

“UTOPIA” AND REALITY IN EMIL CIORAN’S IDEA OF NATION¹

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Abstract. Having to deal with Western civilization, Romanian intellectuals noticed, even at their first contacts, the rich historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of Western Europe. Starting with the nineteenth century a question arised: can a culture progress in the absence of a history specific to the development of a great civilization? What chance does the Romanian culture have in order to stand out historically and culturally? These questions were resumed in the interwar period, when there was a broad debate on the modernization of Romanian culture.

Such questions arise in the work “Transfiguration of Romania”, where Emil Cioran proposes several solutions to a transfiguration of Romanian culture. Beyond a well directed suffering and the “conceptual and stylistic overbid,” there remains the question regarding the validity of the arguments for the importance of the idea of nation to date within the context of a forged European identity or are these but the opinions of a young man influenced by nationalist ideas, which, at the time, had stirred a frenzy among Europeans and not only?

Keywords: idea of nation, Emil Cioran, Romanian culture, European identity

Introduction to the idea of nation

Faced with the Western civilization, Romanian intellectuals noticed from the very first contacts the rich historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in Western Europe, as well as the delay characterizing Romanian society. A new question had been raised in the 19th century: could a culture progress in lack of a history appropriate to the development of a great civilization? What chances did Romanian culture have to take a stand historically and culturally? The main goal was to erase the huge gaps separating Moldavia and Walachia from Western countries. All these questions were raised again, in the interwar period, when an ample debate about the modernization of Romanian culture and society took place. The interwar Romanian elite was faced with either a development of the country according to the Western civilization model, as seen by Eugen Lovinescu or Stefan Zeletin, or an evolution of the country in accordance with its economic and cultural heritage².

Such questions also arise in the work *Transfiguration of Romania*³, where Emil Cioran proposes several solutions for a transfiguration of Romanian culture and, in the end, for the creation of a new role for the Romanian nation in Europe. Of course, the question related the timeliness of the well known philosopher’s book arises, within the emergence of a European identity, and beyond the “conceptual and stylistic overbid”⁴ of the book. Or are these simply the ideas of a 24 year old young man, influenced by the nationalist ideas that, at that time, had contaminated a large part of the European elite, identifying its future in the extreme right ideology?

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² Keith Hitchins, *Romania 1866-1947*, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 1996, p. 315.

³ Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la fata a României (Transfiguration of Romania)*, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 2007.

⁴ Simona Modreanu, *Cioran*, Iasi, Junimea, 2005, p. 122.

Since *Transfiguration of Romania* may be seen as a book of reference in Romanian culture, the book of a generation, we consequently feel that a “dissection” of the book is important, and we tried to make a parallel between Emil Cioran’s book and the book about Europe written by José Ortega y Gasset (a contemporary of Cioran).

Referring to Ortega y Gasset’s ideas, we will try to see the connection created by the historical pressure of the gap between Western and Eastern cultures, in particular the Romanian culture. Ernest Gellner, in the book *Nations and Nationalism* offers an interesting perspective of European nations starting from Europe’s different ages⁵. Following the peace treaties in Paris, from 1919-1920, based on Wilson’s principle of self-determination, new states were born in Central and Eastern Europe, which entered a historical stage for which they were not ready. Thus, Romanians went from the “state-seeking” stage to the “stateled” stage, based on the classification of nationalisms suggested by Charles Tilly.

Prolegomena on the “history” of nation

Although the 19th century is known in world history as the *century of nations*, the issue of nationality re-emerged in the interwar period due to the rise of totalitarian regimes cultivating an excessive nationalism. In what concerns the Romanian, Mircea Eliade explains the resurrection of nationalism within the young generation by the fact that, once the nation-state had been created, the new elite that asserted itself after 1918 was no longer faced with a great national project. Other possible explanations lie in the frustrations of the interwar Romanian elite, forced to admit that a great part of Romanian economy belonged to national minorities; “*a country composed of 80% peasant farmers – wrote Stelian Popescu – cannot bear to infinity an industry run by 90% foreigners, “foreigners” that largely control the press as well*”⁶. Other scholars referred to Romania’s evolution on a path different from that of its traditions, especially those of Orthodoxy, generating all Romania’s problems. This was Nae Ionescu’s case, who had a huge influence on young writers and philosophers: Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, Petre Comarnescu and others. He identified the essence of being Romanian with Orthodoxy. The theorists of Archangel Michael’s Legion talked about the creation of the Romanian nation as a product of the millennia of fighting, ethnic conflicts and religious persecutions, and set forth an essentially totalitarian government⁷. For Emil Cioran, “the transfiguration of Romania” could be made against the Jews: “*We must all understand once and for all: the Jews have no interest to live in a consolidated conscious Romania.*”⁸

The national problem and that of nationalism re-emerges today as well, within the context of globalization and of the development of the European Union: according to E. Renan, the nation is a “*daily plebiscite*”. As A. James Gregor wrote: “*Nationalism is the reaction of human beings as group animals to 20th century challenges and risks and the result*

⁵See Ernest Gellner, *Natiuni și nationalism. Noi perspective asupra trecutului (Nations and Nationalism. New Perspectives on the Past)*, Oradea, Antet, 1997.

⁶ Lucian Boia, *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930-1950*, București, Humanitas, 2011, p.70.

⁷A. James Gregor, *Fețele lui Ianus. Marxism și fascism în secolul XX (The Faces of Janus: Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century)*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000. 256p), București, Univers, 2002, p.213.

⁸ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p 132.

of the incitement and persuasion exercised by elites.”⁹ This is why a confrontation with Cioran’s ideas appears as highly tempting in nowadays political and cultural events.

For our purpose, Cioran’s style – fascinating sometimes – will be of second importance (although at times the stylistic effect over-shadows the logical case), in order to clearly analyze the relevance of the author’s arguments for the idea of nation – an essential motif in *Transfiguration of Romania*, where Cioran stated that “power increases with the historical level of a nation.”¹⁰ Inevitably, the idea of nation appears (repeatedly) in other books as well, such as *The Temptation to Exist*¹¹ and *My Country*¹², both written during Cioran’s exile.

The issue is even more important as Cioran offers an additional challenge, by his contradictory statements in the two above cited works, part of which are opposed to his arduous arguments from *Transfiguration of Romania*, whereas others bring a new significance.

Reading the opinions and counterarguments brought by the authors directly involved in the interwar debate on the identity of the Romanian nation, often opposing Cioran’s ideas on shallow grounds, determined by interpersonal differences or group affinities, our choice for Ortega y Gasset is justified by his model of ideas on the chosen subject: the nation.

The nation for Emil Cioran: between “utopia” and reality

In *Transfiguration of Romania*, Emil Cioran performs a radiography of the Romanian people, which serves him to highlight the characteristics seen as relevant in classifying Romanian culture as a *small culture* by reference to “an orthogenesis of cultures, justifying the individuality of each by originating conditions and determinations,”¹³ incapable of cultural and political fulfillment.

By writing this book, Cioran became engaged in the vast debate on the importance of Romanian culture and Romania’s future, which confronted the divergent modernists and traditionalists.¹⁴ Thus, the goal of the present work is not only to highlight those aspects connected to Romanian spirituality which have influenced for centuries the way Romanians relate to history, but also to attempt to offer solutions that may lead to a *transfiguration of Romania*.

We will now focus on the relevant aspects connected to the theme of communication, trying to identify the way in which the idea of a powerful Romanian nation becomes the guiding motif in the transfiguration Cioran proposed for Romania.

From the very first chapter, *The Tragedy of Small Cultures*, by showing the characteristics of great cultures (messianism, style, demiurge, offensive), which our culture obviously lacks, Cioran places our culture among small cultures, “*peripheral formations of becoming*.”¹⁵ Incapable of freeing itself from “*the straitjacket of anonymity*,”¹⁶ dominated by

⁹ A. James Gregor, *op.cit.*, p.187.

¹⁰ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 35.

¹¹ Emil Cioran, *Ispita de a exista (The Temptation to Exist)*, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 1992.

¹² Emil Cioran, *Tara mea (My Country)*, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 1996.

¹³ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 9.

¹⁴ Grigore Georgiu, *Istoria culturii romane moderne (History of Modern Romanian Culture)*, Bucuresti, Comunicare.ro, 2002, p. 267.

¹⁵ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 10.

the inferiority complex, haunted by the curse of the Byzantine spirit and missing messianic scholars, the only escape from sub-history for the Romanian people is the *historical leap* – an “*ontological leap*”, to paraphrase Blaga.

Starting from Hegel’s idea that progress in history means progress in conscience¹⁷, Cioran develops, at the end of the same first chapter, the concept of a “*minor culture*”, stating that: “*in great cultures, the sensation of power is won automatically. Its intensification merely assumes a conscious growth of that culture’s development. (...) Only small cultures lose you.*”¹⁸

The option for universality seems to be completely different, based on hypothesis impossible to be verified, but which claim the necessity of a universal culture’s authenticity related to a universal conscience (maybe even a collective memory), as the author states: “*I would sacrifice half my life if I could live with the same intensity what the last Greek must have felt, the last Roman and the last French at least for a second at the peaks of their history; (...) to differentiate the monumental in the last soldier’s ego, aware that he is fighting against the whole world, to realize that a universal culture shapes universal features to a universal conscience.*”¹⁹

For a radical change, Romanians must leave the state of inertia in which they spent hundreds of years, while other peoples were making history and becoming nations. For this reason, “*Romania needs an exaltation reaching fanaticism. (...) Romania’s becoming fanatical means Romania’s transfiguration.*”²⁰ Moreover, Romania needs prophets and a vision leading to the fulfillment of a mission. If a vision is essential in the development of a nation, its becoming “*fanatical*” (a long, ongoing process) seems to be an exaggeration determined by Cioran’s exaltation. It is possible that, in this case, he didn’t use the example of the British (like he often did) because it would have contradicted his much supported hypothesis. Even if the vision of this nation and the historical role are irrefutable, Cioran was convinced that the British had never been nor would have never been a “*fanatical*” people.

Indulging in mediocrity and the exclusive presence of a popular culture kept the Romanian people at the brim of the ethnic. But doesn’t the ethnic contribute to national identity? And, then, couldn’t we interpret as paradox(ical) the statement “*detachment from the nation leads to failure*”²¹ ? Moreover: in a later letter addressed to Constantin Noica, Cioran contradicted himself by stating: “*it is impossible to be otherwise than as within your own ethnicity.*”²²

The definition for nation (“*A people becomes a nation when it takes an original shape and when it imposes its particular values as universally valid values.*”²³) is unclear in the many definitions given to a nation, even if Cioran later specified the way in which a people takes *original shape*. In addressing the concept of national identity, which was not detailed,

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

²² As quoted by Mircea A. Diaconu, *Cui i-e frică de Emil Cioran?*, București, Cartea Românească, 2008, p. 47.

²³ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 48.

the ethnic factor could also be included, which was not viewed as a contribution to the “identity shape”, even if, talking about the same subject, the author pointed out that: “*Romania does not have anything original except peasants, folk art and landscape.*”²⁴

Despite the dominant pessimism, there is a ray of hope. The *Psychological and historical gaps of Romania* (chapter 3) are huge, but not impossible to remedy if there were a collective mobilization dominated by a “*vitalizing rage of becoming.*”²⁵

Cioran then catalogues Romanians’ capacity to guide themselves towards Western culture and global problems as a factor of progress, despite “*the blind urge to imitate*”²⁶ that characterized the modernization process.

War is a differentiation factor for nations and a test of fire for a nation. Romania has never been an aggressive state, but a defensive one, with a permanent goal in keeping its material and moral borders and so, it hasn’t had the evolution of a powerful state, focused on expansion.

Whereas war changes the perception on national power, depending on its goal, revolution is the one that allows for the emergence of a new world of ideas and changing the structure of society. This is the reason for which “*revolution creates a new breath, war, a new rhythm.*”²⁷ Consequently, Cioran considers that a Romanian revolution has to go beyond the mediocrity of a people in order to be a genuine one and in order to give Romania a historical prestige.

Regarding the political regime suited for a contribution to Romania’s progress, Cioran feels that a dictatorial regime would be best fitted than democracy. We can find here his sympathy for totalitarian regimes. Just like in fascist ideology, for Emil Cioran the state had to be a totalitarian one. It has been historically proven that in a dictatorial regime, the process of becoming fanatical imagined by Cioran can become reality. At the same time, history is the witness for the failure of such momentary fanaticisms.

In the end, the author returns to the wish expressed at the beginning of the book: “*I don’t want a logical, orderly good Romania, but an agitated one, contradictory, angry and threatening,*”²⁸, that is, a Romania that has become fanatical, transfigured. “*Our nationalism – wrote Cioran – must spring from the desire to avenge our historical sleep, from a messianic thought, from the desire to make history.*” As Marta Petreu wrote, “*Cioran decided, in the purest Transylvanian style, that Romania had to have a history, a culture, that it had to be transfigured and quickly, so that he himself may have benefited from the effects of the miraculous transfiguration.*”²⁹ The only pity was that the model Cioran identified for Romania was in Hitler’s Germany.

“I have made peace with my country”: Cioran between ethos and pathos

In order to analyze from a critical perception Cioran’s ideas, some other clarifications are needed, apparently contradictory from those supported in *Transfiguration of Romania*. 20

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 102.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 135

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 197

²⁹ See Marta Petreu, *Cioran sau un trecut deocheat (Cioran or a Dirty Past)*, Iasi, Polirom, 2011.

years after the publication of *Transfiguration of Romania*, the book *The Temptation to Exist* was published, with a chapter called *Little Theory of Destiny*, where Cioran resumes the problem of Romanian identity. Among arguments and examples, offered in a similar content to those of the work from 1936, the author includes surprising statements that may suggest a possible reconciliation with his own obsession about Romania in the first place: “*It is certain that when I came to feel it with lucidity, I made peace with my country, which at once ceased to obsess me.*”³⁰ What could have been Cioran’s revelation that changed his attitude towards his own country? The *great idea*³¹ of destiny is the one that appears to him in a new interpretation, related to his own person: “*I am grateful to it for giving me as dote, together with the code of desperation, this tact, this ease in the face of Necessity, as well as countless hopeless situations and the art of detaching myself from them.*”³²

My Country brings new explanations regarding what Mircea A. Diaconu called “*the disease of his own country.*”³³ Cioran highlights the exaltation of the moment due to his youth: “*Full of anger, I gave it a future, I made it up, I embellished it, without believing in it for one moment.*”³⁴ We can notice here a statement similar to Sorin Alexandrescu’s for writing *Transfiguration of Romania*: Cioran mainly tried to convince himself that a change in Romania’s evolution was possible, “*precisely because he couldn’t really believe in it.*”³⁵ Consequently, the explanations at the beginning of the 1990 revised edition come as no surprise: “*I wrote these divagations (...) with passion and ego. From all that I have published in Romanian and in French, this is perhaps the most passionate and, at the same time, the most foreign text for me. I do not find myself in it, although the presence of my history back then seems evident.*”³⁶

If we also take into consideration Mircea A. Diaconu’s statement: “*Having become youth deliria, later healed by the illusion of detachment, which he perceives with the despair of denying his native self, Cioran’s raging against his own country, just like against everybody else, is the sign of self-denial.*”³⁷, then what is still relevant for the contemporary reader of the book regarding the issue of the Romanian nation? We believe that the book is still a document for the state of mind of a part of the Romanian interwar elite, a simple imagination exercise deeply infused by the social-political context of the moment and by young Cioran’s passions and convictions.

Hence, as announced in the introduction, we will try an analysis of Cioran arguments, by comparing them with José Ortega y Gasset’s ideas.

The work *Europe and the Idea of Nation* reunites several conferences held by Ortega y Gasset after the Second World War on the crisis of the idea of nation. If Cioran wrote his case for powerful nations before the world conflict, Ortega y Gasset offered a perspective completely differed, backed by the historical events happening in the meantime.

³⁰ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 1992, p. 47.

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 46-47.

³² *Ibidem*, pp. 47-48.

³³ Mircea A. Diaconu, *quoted work*, p. 239.

³⁴ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 1996, p. 13.

³⁵ Sorin Alexandrescu, *Privind inapoi modernitatea (Looking back on Modernity)*, Bucuresti, Univers, 1999, p. 283.

³⁶ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 5.

³⁷ Mircea A. Diaconu, *quoted work*, p. 239.

Although he makes a distinction between nation and people, by differences of relating to the past and the future: “*The idea of Nation, unlike the peoples that are nothing more than peoples, assumes first of all the existence of a life program towards the future*”³⁸, Ortega y Gasset completes this idea with a statement according to which European peoples found themselves in a new context, hence the crisis of the idea of nation. He thus states that “*Europe’s peoples could no longer save themselves unless they surpassed that old decrepit idea, reaching towards a super-nation, towards European integration. (...) The idea of Nation, that was previously an impulse, becomes a brake.*”³⁹

Compared to Cioran’s ideas, for whom the *life program towards the future* mentioned by Ortega y Gasset can be assimilated by the idea of *messianism*⁴⁰, assuming both a “*vitalizing action*”⁴¹ and “*the interiorization of history’s axis within the substance of a nation*”⁴², everything with the purpose to bring originality and stateliness to a nation – the quintessence of the transfiguration of Romania - José Ortega y Gasset’s ideas appear as a bulldozer that cannot be stopped on the itinerary imagined by Cioran. “*Everything that is not prophecy in Romania is an attempt against Romania*”⁴³ becomes, under the wheel of history, that *old decrepit idea* stated by Ortega y Gasset, a defender of liberal democracy.

Cioran sustained the importance of powerful nations, nations that write history and do not abandon themselves to fate. Ortega y Gasset speaks about an super-nation, bringing together European nations deep in the postwar crisis. What is the present situation? European integration, with the famous unity in diversity. From this point of view, Cioran’s arguments are old-fashioned, more suited for the memories of those who knew the legionary period than to the present context of cooperation and of the so-called equality among nations. In this case, the exacerbation of the nationalism and the process of becoming fanatical no longer serve a purpose, as differences are the ones that give stateliness to a nation. We are European citizens, with equal rights but, no matter the place we live in, we belong to a community, to a nation, an indisputable conclusion reached by Cioran later on: “*it is impossible to be otherwise than as within your own ethnicity.*”⁴⁴

Another counter-argument for the nationalist impulse promoted by Cioran is the pressure exerted by European states on one another. Let us think about the 19th century *European concept* or the great alliances of the last century. A European state was never the only actor on Europe’s map, even when a nation imposed itself politically or culturally. Such an example is Napoleon’s France. Despite the great expansion and leaving the impression of being the only actor on the European stage, other states, such a Great Britain, the Habsburg Empire or the Tsarist Empire were closely watching the events and they did not hesitate to end the French hegemony. It is what Ortega y Gasset also states: “*No European nation-state*

³⁸ José Ortega y Gasset, *quoted work*, p. 13.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁴⁰ „În formă brutală, mesianismul a fost reprezentat de germani, ruși și evrei” („In a crud manner, messianism was represented by the Germans, Russians and the Jews”) (Cioran, *op.cit.*, 2007, p.13)

⁴¹ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 22.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 50.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

⁴⁴ *Apud* Mircea A. Diaconu, *quoted work*, p. 47.

was ever completely sovereign in relation to the others. National sovereignty has always been relative and limited by the pressure exerted on each state by Europe as a whole."⁴⁵

Nevertheless, we inevitably notice that some European states stand out even within the European Union's pacifist and cooperative framework. They are the same states (like France, Germany, and Great Britain) that Cioran used as examples for the "strong" nations. The difference lies most of the times in the antinomical forms of the discourse used: if, in the past, a nation's international affirmation was made by violence and war, now it is done under the mask of the "politically correct". This does not mean that "strong" nations lost their stateliness or that they are less interested in keeping themselves powerful politically, economically or culturally.

From this perspective, we can say that Cioran was not completely wrong in placing an emphasis on the capacity of important nations to affirm themselves at any price (*"Great nations have run through history in their urge to affirm themselves"*⁴⁶) and when he said that *"the difference between a great culture and a small one is not based on the number of inhabitants, nor on the frequency of extraordinary events, but on the spiritual and political destiny through which they are individualized in the world."*⁴⁷

Nevertheless, coming back to Cioran's idea that the individuals belonging to a great culture get, together with this belonging, the feeling of victory, affirmation, whereas, in a small culture, the individuals are born and die with the feeling of the nothingness, we can bring as counter-argument the lack of uniformity in a society, even a developed one. Perhaps Goethe felt universal and in tune with the *spirit of the century* Lovinescu talked about, when writing *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, but this does not mean that the peasants in Mecklenburg shared the same feelings of "universality", although they belonged to the same nation. And this phenomenon is still valid today. Moreover: to belong to a great culture may be as honorific and comfortable, as restrictive. The reason lies in the danger of cultural stereotypes promoted for centuries, and which, although criticized now, continue to darken the horizons of intercultural communication. Thus, a solution is presented by Adrian Marino: "I am increasingly convinced that true universality and an objective scale of values are achievable only in small cultures, open, non-provincial. Because the true provincial spirit does not consist only in thinking, acting, ranking, exclusively depending on local criteria and hierarchies, mainly Parisian."⁴⁸

Then how does one interpret Cioran's statement: *"It is mostly inconvenient to have been born in a second hand country?"*⁴⁹ First of all, we have to clarify Cioran's meaning in using the phrase "second hand country." Most probably, he refers to a country characterized by a "small culture" (minor), if we take into account the distinction between great cultures - small cultures Cioran made in the first chapter of the work *Transfiguration of Romania*. If we apply these patterns to Romanian culture, we come to the same conclusion as Cioran, that indeed Romanian culture is a small culture, especially as one cannot help but notice the

⁴⁵ José Ortega y Gasset, *quoted work*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 34.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ Adrian Marino, *Carnete europene: însemnare a călătoriei mele făcută în anii 1969-1975 (European Notebooks: Scriblings on My Journey from 1969-1975)*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1976, p. 132.

⁴⁹ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 29.

cultural heritage of peoples in Western Europe, as noticed by Marino as well: “*To be perfectly mediocre and have one thousand years of mankind and culture behind is not at all the same as to be equally mediocre without one thousand years of mankind and culture behind.*”⁵⁰ Could he have learned at a more mature age about “*the spring of small cultures?*”

Nevertheless, as Cioran sustains the liberation of Romanians from the inferiority complex, he cannot heal himself from this complex, proving, later on, disorientation and confusion in the initial definition (in *Transfiguration of Romania*), restrictive as it is, of the nation: “*For that matter, all ideas are absurd and false: all that remains is people, as they are, no matter their origin and beliefs.*”⁵¹ Should we read here conciliation between extremes and the highlighting of the individual factor? It could be, if we thought about the problem of tradition as inherent to the process of modernization of a society, that denial of the tradition is a necessary step for a *historical leap*, maybe not as violent (fanatical) as imagined by Cioran, but a leap nonetheless.

In the end, the problem of tradition is but one of the issues that a nation has to clarify within itself in order to affirm itself externally. Every solved dilemma strengthens a nation, which may contribute to its stateliness in the current context when, even if we can no longer talk about a competition between nations, we have a competition of the influence within a super-nation. At the same time, this superior instance offers, at least theoretically, the chance for all the component nations to affirm themselves, no matter the past or the cultural role they have played so far. For this reason, now, more than ever, is the time for the capitalization of the ethnic factor whose importance was constantly denied by Cioran. Moreover, in a world where “Big Brother is watching you!” in every country and where the desire to be a powerful nation is disguised under various forms, the development of a nation continues to be extremely important. Thus, Romanians’ awakening from inertia, suggested by Cioran, is necessary in order for them to adapt to this “super-nation” the European Union has become. Still, the process of becoming “fanatical” he set forth remains exaggerated, now having pragmatic means at our disposal that may contribute the evolution of the Romanian nation.

Conclusions

To conclude, the issue regarding the development of the Romanian nation remains open, especially in the nowadays context. The importance of some of Cioran’s ideas cannot be denied, although, while reading his work that is relevant for the issue at stake, a permanent reference to the current situation and a clear judgement are highly recommended.

We have tried, through the ideas that we have presented, to create a balance between the pros and cons for Emil Cioran regarding the importance of the idea of nation, precisely in order to avoid the nihilist trajectory set by the author. When all one wants to see is either black or white, one may lose sight significant aspects of a certain issue; this does not mean, however that we have made use of the transactional spirit that some scholars feel is specific to Romanians.

⁵⁰ Adrian Marino, *quoted work*, p. 98.

⁵¹ Emil Cioran, *quoted work*, 1996, p. 27.

After having evaluated the arguments presented in the forth section of the present work, we believe that the individual factor can be coagulated in order for the nation to succeed. In a century of individuality, a general mobilization inherently entailing uniformity and fanaticism is more difficult, and it may easily lead to frictions and pointless conflicts. We thus feel that in the development of the Romanian nation and its promotion on a European and global level, an active involvement of individuals, regardless of age or social status, is necessary, thorough civil society, which is currently a latent phase in Romania.

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