



Título: *Islandia* (fragmento), de Héctor Miguel Guerrero Aburto

Comprehending *Ode* (In Ancient Meter) by Mihai Eminescu, on the Grounds of Phenomenological Hermeneutics

Carmen Cozma

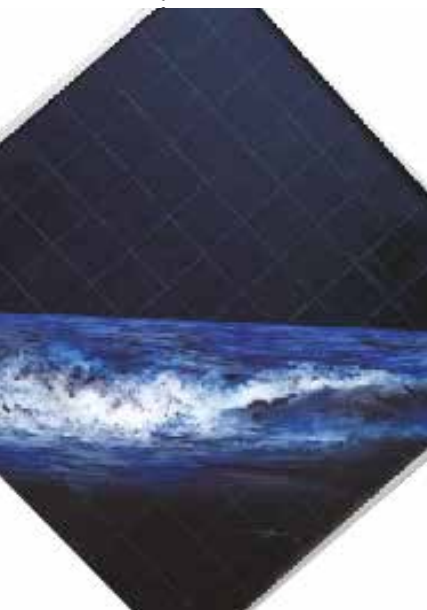
Universidade "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" de Iași,
Romania

Abstract

One of the most beautiful poems of Romanian author Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889), *Ode (In Ancient Meter)* continuously challenges the reader to think about major philosophical topics of the human condition, such as the art of living and the attitude towards death. In the effort to disclose the in-depth meanings of the mentioned literary creation, which was published in 1883 by *Edition Princeps*, the phenomenological hermeneutics' scrutiny offers us great opportunities in understanding and interpretation. It encourages us to decipher and to highlight some of this poem's significance as wisdom to be considered by a man/woman who is aware of what really matters for his/her very own human destiny. The purpose of this paper is to unfold an analysis that is both literary and philosophical, by articulating a hermeneutical comment focused on the phenomenology of understanding; guiding and even supporting the reader forward on the path of enlightening a unique artwork materialization —or so to say— in the language of Roman Ingarden.

Keywords

Mihai Eminescu, poetry, *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*, life and death, phenomenological hermeneutics.



Título: 6.1 (fragmento), de Héctor Miguel Guerrero Aburto

Hacia una comprensión de *Oda (en métrica antigua)* de Mihai Eminescu, desde la perspectiva fenomenológico-hermenéutica

Resumen

Entre los más bellos poemas del autor rumano Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889), *Oda (en métrica antigua)* desafía permanentemente al lector a pensar en los grandes temas filosóficos de la condición humana, como el arte de vivir y la actitud hacia la muerte. Tratando de revelar significados profundos de esta creación literaria, que publicó Edition Princeps en 1883, la hermenéutica fenomenológica nos ofrece grandes oportunidades de comprensión e interpretación. La obra mencionada nos anima a tratar de descifrar y destacar el poema como un aprendizaje sabio, para ser considerado por un hombre/una mujer consciente de lo que realmente importa para su destino humano. El propósito de este artículo es desarrollar un análisis literario y filosófico a la vez, articulando un comentario hermenéutico desde la fenomenología del entendimiento, y permitiendo que el lector avance en el camino de una concretización de la obra de arte literaria única —por así decirlo—, en términos de Roman Ingarden.

Palabras clave

Mihai Eminescu, poesía, *Oda (en métrica antigua)*, vida y muerte, hermenéutica fenomenológica.

Mihai Eminescu: A romanian polymath of modern times

Born on December 20th, 1849 and registered on January 15th, 1850, in Botoșani (in the northeastern part of Romania), Mihai Eminovici, and then after Eminescu, was a polymath who performed as a modern poet, a redoubtable journalist, a gifted prose writer and playwright, and an educated philosopher and translator.

He is one of the greatest Romanian literary creators, who — first and foremost, according to the majority of exegetes— is considered to be a genius poet. Hence the expression, “Mihai Eminescu [is] the evening star of the Romanian poetry”.

Mihai Eminescu’s formal education was based in Cernăuți (Gymnasium) and it continued with studies in philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy and Law in Vienna and at Humboldt University in Berlin.

For a while, he lived in Iași, where he met and cultivated a friendship with the writer Ion Creangă (1837-1889) and he lived a dramatic love story with his beloved Veronica Micle (1850-1889), herself a gifted poetess. In the autumn of 1877, Eminescu moved to Bucharest, where he spent most part of his time until his death on the 15th of June 1889.

During a very short but tumultuous life, Mihai Eminescu engaged in different activities, cooperating with theatrical troupes, translating many texts from German into Romanian, (co)found-ing and actively participating in literary circles (such as *Junimea* of Iași), working in the educational system, and especially writing and publishing poetry and prose; many of his texts have appeared in *Convorbiri Literare* / *Literary Conversations* -that was and it is still one of the most important literary magazines in Romania, since its first No. of March 1st, 1867 (see Chelaru, 2017).

Very early, Mihai Eminescu started to write poems. At the beginning of 1866 he made his debut in the literary magazine *Familia* / *Family* edited by Iosif Vulcan, who changed his surname from Eminovici into the ‘nom de plume’ Eminescu.

A careful research of Mihai Eminescu’s whole work indicates his boundless appetite to know and to appropriate, by a personal



comprehension and interpretation, a wealth of areas and trends in which the human being has been significantly asserted throughout history. He manifested an interest in mythology, in Oriental languages and cultures, and not least in the ancient Thracian-Getae civilization developed in the area located between the Danube, Tisza and Dniester rivers, and Black Sea, and from which the Romanian nation—to which Eminescu does belong—draws its roots.

Among other things, Mihai Eminescu took an active interest in the Romanian folklore creation, collecting fairy tales, poems and documents about the history and the literature of his people. He travelled a lot in all the Romanian counties, knowing directly the lifestyle, habits and traditions of his own nation.

The prime occupation he practiced was that of a journalist—a political journalist—, working for various newspapers, such as: *Albina / The Honey-Bee*; *Curierul de Iași / The Courier of Iași*; the longest time being the first editor and then the editor-in-chief of *Tim-pul / The Time* (between 1877 and 1883).

An attentive exploration of his articles reveals Mihai Eminescu as a model of professional journalist of great culture, very well informed about the situation (political, economic, social, cultural, etcetera) of Europe's transformations from the second half of the 19th century; and, no less, as concerned about the situation of the modern Romania. He was a serious analyst and a virulent critic, expressing himself with full responsibility throughout the accounts he published between 1868 and 1889 (see Eminescu, 1990).

His brave attitude to communicate grave truths—not at all pleasurable for the politicians of the time, both from his country and from abroad—, by a rich intense journalistic work, led to his “civil death” (see Codreanu, 1999). Much evidence points to this fact. Redoubtable researchers have dedicated themselves to spotlight the real circumstances that contributed to the social destruction of a high value journalist who used to play cards on the table.

Mihai Eminescu was a “political victim”, whose ending started on the fateful day of June 28th, 1883, as Nicolae Georgescu has underlined in many writings (see Georgescu, 1994; 2002; 2009). The distinguished Eminescologist established the very suggestive expression “*antum death*” of Eminescu (1883-1889), devoting many

years to find out the truth in regards to the civil end of the fearless journalist from *The Time* (Georgescu 2002).

Concerning the end of Mihai Eminescu —that was set by the politicians of the time—, clear testimonies can be found within the very impressive 2008 series published by Constantin Barbu, under the title *Codul invers. Arhiva înnebunirii și a uciderii nihilistului Mihai Eminescu / The Reverse Code: The Archive of Going Crazy and of Killing the Nihilist Mihai Eminescu*. We underline that the term ‘nihilist’ must be understood in the sense Barbu has used in the context of his original analysis of what he calls “eminescianitate” / “Eminescianity”, trying to explain what happened to Mihai Eminescu as from 28 June, 1883 and the “Luciferic sacrifice” of an awkward journalist for the governors of the time, especially in Romania (Barbu, 2008: 17-133).

Beyond the fact that Mihai Eminescu was an eminent educated personality who strongly manifested in the field of journalism, he was a philosopher who left us many significant manuscripts (collected in the famous 44 copybooks containing more than 7000 sheets that are kept at the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest). In a professional manner, he succeeded to approach almost all the domains of science and culture: ontology, gnoseology, axiology, ethics, aesthetics, religion, sociology, politics, law, history, general linguistics, Romanian linguistics, foreign languages (Latin, French, Spanish, Ancient Greek, German), political economy, literature and arts, mathematics, physical astronomy, natural sciences, education and instructional system, physics, psychology, genetics, etcetera (see Eminescu, 1993) Looking at the full body of Eminescu’s work, it seems that nothing important remained out of his intellectual curiosity and “passion for culture” (Noica, 1992: 14).

Actually, imposing himself as a great model of “piety for culture”, Mihai Eminescu had an interest in everything. A nuanced observation made by the philosopher Constantin Noica —one of the best researchers of the Eminescian work in its entirety— is worth noting, seeing that Eminescu reveals himself to us through a committed attentiveness to a plurality of fields:

not merely the literary creation, but the world’s literatures; philosophy, as well as astronomy, mathematics, physics and chemistry; history, as well as economy; classical and modern



languages, the foreign word and the Romanian word. When he can't master a matter and he can't say something essential about this, he does heed and he learns like a schoolboy, he copies a Slavonic grammar or a treatise of physics, he writes Greek words, he draws Arabic letters, he does math exercises, ingeniously and with zeal, facing the entire universe of culture (Noica, 1992:15).

According to Noica, this brilliant mind and exceptional talent who worked so assiduously —it is well known, from the reports of his inner circle, that Mihai Eminescu used to sleep extremely little— represents the highest image of the “Educator” for Romanians. Being “a well-schooled wandering among the world-wide cultures, Eminescu becomes a University. His educated youthfulness, which is an example of openness towards everything means truth, light and pedagogic mastery, should be unceasingly offered to the present and future young people” (Noica, 1992: 16).

Briefly, we can easily discern that Mihai Eminescu was an inquisitive mind, eager to know about a lot of domains in depth; and, at the same time, he was a very impressive hardworking intellectual, as we discover him through so many versions (of his lyrics, for example) he elaborated until he considered he finally reached the perfect expression of his ideas (see Eminescu, 1993).

The search of Mihai Eminescu's work in its integrality, not merely the literary and the journalistic one, but also the vast amount of manuscripts included in the 44 famous notebooks —on which great philosophical importance Constantin Noica (following Ion Scurtu, Nicolae Iorga, G. Călinescu, and others) has insistently drawn attention to, pleading for the urgent facsimileing of a precious treasury that risks to be lost by the direct access of the Academy Library's readers in Bucharest; since the all is about old sheets “yellowed over time” (see Noica, 1992)— allows us to perceive and to comprehend a fine and original thinker, particularly poring over philosophy.

The “sage-poet”

Above all, we can understand some of Eminescu's complex and modulated thinking and creation by discovering him as a “Sage-Poet” / “a Hindu *kavi*”, as Amita Bhose (1978) has characterized him, underlying the same sensitivity background of both Romania and

India. The eminent philologist, researcher and translator, who was herself a poetess, has acknowledged that “Eminescu was and he is a *kavi* (a Sage-Poet), a thinker who approaches life in the light of philosophy” (*Ibidem*). Affirming herself as one of the greatest Eminescologists, Amita Bhose (1933-1992) is not only a knowledgeable researcher of Mihai Eminescu’s poetry but she is also his first translator in Asia —through the 1969 book *Eminescu: Kavita (Poems)*. The Indian author has published many important studies about the Eminescian literary work, emphasizing the deep connection between the Bengali and Romanian cultures. She appreciated that “Mihai Eminescu is a unique European poet who achieved to make India immortal in his country” (Bhose, 1978).

It’s also worth mentioning that Eminescu was a connoisseur of Sanskrit language and he partially translated the work of Franz Bopp, *Kritische Grammatik der Sanskrita-Sprache in kürzerer Fassung* (Berlin, 1845), as well as a transcription of some pages from the *Glossarium comparativum linguae sanscritae* by Bopp (Berlin, 1867). Between 1884 and 1886, Eminescu intensively worked in this regard, as we can find in the Ms. 357, 11-30 (see Barbu, editor, 1997).

Reading any part of Eminescian lyrics, we find the Romanian poet like the philosopher of *Scrisoarea I* —translated as *Satire I* or *First Epistle*—, who “yet not stays his quick thought; / One cast of that far-ranging brain a hundred eons of time has caught.”

The 1881 *Scrisoarea I / First Epistle*, according to Corneliu M. Popescu’ translation (see *Worlds of Words*), offers us an image of the pure articulations of the Eminescian entire poetry:

Into the time are things began, when being and not being
still

Did not exist to plague man’s mind, and there was neither
life nor will,

Where there was nothing that was hid, yet all things darkly
hidden were,

When self-contained was uncontained and all was slumber
everywhere.

Was there a heavenly abyss? Or yet unfathomable sea?

There was no mind to contemplate an uncreated mystery.

Then was the darkness all so black as seas that roll deep in
the earth,



As black as blinded mortal eye, and no man yet had come
to birth,

The shadow of the still unmade did not its silver threads un-
fold,

And over an unending peace unbroken empty silence ro-
lled!...

Then something small in chaos stirred... the very first and
primal cause.

And God the Father married space and placed upon confu-
sion laws.

That moving something, small and light, less than a bubble
of sea spray,

Established through the universe eternal and unquestion-
able sway...

And from that hour the timeless mists draw back their dark
and hanging folds.

And law in earth and sun and moon essential from and order
moulds.

[...]

The body of the universe is stiffened to eternal death

And through the emptiness of space is neither movement,
life nor breath.

All falls into not being's night and an unbroken silence reigns

As once again the universe its primal peace and void re-
gains...

Another poem, *Venere și Madonă / Venus and Madonna* (1870)
—that can be seen as a more lenient writing (of the love poems) at
a glance— is no less eloquent for the philosophical dominant of the
Eminescian poetry; just bring herein its first stanzas: "Oh, ideal lost
in night-mists of a vanished universe; / People who would think in
legends —all a world who spoke in verse; / I can see and think and
hear you— youthful scout which gently nods / From a sky with dif-
ferent starlights, other Edens, other gods. // Venus made of blood-
warm marble, stony eyes which often flash, / You embodied in a
goddess woman's beauty, charm and dash: / *Arms as soft as is the
thinking of an emp'ror born a poet*; / Woman's own divine attraction,
still enticing as I saw it" (our italics).

We could note many other philosophical poems, among
which there are: *Cugetările sărmanului Dionis / Poor Dionis' Reflec-
tions* (1872); *Sonete / Sonnets I, II, III* (1879); *Rugăciunea unui dac /*

A Dacian's Prayer (1879); *Scrisoarea II, Scrisoarea III, Scrisoarea IV, Scrisoarea V / Second Epistle, Third Epistle, Fourth Epistle, Fifth Epistle* (1884-1886); *Luceafărul / The Evening Star* (1883); *Glossă / The Gloss* (1883); *Memento mori (Panorama deșertăciunilor) / (The Panorama of Vanities)* that has been posthumously published, etc.

This is the general tonality in which *Ode (In Ancient Meter)* is fully registering, too.

An insight into *ode (in ancient meter)* from the perspective of phenomenological hermeneutics

Attempting to decipher some of the key meanings of *Ode (In Ancient Meter)* —published in 1884, after a hard work between 1874 and 1882, exercising eleven consecutive versions (see Eminescu, [1944] 1994, 113-135)—, we apply the perspective of *phenomenology of understanding* that is one of “the two faces of hermeneutics” according to Gerald Nyenhuis (2009).

In contrast to “a logic of validation”, the hermeneutics conceived as a “phenomenology of understanding” opens towards extensive possibilities to penetrate and to comprehend a literary text “as both the language and reflection about it meaning, which we have got to learn what it is to be appropriated through the process of understanding. Thus, the hermeneutics tries to answer the question ‘what does it mean we are doing during understanding a text?’” (Nyenhuys, 2009: 23) On this basis, we seek to grasp part of the essence of the Eminescian poem through a phenomenological attitude, putting together ‘noesis and noema’ through the lived experience of a conscious subject facing a poetic text written in the classic style of the archaic Greek poet Sappho of Lesbos (c. 630 -c. 570 BC).

As the first line of *Ode (In Ancient Meter)* emphasizes: “Hardly had I thought I should learn to perish”, the nucleus-topic is a meditation upon the learning with respect to death.

This represents one of the tremendous interest themes that run through the continuous history of philosophy from the Ancients to nowadays thinkers.

Death is to be found in Socrates, Epicurus and Stoics’ philosophy, for example. But no less it is one of the defining ideas of Zalmoxism —the Dacian and Getae spirituality— with the so-called



myth of the god, the high priest and the twice reborn philosopher Zalmoxis (or Zamolxis)¹ —who may have lived much earlier than Pythagoras, according to Herodotus ([430 BC] 1920, Book IV, 96)—, with the “ritual of passage” (Eliade, 1970). Centered on this Magus’ death and resurrection, the “core theme of Zalmoxian doctrine” is the mystery hope of immortality, “the Eternal Life, the theory that seduced the man despite millennia of argumentation for and against” (Cernătescu, 2012).

Referring to the Geto-Dacian myth of Zalmoxis, we discover two strong ideas in this ancient spirituality: the uniqueness of the god and the immortality of the soul (see Ghiddeanu, 1985). These ideas have been transmitted over centuries and they became pivotal elements of the Romanian culture, both the popular and the author ones.

Belonging to one of the earliest spiritualities developed on the present European territory, namely the Thracian-Getae culture (7-4th centuries BC), Eminescu knew of the wisdom of his ancestors around the teachings of the god (*daimon*) Zalmoxis —sometimes called Gebeleizis.

Activating the relation *mythos-logos* in poetic writing, many symbols are brought into relief: the cosmic dimension to which the poet is permanently referring to: “I wandered, / Raising dreamy eyes to the star styled often / Solitude’s symbol”; looking towards the sky (in first stanza), but also to “Billow of oceans” in which could be “extinguish[ed] my flames” (the third stanza); the all, on the ground of being aware of the profound relation between human and nature: the former, by understanding its position as part (and not apart) of the entire universe that can be accessed by a mortal being.

We might correlate this vision with the phenomenology of life acknowledged by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka concerning the human

¹ Sources about the divinity but also the real wise man who lived among the Getae and Dacians, namely Zalmoxis / Zamolxis / Salmoxis can be found from the ancient authors: Herodotus in his *Histories*, Book IV, 93-96 [c. 430 BC]; Plato [428/427 or 424/423-348/347 BC] in *Charmides*, 156d-158; Diodorus Siculus [90-30 BC] in *Bibliotheca historica*, Book 1, 94.2; Strabo [64/63 BC-c. 24 AD] in *Geographica / Geography*, Book 7, 3, 1-11; Iamblichus [c. 250-c. 325] in *De vita pythagorica / On the Pythagorean Life*, 104, 173; Jordanes in *Getica* [about 551 AD] V. 39 *et al.*, until authors of modern times, such as Mircea Eliade (1970); Mircea Eliade and Willard R. Trask (1972); Sorin Paliga (1994), etcetera.

"self-individualization in life" and the "manifestation of life through the complex of nature" in the embodying and transforming the sense of living by revealing human "cosmic breath" within "the cultivation of nature-life"; taking into account the workings of the "logos of life" dynamics in the "strategies of *impetus/equipoise* in communal sharing-in-life", within the "meta-ontopoietic" comprehension of "recovering the great vision of the All" with the "universal harmony in the spectacle" of the "Great Plan of Life" in which man / woman discloses his / her "creative rise of the human spirit" (see Tymieniecka, 2000: 97-138; 367-406; 417-425).

Certainly, a phenomenological hermeneutic analysis could be constructed following the Hans-Georg Gadamer's "hermeneutic circle" of the needed *dialogue* to understand each other, but no less "to understand the texts themselves" (Gadamer [1960/1990] 2001, 288). At the same time, a path would be the application of Roman Ingarden's phenomenological perspective to interpreting the literary work of art, through the elements of the "aesthetic experience" (see Ingarden, 1968; Vergara, 2018).

The mythological dimension is a dominant presence in many places within the poem *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*. Names like Nessus the centaur and Hercules / Heracles the divine hero, son of Zeus and Alcmene, are mentioned in the third stanza, through their particularities: "Sadly racked, I'm burning alive like Nessus, / Or like Hercules by his garment poisoned"; since the poet has inserted his very own consciousness of living by crossing the "pathway – / Suffering – you, painfully sweet, yet torture... / To the lees I drank the delight of dying – / Pitiless torment" – in the second stanza of the poem.

Our hermeneutical approach goes to the central thematization that is built around the connection between *life* and *death* —one of the major topics in the whole universal philosophy; at the same time, one of the great subjects approached by the popular sapientiality—certainly, one which presence can be found in the Romanian popular culture —and, no less, one of the most frequent matter of the worldwide poetry of all the times.

Reading *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*, at a first glance, it seems to be unveiled a sort of pessimism. But a much more sensitive reading and the endeavour of the best understanding of the text enlighten



us as concerns a kind of the very own Eminescian responses dealing with a balanced vision upon life. The poem does eventually show a thinker and an artist able to catch the idea of the classic equilibrium, of the self-recovery by an authentic *wisdom in life*; that a wise man should and can find by detaching from any source of sorrow and suffering. There is an obvious expression of existential torment and the burning at high temperatures by an awoken human being who is getting a lot on his / her mind, dominated by daily queries in respect of the existence and the meaning of it. But, at the same time, there is hope and trust of reviving: "By my own illusion consumed I'm wailing / On my own grim pyre in flames I'm melting... / Can I hope to rise again like the Phoenix / Bird from the ashes?" —in the fourth stanza of the poem.

Simultaneously, *hope* comes under interrogation; and the final stanza somehow establishes the situation of a philosopher who knows too well the significance of transcending the illusion of life —with its joys and sorrows alike—, trying to permanently move towards the level of finding the serenity and peace of accepting human destiny: "May all tempting wyes vanish from my pathway / Come back to my breast, you indifferent sorrow! / So that I may quietly die, restore me / To my own being!"

It is something expressed in a decisive manner —by the use of exclamation marks, twice in the same stanza— as a conclusion to be seriously considered by a powerful human being that finds the force of living together with the inexorable fate. Isn't life just a "dream of our soul" —as we read in Eminescu's *Poor Dionis* short story (Eminescu [1872] 1966, 28-78)? And since the soul is eternal, doesn't it mean that such a dream is without end? By consequence: Why a sage man / woman would be pessimist?!

Somehow we discover the attitude of an Epicurean thinker who gets the sense of *ataraxia* (tranquility, imperturbability). And, no less, we find here something from the Stoics' *apatheia* as the freedom from passion or suffering, and a component of a *eudaimonist* / a happy life, finally.

As a defining quality of a sage person, the Stoic concept of *apatheia* reminds us the state of *Nirvana* —conceived to be a state of perfect quietude and spiritual liberation leading to the so desi-

red happiness—, cultivated by the Buddhist philosophy² and other major Indian religions, about which Mihai Eminescu had a profound knowledge.

Either on the path of Hellenistic or on that of the Buddhist vision upon life and death, time/timing, dream and reality, human suffering and rebirth, wise detachment from the illusions of being, etc., the attitude of the Romanian poet, in his *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*, is one of *the sage* confronting with the great and grave interrogations of human beingness—in-becoming, and adopting the higher *adiaphoria*.

Some echoes of the teachings of *the sage* coming from *Glossă / The Gloss* can be captured. Just review the last stanza of *Glossă*, translated by Andrei Bantaș:

Keep as cool as ice or glass,
Should they urge or should they call.
Wave-like things like waves shall pass,
Don't be Hope's or Terror's thrall;
You should ponder in your mind
What is right and what is wry;
All is old, but new in kind;
Time will come and time will fly.
(Eminescu, 2004: 321)

Closure advancing towards disclosures

Using the phenomenological-hermeneutical scrutiny applied to *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*, we disclosed part of the meaningfulness of the Eminescian poetry. A very own complex creation belonging to an important thinker of the second half of the 19th century as regards of basic ideas of an acute philosophical and artistic consciousness is revealing to the reader, making him/her to meditate upon some real coordinates of human condition, beyond any temporal and spatial determinations; and it bears an enlightening insight about what actually does matter for the manifestation of human beingness—in-becoming as microcosm within the cosmic universe; precisely

² See for example: Steven, Collins (1998). *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali imaginaire*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, pp. 135-190.



according to a fundamental Eminescu's idea we find in the Ms. 2262, f. 42 v.: "by each human being, the spirit of the Universe is hardly trying", because every man/woman is "a problem put again and again to the Universe" (Eminescu, 1981: 76).

Crucial problems of human destiny that are kept within the cosmic spatial-temporal becomingness are disclosing in the artistic language of an authentic inspired and inspiring Poet; Mihai Eminescu being recognized as "the Poet-Vates" who established his roots in a "historic *humus* of a distant past" (Del Conte [1961] 2003, 150; 160), from which he has succeeded to draw "the kernel of the world, [with] all is right, beautiful and good" (Eminescu, *Egipetul* [1884] 1994, 44), always feeling and assessing the power of *love* —[as] the call of the Absolute (Del Conte [1961] 2003, 202).

The search of great problems marking the human condition remains open to future exegetical types of approach in terms of Umberto Eco's *opera aperta* in its potential to render many successive interpretations and evolving viewpoints, seeing that *openness* is a constant of the work of art (Eco, 1967).

Undoubtedly a better knowledge and comprehension of Mihai Eminescu's poetry claims to be analyzed and elucidated merely "in *its wholeness*, taking into consideration all the versions, fragments and drafts, which have been printed by Perpessicius in his master edition"³ (Eliade, 2003: 462).

Unfortunately the translations of Mihai Eminescu's work — even those that stand as the most achieved ones by gifted dedicated authors— can't play the right and all-encompassing meaning and the harmony of style of his writings; and very little of the Eminescian "chromatic sensitivity" and "musicality" —that are some "aspects defining Eminescu's art and language" (Del Conte, [1961] 2003, 239-260)— is coming out in the best way from the English translations of his poetry. It is the case of *Ode (In Ancient Meter)*, too. But at least something about a genius work is possible to be pointed up for anyone who wants to know and understand it. And what does make "a permanent imperative", according to Tudor Ghiddeanu (2004, 11), is "to apprehend the *eidos*, the original essentiality of the Eminescian cogitation, which must be explored not in the eclectic diversity but

³ See Mihai Eminescu, *Opere / Works*, Vols. I-V. Edited by Perpessicius. 1939-1958.

in the unique synthesizing power that devotes the Eminescu's metaphysics, eventually the dominant of his life of theoretical creation".

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Addendum

A Spanish translation of *Ode (in Ancient Meter)* is reproduced below:

Oda (en métrica antigua)

No creía que algún día aprendería a morir;
eternamente joven, envuelto en mi capa,
mis ojos soñadores levantaba hacia la estrella
de la soledad.

Súbitamente llegaste en mi camino,
tú, sufrimiento, dolorosamente dulce...
hasta el fondo bebí la voluptuosidad de la muerte
implacable.

Patéticamente estoy ardiendo vivo, atormentado como Neso,
o como Hércules envenenado por sus ropas;
mi fuego no lo puedo apagar con todas las aguas
del mar.

Por mi propio sueño, abrasado, me lamento,
sobre mi propia hoguera me estoy derritiendo...

¿Puedo resucitar luminosamente como
el ave Fénix?

Que desaparezcan los ojos inquietantes de mi camino,
ven otra vez a mi seno, indiferencia triste;
para poder morir tranquilamente, devuélveme
¡a mi propio ser!

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Carmen Cozma

Correo electrónico: carmen.cozma@uaic.ro

Nacionalidad: rumana. PhD profesora en la Universidad "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" de Iași, Rumania. Sus líneas de investigación: filosofía y fenomenología del arte.