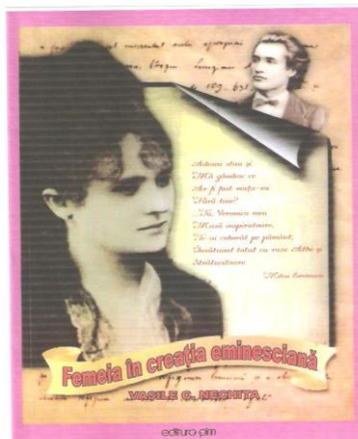


***The Inspirational
Feminine in the
Poetry of
Mihai Eminescu***



Carmen Cozma*

Vasile C. Nechita, *Femeia în creația eminesciană / The Woman in the Eminescian Creation*. Iași: PIM Publishing House, 2017. Pp. 183.

The poetry of Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) is a territory to be continuously revealed in its in-depth valences from various perspectives. It is a major unavoidable challenge to approach – focusing on just a part of this work - the *love poems* written by the Romanian poet who represents even “the Absolute”, according to Rosa Del Conte in her book *Eminescu o dell’Assoluto* (1963).

Renewing the hermeneutics around the poetic (but not merely) creation of the author who gave us the fabulous 1883 *Luceașărul* [*The Evening Star*] – which is the longest love poem in the world with its 98 stanzas – is a duty firstly for the country people of Mihai Eminescu to exploring and knowing his work in its entirety, on the one hand, and to unceasingly trying to make it known as much as possible to the foreigners, on the other hand; and thus, to correctly understanding and

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satisfying the imperative inserted in the confident and forceful opinion of Constantin Noica, he has stressed in the 1975 essay “An image of the piety towards culture”: to realize that Eminescu is to be reckoned “the *Educator* of Romania” (See Constantin Noica, *Introducere la miracolul eminescian* [*Introduction to the Eminescian Miracle*], 1992, p.14). We dare to say that the study of Mihai Eminescu should be – first of all for the Romanians - a permanent concern generated by an essential need to (re)discover an astonishing polyvalent and hardworking creator who “is still, even for his people, a Great Mystery” as Ovidiu Vuia notes in the 1996 *Misterul morții lui Eminescu* [*The Mystery of Eminescu's Death*].

In such a context, we welcome the appearance of the volume *Femeia în creația eminesciană* [*The Woman in the Eminescian Creation*] belonging to one of the most remarkable Romanian academics in the economic sciences area, Vasile C. Nechita, representing the result of his research effort to unveiling a little part of the complex multifaceted Eminescian work.

It is worth mentioning that the author has already published, in 1989, a fundamental book assuming the pioneering role in the analysis of the economic thought of Mihai Eminescu, namely *Meditații economice eminesciene* [*Eminescian Economic Meditations*] that has been awarded with the “Petre S. Aurelian” Prize of Romanian Academy. Also, the peculiar interest and dedication to increasing the Eminescian knowledge and comprehension were the basis of another significant tome, *Economiști români cu vocație universală* [*Romanian Economists with Universal Vocation*] (2015) in which Mihai Eminescu is presented together with Mihail Manoilescu and Nicolae (Nicholas) Georgescu-Roegen as “three creators of original economic theory”.

The recent writing of our Professor is a somewhat different attempt to deciphering in an original interpretation one of the sensitive questions linked to the poetic work of Eminescu. As the title announces, the reader has the opportunity to enter in the universe of the love lyrics written by the Romanian poet of genius, under the exegetic guidance of Vasile C. Nechita. The core idea is developed under the auspices of the author’s intention to shedding lights on the “impact” the women - Eminescu has been enamored with them - have exercised on his poetry.

The approach of such a topic – although it would look to be an expected and usual one: actually, ‘the romances that always mark the world literary creation’ –, in this case, is not at all a facile one. And the

author knows it too well. But it is not an obstacle for him; or, perhaps better: it may be an obstacle, but one to be overcoming, because it is one of the most irresistible challenges we should try to take into consideration if we were *living a true life*, by experiencing *love* and the call to get an adequate insight into it; and, why not, trying to reflect upon and to catch the meaning of life, finally (seeing that life is nothing without love). All of these are brought to the fore by a peculiar theorizing endeavor centered on the poetry of the one who represents – in terms of the philosopher Constantin Noica (in his 1975 book *Eminescu sau Gânduri despre omul deplin al culturii românești*) - “the complete man of the Romanian culture”.

Following a wonderful and no less a serious theme of all the times: *love* – that covers the Greek *eros*, accomplished by *philía* and even by certain articulations of *agápē*, about which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to talk (and, the last two, used to write) -, situating himself within the poetic world of Eminescu, Vasile C. Nechita actually tackles the problems of the ‘self’ in its pure beingness and of the acknowledged ‘I and thou’ relation, together with the existential principle: the *archē*, in its duality of feminine and masculine manifested in the *uni-* and *multi-*verse dimensioning the whole cosmic order, and no less in the power of the phenomenological fullness of the *logos* (both thought and word), being aware of the truth Eminescu has expressed in 1883 - a long time before Heidegger did - that “we are not the masters of language, but the language is our master” (MS 2275B). Properly, under the heading line of the women role in creating part of his poems, Mihai Eminescu is, once again, revealed in his complexity, as a *kavi* (in Hindi language), respectively as a Poet and veritable Sage at the same time, according to Amita Bhose (the first translator to Bengali, in 1969, of Eminescu’s *Poezii / Kavita*).

Femeia în creația eminesciană [*The Woman in the Eminescian Creation*] offers us an integrator image of the feminine’s meaning in writing some of the most beautiful and unique poems of love by Mihai Eminescu. At stake there is the eternal ‘feminine’ in the space built by the Poet in his very own manner. It is the ‘feminine’ in the balance of ideal and real, allowing the consciousness to awake and rise to a sublime level of experiencing life in its meaningfulness circularity thanks to the integral humanity that the human being is able to become.

The book is in resonance with the fact that permanently the Poet reflected on the necessity to preserve the value of life-dream, as we can read for example in the 1872 prose *Sărmanul Dionis – fragment-*

[*Wretched Dionis – A fragment -*]: “...Indeed, the world is the mere dreaming of our soul. (...) If we could only learn the mystery that would connect ourselves to these two orders [past and future; time and space, which “do not exist – they’re only in our soul”] of things that lie hidden deep within us, (...) then, descending into the depths of our souls, we would be able to really live in the past and inhabit the world of the stars and of the sun” (See Mihai Eminescu, *Poezii alese / Selected Poems*, translated by Adrian George Sahlean. Bucharest: Univers Publishing House, 2000, p.149).

Being a meditative human nature and well-instructed in philosophy, in fact, the metaphysical vision has always accompanied Eminescu in his life’s romances and in his literary creation alike.

Structuring the book in four sections, Vasile C. Nechita unfolds some major ideas aiming to highlight, as he reiterates, the “impact” of women Eminescu has met and loved and, no less, they have inspired him.

After an explanatory Foreword, the author settles the discourse in nowadays, marking the “167 years since the birth of Mihai Eminescu and 128 years since his death” (pp.9-14).

Somehow paraphrasing the motif established by Alain Guillerrou in his 1963 insightful analysis *La Génèse intérieure des poésies d’Eminescu*, Vasile C. Nechita develops a second chapter “The ‘Inner and outer genesis’ in the frame of the Eminescian creation”, then moving toward which he calls the “Platonic Loves impacting the Eminescian poetic creation”. Herein, we find about the artists and intellectuals who were so inspiring for the poetry of the Romanian writer; i.e. Eufrosina Popescu, Eliza – the adored “demon saint with big blue eyes and golden hair” (*Venus and Madonna*, 1870) -, Friederike Bogner, Mite Kremnitz – for whom Eminescu wrote, in December 1883, *With Life’s Tomorrow Time You Grasp*, and before, in September 1879, the verse: “So delicate, so pure you are / As April’s snow-white cherry bloom...” -, Cleopatra Poenaru-Lecca – who used to attend *Junimea* sessions in Bucharest as a guest of Titu Maiorescu, and who seems to be the inspiration of the famous poem *Along the Row of Poplars Odd* (1883), etc.

The climax of the book is, by sure, the fourth chapter, which is the consistency (pp.103-156), dedicated to the uniqueness’ relationship with Veronica Micle, herself a poet whose life span was exactly between the beginning and the end of that of Mihai Eminescu (1850-

1889). Actually, after the death of the poet, Veronica died on August 3rd 1889 (not two months after Eminescu's death on June 15th 1889).

By a sensitive touch of the exceptional bond between the two so young and tragic characters, Vasile C. Nechita succeeds to design an enlightened presentation of the most powerful inspiration Veronica Micle has meant in general for the poetry (and not only) of Mihai Eminescu.

The author insists on the “(Re)Valuations concerning the love affair of Eminescu and Veronica”, “The setbacks they had to deal with, trying to live together” - that eventually was impossible -, and the “Sentimental poetical experiences and expressions” they both have manifested. Addressing each other by *my sweet Lady* and *my beloved Emin* – as the love letters' collection published in 2000 testifies -, they appear us like an icon for what does mean a deep soul and cosmic connection about which we just take the risk to think that it has really entered immortality.

‘Eminescu and Veronica’, as a whole, was a great love story that undoubtedly is still alive, just in another ontic-ontological plan of the universe. And it also – and maybe particularly – continues to live through the magnificent Eminescian poems we may enjoy, such as the 1873 *Sky-Blue Flower* does tell us: “Are you rapt in stars again / And in clouds and lofty skies? / Mind you don't forget my eyes, / You, the clearest of all men! (...) Wonder sweet, you left your thrall: / Our love lived but an hour. / Sky-blue flower, sky-blue flower!... / Sad is this world after all!” (In Eminescu, *Poezii – Poems*, translated by Leon Levițchi and Andrei Bantaș. Bucharest: Teora Publishing House, 2004, 1999, pp.87, 91).

But many are the poems Eminescu wrote for and/or because the “muse” Veronica Micle he firstly met in October 1869, when he was studying Philosophy at the University in Vienna. In the case of their intimacy, the inspiration is to be understood as something “larger than beauty, endearment, attachment, tenderness, kindness, common aspirations, etc.; also as artistic skills they shared, and mutual fair and competent judgments, and no less the belief that the uncertainties and syncopations are their own role to maintaining a love affair alive; seeing that both of them and together, the two lovers reached to appropriating *what essentially is love*” (pp.111-112). Keeping the lines Vasile C. Nechita selected from *Ce e amorul? [And What Is Love?]*, we remind: “And what is love? It is a long / Occasion to be sore / For

though a thousand tears you throng / It ever claims some more.” (In Eminescu, *Poezii – Poems*, *op.cit.*, p.307).

Beyond all, according to the author’s emphasis, the intense, strong and from time to time so nerve-wracking feeling of affection between Veronica and Eminescu can be disclosed throughout the wonderful poem *Luceafărul* [*The Evening Star*; also translated as *Hyperion* or *The Legend of the Evening Star*]: “...Now, once upon enchanted time, / As time has never been, / There lived a princess most divine / Of royal blood and kin. Such beauty only heaven paints! / She walked in maiden bloom / As Virgin Mary ’mong the saints, / Among the stars, the moon. The solemn columns guide her gait / Through vaulted chambers, far / Where at the windows will await / The lonely Evening Star. (...) Each night she watched, with growing love / That kindled sweet desire; / He, long adoring from above, / Glowed with a hidden fire. (...) And he, oh, how he waits, aglow, / When dusk long shadows casts / Above the castle where, below, / She will appear, at last. * And step by step, along the trail / He follows to her room, / Weaving a scintillating veil / With his cold sparks bestrewn. (...)” (Translation by Adrian George Sahlean. In Mihai Eminescu, *Poezii alese / Selected Poems*, *op.cit.*, pp.55-59).

The new book signed by Professor Vasile C. Nechita is a gift the author shares with us, expressing his peculiar love and high fully entitled appreciation of the tutelary genius of the Romanian culture, Mihai Eminescu.

The romances of this tragic figure in the worldwide literature are just some of the life of an overwhelming creator who, despite the heavy burdens he had to cope with, has proved to be not only a great artist, but also a man of moral sovereignty (in Kantian terms). Indeed, “without Eminescu we would be more different and poorer for the world around and within it”, as the literary critic Tudor Vianu pointed out (*Poezia lui Eminescu* [*The Poetry of Eminescu*], 1930).

For us, Mihai Eminescu is one of the most elevated human models that urge – and even command us - to be open-minded and to learn something significant and essential for living on the Earth.

As the author of the present book states, Eminescu has experienced “the noblest feelings, especially the human goodness and love – that are, in our opinion, the defining features of his personality. Physically rooted in work and sobriety, he has activated them up to the ultimate limits of supportability. This is the way he understood to live and to fulfill his creator’s mission (...); the hard work and a lot of sacrifices

he had to make are the vital sources for developing his original priceless thought and creation, showing themselves as the reference points of his entire beingness” (p.36).

Inviting to find out a fragment of Eminescu’s tumultuous life through his lens, Vasile C. Nechita unveils some of the fascinating feminine power for living, finally. And the pivot is the complex and complicated existence of a poet, novelist, playwright and a first-class journalist: “the gentleman from the newspaper *Timpul* [*The Time*]” as he was called during the Romanian War of Independence (1877-1878). At the same time, it is the existence of an authentic philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, translator, etc., seeing that Mihai Eminescu remains an awe-inspiring example for us, because his huge curiosity of appropriating, as a professional, so many various domains of science and culture, from the Sanskrit language to mathematics and astronomy, from literature and linguistics to metaphysics, anthropology, economy, political sciences, etc. And, as the Eminescian full published work and his manuscripts are so impressive evidences to anyone explores them, it is clearly that Mihai Eminescu imposes himself as one of the exceptional humans in the world, who has accomplished a total creative destiny, even though his life line on this planet was so short.