes there is a striking situational analogy (Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, 1976: 180). They are both orphans, a frustrating situation which makes them different from the other people, and they both live the experience of the dead lover. First Ioan who, after Sofia's death, gives up on the world and enrolls in Avram Iancu's army, is wounded in battle and dies killed by the old commander, who loved him like his own child, in order to prevent his being taken by the enemies.

Toma, betrayed by Poesis, loses his love, as well; he tries to find himself, after long sad monotonous years among his relatives in his native village. Then he goes into the mountains to join the revolutionaries, he avenges Ioan, returns to Cluj, where he finds out about Poesis' death and her sacrifice (she became a prostitute in order to save her father), wanders across Europe, caught up in confusing political fights, and dies – we assume – a violent death. A fragment from Toma Nour's manuscripts found in the Siberian ice follows the hero's destiny in a prison in the czarist Russia, and then while he is deported to Siberia.

However there are also many differences between Toma Nour and his double, Ioan, both objective projections of Eminescu's ego. Ioan is the embodiment of beauty, purity, love and forgiveness. The portrait, which his friend Toma Nour had made, showed a

child about 18 years old - with long black hair, thin rosy lips, face white as marble, big blue eyes and long black lashes and thick eyebrows. The child's blue eyes were so bright, the colour so unusual that they seemed to have a feminine, innocent look /.../ How beautiful the child was and how young he died (Eminescu, 1964: 115).

His hands were "fine, sweet, white, his face was delicately pale. Someone looking at his face painted in oil" might have thought he was a "transvestite woman". It is an allusion to the androgynous and it represents an indirect reference to the angelic quality of the hero. There is also a direct reference, when Toma names Ioan that "child, that soft angel".

Toma Nour, on the other hand, is a demon, a Satan, according to the way in which he is portrayed by the poet-narrator, at the very beginning of the novel. He is an incandescent nature, his living is characterised by extreme exaltation, despair, and intense drama. Here are two souls, of contradictory nature, complementary, which remind us of the unlimited aspiration towards unity, which marked the life and creation of Eminescu's genius.

Eminescu's characters do not completely escape into solitude, dreams or worlds discovered in the works by Fichte, Schelling, or

Schopenhauer. Even though they are inadaptable, they do not lose their illusions and zeal. Socially rebellious, they love fighting; this is where they find beauty and fulfillment.

***L'entre deux* in the Historical, Social and Political Context**

The ambivalent *l'entre deux* character, both centric and eccentric, that equals to inadaptability in Eminescu's works cannot be separated from the historical, social and political context in which the author lives, since its display is far from being ostentatious: it is conscious, deliberate and actantial. This is a way to live outside time rather than a fashionable attitude. Social frames of reactionary and inadaptable thinking are present in a later version of the novel. Neither ideal aspirations, nor absolute beliefs free the dreamer from the fact that he belongs to a society. Thus, we can conclude that such notions as riot, uncertainty, extreme revolutionarism, total scepticism, absolute love and search for social justice are clearly discernable in the inadaptability of Eminescu's characters from *Wasted Genius* at the socio-historical level. To sum up, the inadaptable Toma Nour borrows the constituent elements of his inadaptability from the external reality; he approaches and consumes his inadaptability as a form of otherness, turning it into a topic that lays the foundations for his neurosis, being uncovered in the aesthetical prose in "its weak and strong points" (Călinescu, 1936: 284). The character's Romantic neurosis is the writer's neurosis, since the former is the double of the latter; it is a Romantic-realistic neurosis in which the reader shares the role of constructing the meaning.

The idea to write a novel that would bear the *mark of the time* was born when Eminescu was 19. That explains the novel's description as part of an epigonic literary context, and as such less valuable, as it was considered, among many others, by G. Ibrăileanu (who thought the novel was merely a subject of study for researchers⁴). Thorough research by critics such as G. Călinescu, Tudor Vianu, or Perpessicius has demonstrated the contrary. Those who want to know the poet's entire work should not remain ignorant of its beginnings and ending, Eminescu being the same in his work's weaknesses and strengths⁶. Eminescu himself underlines the way the novel is linked to reality when he writes

⁴ G. Ibrăileanu, *Postumele* by Eminescu, in *Scriitori și curente*, 2nd edition, publishing house Viața românească, Iași, 1930 and Eminescu – geniu pustiu, in *Scriitori români și străini*, publishing house Viața românească, Iași, 1926; Constanța Marinescu, *Postumele lui Eminescu*, Bucharest, 1912. A detailed discussion of the problem in Comments to the volume *Mihai Eminescu. Proză literară*, edited by Eugen Simion and Flora Șuteu. Introduction by Eugen Simion, E.P.L., Bucharest, 1964, p. 359–364.



to Jacob Negruzzi in 1871 from Vienna (where he is a student); in this letter he reveals the title, the structure and the objectives of his work:

You write to me that a novel is chasing you; I am also being chased by one; with it in mind I have taken a lot of notes for a study on culture in order to clarify the phenomena of transitional epochs in general and the misfortunes of the present generation in particular [...] thus, my notebook is full of reflections by means of which I am trying to clarify myself; from now on I intend to use them as the basis for a novel. It is called *Naturi Catilinare* (Torouțiu and G. Cardaș, 1931: 316–317).

After several months Eminescu writes another letter where he adds: “... then I started to write my novel partly after my personal experiences of the year 1868, when I was in Bucharest, and partly after hearing a story from a student from Transilvania” (*Ibidem*: 321–322).

After defining the novel as „the metaphor of life”⁵, and a few philosophical reflections (echoing Kant) on the portrait of Torquato Tasso discovered in an old history book about an old Scottish king (an opportunity to define the objective existence as a creation of subjectivity⁶ (*Ibidem*)), the novel opens with a vivid description of 1868 Bucharest. A town with narrow and muddy “unpaved streets”, with “small, badly built houses”, with muddy puddles “splashing their claylike water”, with small taverns and shops with “large dirty windows”, with cafes where they played pool and cards. It is in one of these cafes that, one autumn night, the poet-narrator meets a young *sobber*, Toma Nour, a student from Ardeal, whose narrations and “first-hand impressions” will make the substance of the novel.

The discussion between the poet-narrator and Toma Nour, regarding the misery of this generation, the shortcomings of the social, political, and moral life in his times, reveals his own socio-political creed, the way it will also be illustrated in his polemical articles published in the magazine “Federațiunea de la Pesta” (1870) and later in “Curierul de Iași” and “Timpul”. In the name of his creed he criticizes the phantasmagories of our fake civilization and from the position of positive classes, denounces the Romanian society of the time, where one can find

⁵ “Dumas says that the novel has always existed. It could very well be. It is the metaphor of life. Look at the golden side of a forged coin, listen to the absurd song of a day which didn’t pretend to make more noise than the others, see all the poetry there is in them and there you have the novel.” (Eminescu, 1964: 105).

⁶ „... everything we see, hear, think, judge is nothing but an arbitrary creation of our own subjectivity and not reality. Life is a dream.” (*Ibidem*).

historians that do not know history, literarians and journalists who can't write, actors who can't play, ministers who can't govern, financial officers who can't calculate./.../. "souls" that do not "love our ancestors' language and traditions"/.../As for our intelligence – a generation of employees...of half-learned...people who make calculations to check how long it takes for them to get the power to rule...fake intelligence (*Ibidem*: 109–110).

The salvation is one and only, Toma Nour says in a „low, hoarse voice: Change the public opinion, give it a new direction, unsettle the nation's genius – the people's own characteristic spirit – from its deep slumber, react strongly from a moral point of view, start a revolution of ideas where the idea of what is Romanian should be more than just human – it should mean ingenious, beautiful – and finally, just be Romanians and nothing more" (*Ibidem*: 112). The love for the Romanian people must become love for the whole humankind, humankind being the

prism, a single one, bright with light, but in so many colours. A prism in thousands of colours, a rainbow with thousands of nuances. Nations are but nuances of the prism of humankind/.../ Make all these colours be equally bright, equally golden, equally favoured by the light which gives them life and without which they would be lost in the nothingness of non-existence-as in the darkness of injustice and barbarianism, all nations are equal when it comes to brutalisation, fanaticism degradation and vulgarity (*Ibidem*: 112–113).

Love for other nations and the spirit of brotherhood in defending the same values make the basis of the discussion on cosmopolitanism between the poet and Toma Nour, as they share the enthusiasm of the 1848 revolutionaries, disciples of Bălcescu's.

Toma Nour is a problematic nature, as can easily be noticed from his portrait and the discussions he has with his new friend from that tavern in Bucharest. He lives in a transition period which, in its imbalance, is characterised by all the misery of the generation of those times. A being with an ambiguous status, where the divine and the human complement each other, Toma is a demon-daimon (in the sense the word had in Antiquity), a genius, a godly demon. Fallen on earth, hurt by the phantasmagories of a fake civilisation, he lost, as he came into contact with a hostile environment, his most sublime ideals, his dearest dreams. The Genius Angel, wasted, turns into demon but without acquiring the attributes of a malefic destructive force. Toma Nour's Satanism is a reversed sentimentalism born out of deep deceptions and a tremendous revolt. A revolt expressed in a rhetorical and ostentatious way, in a polemical tone accompanied by pathetic gesturing, characteristic to an extrovert and justified in an insurgent who builds his refusal to adjust to an alienated world not only on injustice,

but also on a powerful love for his country. His country is suffering: the miserable country is a topos present in Eminescu's writings, memorable also in the novel *Wasted Genius – Geniu pustiu*. This intensity of the feeling of patriotism (the most beautiful and moral of all feelings, according to the poet), titanic in its sense of affirmation and protest,⁷ transforms the satire and the revolt into Action and Deed. The eulogy of affirmation and not negation, gives raises his urge to the most constructive activism, to make the idea of Romanian be greater than human, ingenious, beautiful. Lucian Blaga sees in the misfit Toma Nour a "positive spirit of creation, of productivity, of fact" (Blaga, 1968: 58; Petrescu*, 1978: 86). More rewarding than dream and love, pursued in the quest for the lost paradise, the Deed becomes a solution, a meaning of life.

Once the character is physically and spiritually defined, the poet allows his hero Toma Nour to speak as he is the character most engaged in adventure. He presents himself as another Werther deliberating and acting through the diary that, from his deathbed in prison, he sends to his friend he had once met in a tavern in Bucharest. This diary is the first (and only) Romanian interior diary, a Romanticist confession, a sad and unusual story of Toma's life, which tells us about his peasant origins, his poor childhood, his education in Cluj (here we find information related to the poet's education in Blaj), his miserable love for Poesis, the encounter with Ioan and many more happenings from a life unsettled by anxiety and quest.

The novel, narrated in the first person, evolves from a poem of inner life, as an attempt to romanticise the epic, to the diary form which then leads to confession, and in the end the novel becomes epic in a spectacular panoramic presentation of the revolution in Ardeal. The narrative becomes objective, the narrator seems to disappear to make room for the facts. However, his presence is still felt in the action itself, in the movement of thought and effect. The description becomes free, just like the narrator's access to the world of the characters, whom he accompanies through the events and whose actions he observes and evaluates without mystifying the historical truth. The Revolution is evoked in striking detail, in violent and macabre nuances, as Eminescu, like all of the Romanticists, has a hypertrophic sense of the grand. Some scenes are hallucinatory due to their ruthless realism: the hanging of the orthodox priest, the attempted rape of his daughter, the murdering of the

⁷ According to Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, this Romanian titanic aspect represents the genesis of the motif in the European *Sturm und Drang*, at the end of the 18th century, while * Aurel Petrescu aesthetically classifies *Wasted Genius – Geniu Pustiu* as a *Preromanticism of the sturmerian type*.

Hungarian count or the apocalyptic episode of punishing the German traitor, who was tied to the beams of his burning mill. The quote included below presents the vision of a rebel and a vengeful infernal person.

The mill started to move, burning and floating on the waves. Not only fire but also drowning! The old man shouted fiercely, climbed on a rock, his fist towards the sky - if I did harm let it fall upon me! Terrible thing!... The whole mill seemed like an old sick fire dragon, beating its wings against the fire-reddened water... (Eminescu, 1964: 186–187).

The scene becomes fabulous, like a Hoffmannian vision, illustrating a fundamentally lyrical artistic temper.

Conclusion

When the notions of inadapted and inadaptability enter a work of verbal art, and are integrated in a hermeneutic interpretation, they lose their stability and become flexible from one literary piece to another. It is the diversity of these pieces that builds and structures these notions. As referred to Eminescu's novel *Wasted Genius*, we can conclude that there is a strong correlation between the inadaptability of characters and the structure of the discourse; this means that inadaptability cultivates and, at the same time, threatens the relationship between the author and his text. We can affirm that inadaptability of action and the mental attitude are doubled by inadaptability of discourse. Both of them become, in the author's personal literary laboratory, a dynamic process of research and cognition. His cognition is a poetic one. Eminescu remains – and wishes to remain – a poet in the hypostasis of a novelist. “The more poetic, the truer!” He deliberately subjects the novel to the unlimitedness of poetry (Olteanu, 1974: 39). In Eminescu's case, inadaptability is a personal semantic matrix, a way to be in opposition, depending on the energy of the author's writings and the productivity of meaning.

Eminescu's characters from *Wasted Genius* are inadapted; however, the reasons for their behaviour are not difficult to find: the historical, political and social reality fails to satisfy them. Therefore, their inadaptability is not a withdrawal into the character's own self, but a conscious decision, a deliberate and critical act of opposition.

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