V. VOICULESCU'S SONNETS: EROS, FLIGHT INTO THE LIGHT OF AGAPÈ

Dorin ŞTEFĂNESCU[1] and Sorin SUCIU[2]

Abstract

This paper represents a glimpse into the world of V. Voiculescu's "Ultimele sonete ale lui Shakespeare. Traducere imaginară" ("Shakespeare's Last Sonnets. Imaginary Interpretation"), a glimpse of the heart following the eye through the inner sceneries of our poet's masterpiece. As the title shows, the authors intended to reveal, through Voiculescu's sonnets, two complementary aspects of Love with the help from some critics, Patristic authors and modern theo-philosophers who are trying to institute a phenomenological theology on the grounds of Johannine assertion "God is Love."

Keywords: eros, agapè, sonnet, ethical conscience, transcendental

The aim of our study is to cast a light upon the elements which unravel, in V. Voiculescu's sonnets[3], the plait of two terms which define love in ancient Greek of the New Testament and Patristic, *eros* and *agapè*.[4] The method of solitary style, as H. R. Patapievici names André Scrima's hermeneutics[5], could explain our attempt to construe Voiculescu's text and some of the major opinions of the Romanian critics on his late period poetry. The way constructs itself under the steps of those who would define its direction, as Miles Davis' creative method reveals to us a master surrounded by young artists touched by the breathe of originality and orchestrated by jazzman's magic and roads opening clairvoyance. Our attempt is made in order to put the reader on the way opened by that trend which tries to set a phenomenological theology[6] based on the Johannine assertion: "God is Love."[7]

Therefore, we are beginning with a quote from one of Ovidiu Papadima's studies in order to show how was pointed out this entwine of the two terms – which define love - by

[1] Assoc. Prof. PhD., „Petru Maior" University of Târgu-Mureş
[2] PhD. Candidate, „Petru Maior" University of Târgu-Mureş
[3] V. Voiculescu, *Ultimele sonete ale lui Shakespeare. Traducere imaginară,* tabel cronologic, prefaţă şi referinţe critice de Roxana Sorescu, Ed. Art, Bucureşti, 2010.
[4] The other two terms are *storghi* (Στοργή), which defines affection, the love coming from the respect of children towards their parents or the parental love (it could mean also marital love) and *philia* (φιλία), the equivalent of friendship, of love between human beings.
[5] Horia Roman Patapievici, „Despre metoda unui stil de insolitare", in André Scrima, *Duhul Sfânt şi unitatea Bisericii,* Ed. Anastasia, Bucureşti, 2004, pp. 12-23.
[6] "This development of an ethic without ontology, made by a Jew thinker (Emanuel Lévinas, *note ours*), produced many echoes through Christians. There are different attempts made to develop on the *love* and *gift* categories a new theological thinking under the sign of «God without Being». Jean-Luc Marion, the most brilliant of these new theo-philosophers, begins also from Nietzsche's declaration about the death of God. But, he is interpreting it as a criticism of God's Names *known* until now, including the Name of the Being." (Paul Ricœur, „De la interpretare la traducere", in André LaCoque, Paul Ricœur, *Cum să înţelegem Biblia,* trad. de Maria Carpov, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 2002, pp. 316-317).
[7] "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Love" (*1 John* 4, 8). Saint John's assertion could be completed by St. Mathew's: "«Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? » An He said unto him: «Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.» This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto is this: «Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself». On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (*Matthew* 22, 36-40*).* In our study, we are using American Standard Version of the Holy Bible, to be found at: http://bibleresources.bible.com/

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

one of Voiculescu's contemporary critics: "In V. Voiculescu's poetry, the inner scenery is not a way of expression but, on the contrary: the expressing of a unique inner mode, which the poet needs to unravel to himself with that kind of harsh, blind sincerity which represents the heavy burden discharging from a soul."[8] After introducing a poem from Voiculescu's debut volume - where poet's soul is a "deep, immensely deep" fountain and, in there, "Loam torment and gentle smile from heaven / Are binding, fixed together / And falling light on the salt pit of tears / It's making it better, smoother"[9] - the critic wrote: "Let's recall. In this first volume: *Poezii – Poems,* published in 1916 – and characterized by our shallow criticism as having too much resemblance with Vlahuţă's poetry – one can discover a verse like this, where, into the appealing - at that time - expressive patterns of symbolism is to be found the essence of V. Voiculescu's lyricism: that kind of painful an yet – or, maybe, precisely why – fertile entwine of nature's raw elements and, more than that, of light's transcendental quality and the humid sensuality of the soil."[10] What we should keep in mind from these passages regarding *The Last Sonnets…* is the inferred struggle of *eros* (implied in "earth's nostalgia" phrase and an attribute of humanity, the peak of divine Creation) and it's aim for fulfillment into the Light of divine Love, *agapè*[11] ("identity" of the Creator[12] descending onto His creation, Whom works on our level through the uncreated energies, bringing back "the celestial words"), struggle fancied by Voiculescu's imagination and presented in those "inner sceneries" with an iconic function to convey the contemplator into the *distance.*[13] Unlike the "distracted" or "in part" *eros,* which is irrational love because it is only a sensual attraction,[14] *agapè* is "contracted" love, a manifestation of the divine love "as first handed experience of the personal universality." It is neither an individual virtue, nor the altruism or the solidarity, but its aim is the fusion with the divine mode of existence, which is love itself, achieving, in this way, "the assembling, the gathering in the One of those who were apart before."[15]

Furthermore, in order to approach the relation between sexual realism and matrimonial morality in the *Canticles* (as Paul Ricœur - who proposes an "erotic" and not a

---

[8] Ovidiu Papadima, *Peisajul interior din poezia lui V. Voiculescu* in „Gândirea", Bucureşti, an XXII, nr. 7, august – septembrie, 1943, p.391.

[9] The translation used in this text comes from the authors.

[10] Ovidiu Papadima, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

[11] "Eros tries the climbing, for fulfillment; agape is descending, to overflow, to fulfill. Thus, eros' origins are in penury, agape's in wealth; eros is the mark of the incompleteness of the human being, agape the proof of divine perfection. (Pr. Prof. Isidor Todoran, *Eros şi Agape – uman şi divin,* at http://www.crestinortodox.ro/morala/eros-agape-uman-divin-70850.html,).

[12] "And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him" (*1 John,* 4, 16).

[13] "Therefore, the distance, as di-stance, says: only duality aloud thanksgiving, communion increases with the length from which one regards the other. Di-stance: becomes my fellow only he who gets forever out of me and my personas. It is with me only the one who stands before me. (…) The definition of the distance defines us as one of its terms and therefore is eluding us to the other precisely in that moment when it exerts attraction. The Other, intimately a stranger, disappears precisely in its apparition and defines itself as the indefinite. No image, no concept and no negation of some image or concept suits the unthinkable and does not reveal him. If we approach the distance rigorously, one of the terms becomes unapproachable. (Jean-Luc Marion, *Idolul şi distanţa,* Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2007, pp. 277-278).

[14] "A partial love, carnal and diverted, which is not the true love." (Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul, *Despre Numele divine. Teologia mistică*, trad. Cicerone Iordachescu si Theofil Simenschy, Institutul European, Iasi, 1993, IV, 12). *Cf.* Christos Yannaras, about "the eros as part", in *Persoană şi Eros*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucureşti, 2000, p. 158.

[15] Christos Yannaras, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 160; idem, *Libertatea moralei*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 53.

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

"naturalist" approach - sees it), section of the *Holy Bible* which, according to Valeriu Anania, represents the paradigm of Voiculescu's *Last Sonnets…,* we will use Ştefan-Augustin Doinaş' point of view on solving the ethical issues in Voiculescu's poetry. In order to do that, the essayist makes a parallel with other two major representatives of Romanian poetry: "In Blaga's artistic doubles – spirit and matter, word and silence, created and uncreated, sin and holiness, etc., the solution is always an artistic matter, transgressing the moral plane of the good and evil dialectics. (…) Similarly, in Arghezi's poetry, the morality problems are surpassed by the location of the conflict, by its resolution on an *enjoyable game play* level. (…) On the contrary, V. Voiculescu never detaches himself from the moral implications of the existential act: he is, first of all, a conscience terribly troubled by its own inner energies, by his «enemy siblings» whom are living in the depths of his soul. This conflict stays onto a lucid conscience level, constituting its very own contradictory essence: V. Voiculescu's soul *is,* at the same time, sin *and* innocence, constraint *and* liberty."[16] In our opinion, although, any traces of moralistic views are left behind in the sonnets, love songs par excellence, the ethical problems being transmuted into an eroticism which is analogous to Ricœur's "nuptial", as it is revealed in one of his essays dedicated to the *Canticles*: "At the end of this string of observations one could affirm that, through these pure literary methods of calculated indetermination and metaphorical creation, one particular distance of meaning is set between nuptial (as it is) and sexual, without replacing the nuptial on the matrimonial orbit. Precisely this equidistance left between the sexual realism and matrimonial morality would permit to the nuptial, as I see it, to serve as an *analogon* to other configurations of love also and not only to the erotic love."[17] And yet, this distance in meaning does not ignore the understood ethical dimension – in the way in which Lévinas does it – as the originar posibility of loving the other, which founds the trancendence of the act of love and thus, the moral conscience itself. When Voiculescu says "And from the world to come no evil / I send to you Love's Seas to tumble" (CLXXVIII - 24) or "at will you bridle to you submitted evil" (CCXXI – 67), he designates the act of transcending the being whom he loves, externalization which is the transferring of one's substance into the being of his/hers beloved. And this is "because of the fact that, existing for the other, I exist different from I exist for myself, is the morality itself" and "to be for the other means to be good",[18] to love in loving of the Good which encompasses both in a *unique* way: "From same celestial fire together to be burned" (CXCVIII – 44). Here, as we shall see, the originating in Good means, at the same time, the attraction power, the communion into the high expanse of self transcending.

On the other hand, Origen, the one who initiated the allegorical interpretation[19] of the *Canticles,* wrote that: "God, the Creator of all things, made all the movements of the heart (*motiones animae*) in goodwill but, in life, often happens that the good deeds are leading us into

[16] Ştefan-Augustin Doinaş, „Lirica de dragoste a lui V. Voiculescu", in *Orfeu şi tentaţia realului,* Ed. Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1974, p. 182.
[17] Paul Ricœur, „Metafora nupţială", in André LaCoque & Paul Ricœur, *op. cit.*, p. 362.
[18] Emmanuel Lévinas, „Fenomenologia erosului", in *Totalitate şi Infinit. Eseu despre exterioritate*, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 1999, p. 234.
[19] See Tzvetan Todorov, *Teorii ale simbolului,* Ed. Univers, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 71.

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

sin because we use them in a wrong manner. And, one of those movements of the heart is love. We use it well if we love the wisdom and truth but when our love lowers itself seeking unworthy things we love carnality and blood… Therefore you, whom are a spiritual being, take this sang words spiritually and learn to raise both, your soul movement and the fire (*incendium*) of your natural love, to something higher."[20] Ricœur underlines (in the quoted work) that this movement is not a spatial one but a movement of love itself. Summing-up, one can say that love *agapè* is, firstly, the love-action, *movement,* life's renewing dynamic force.[21] Secondly, it originates in *good* and aims for good; the positive *eros* preexists in good, working for the good, its action being a beneficent one.[22] Thirdly, it is attraction and fusion, unmediated interpersonal *communion,* unifying through its own movement of attraction.[23]

That being said, it is imperious to remember that Voiculescu is a poet; a true Christian believer but, above all, a poet. Analyzing his poetry from the debut until the *Întrezăriri (Glimpses)* volume, Vladimir Streinu concludes: "Frequently, V. Voiculescu insists on the erotic compulsions which are seen as a contribution of the body to the spectacle of the conscience, close to another contribution, almost separated by it, that of the spirit. One could state that two actors (the Body and the Soul) and one spectator (the Poet) are constituting the hero of this drama if the spectator would not multiply himself ad infinitum with each reader. The new poetry of Voiculescu is a kind of council of the wise with the world or a quarrel of the Spirit with the Body."[24] In the end, what matters is the poetry as an instrument for transposing the reader into that distance mentioned before, distance meant to be inhabited by the worthiest men following the Son's footsteps and permitted by the uninterrupted retrieval of the Father.

In transition to the next step of our journey we will remind that Anania also embraces the allegorical interpretation of *The Last Sonnets*… "Using the method of artistic ambiguity the poet is building his cycle of ninety poems claiming the Shakespearian model but, in fact, he is guiding himself, not confessing though, after the model of the *Canticles.* As in the Bible, God is a friend to the hesychast poet, aspiring to be his loved one, lover

[20] Origen, The second *Homélie sur le Cantique des Cantiques,* p. 79, *apud* Paul Ricoeur, „Metafora nupțială", in André LaCoque & Paul Ricœur, *op. cit.,* p. 369.
[21] God "pours out of Himself the *eros* filled with love and (…) it is in motion"; he "moves towards Himself all those which are in sight." (Maximus the Confessor, *Cap. gnostica*, V). God, being eros, moves as love also. Love guides the soul through a "concentric movement", "onto the beauty and the good which is above all of the things existing (Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul, *op. cit.*, IV, 9). It is "a moving force which guides all things towards Itself (IV, 14), "a simple power, which moves by its own will all the existent things and blends them in a unity originating from good." (Sf. Ierotei, *Imnuri de Dragoste*, in Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul, *op. cit*, IV, 17). It is "the dynamic movement of the self-offering, filled with love." (Christos Yannaras, *Persoană şi Eros*, ed. cit., p. 134).
[22] "The divine love for the good is nothing else but a desire of the good for the good, because "love preexists in good par excellence." (Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul*, op. cit.*, IV, 10).
[23] "The godly eros is that of the union." (Maximus the Confessor, *Schol.*; 4, 17; P. G. 4. 268 D – 269 A.); God "sets everything in motion as the one who enthuses into Himself." (idem, P. G. 91, 1260). The Creator "all preserves and all attracts" (Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul, *op. cit.*, IV, 10), his love being "an invading and unifying power." (Sf. Ierotei, în loc. cit., IV, 15).
[24] Vladimir Streinu, *Pagini de critică literară,* vol 3, Ed. Minerva, Bucureşti, 1974, p. 231.

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

and spiritual bridegroom, wellspring and receptacle of the communion."[25] On the other hand, one could complete this interpretation with significant and signifying arguments in the light of the dialogue between theology and philosophy, initiated by LaCoque and Ricœur[26], even if the allegorical interpretation used by Anania is still valid in the righteousness of the tradition.[27] On this matter, Ricœur wrote: "The Canticle is nothing more but an epithalamium, a dialogued erotic love song – the allegorical explanations, extremely vivid for a long time inside the Jewish tradition, and then, in that of the Christianity, are being denuded by their ancient credibility and assumed in the prehistory of the erotic interpretation."[28] Consequently, marching on the idea of the biblical model presumably used by Voiculescu, his cycle of fancied translations of the Shakespearian sonnets are not based on that allegory initiated by Origen's thinking but, in our opinion, on *anagogic*[29], the capacity to see in something which exists in reality – the *erotic* love between two human beings in our case – a higher purpose, the yearned fulfillment into the Light of love *agapè*: "Don't mind the slander, write off the taint / On us by friends deserters smeared, / By elevation our love is sacred / It takes us up into eternal sorrows light" (CLXXII, 18). As we mentioned before, the moralistic attitude "ascribed to" our poet by the large majority of the critics, not without a trace of reason, though, vanishes in *The Last Sonnets…* In fact, here is the place where one could find Ricœur's *nuptial*. The movement of the *eros* – a climber into the Light planted in humans by *agapè* – is illustrated also in the verses: "cause than the nature stronger and able to convert it / Love's within the mortal flesh Almighty's seed" (CCXXXV, 13).

Affirming again, in accord with the exegets of Voiculescu's work, the fact that *The Last Sonnets…* represents the quintessence of his poetic creation, we will remind what is unraveling, for Roxana Sorescu, as a significant element in this direction: "In the final variant of the *Sonnets…,* V. Voiculescu created, following the biblical model, an explanatory, unifying motto: "Instead of ὕπαγε, σαζαυά (Get thee hence, Satan!) from *Mathew* [4, 10] and *Luke* [4, 8] we have: ἀπαγε βαβελοϊ - (Back off, Babel Tower's inhabitants!) The inhabitants of the Babel Tower are those who are living in dissipation of

[25] Valeriu Anania, „Introducere" la „Cântarea Cântărilor" in *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptur*ă, Ediție jubiliară a Sfântului Sinod, Versiune diortosită după Septuaginta, redactată şi adnotată de Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Arhiepiscopul Clujului, sprijinit pe numeroase alte osteneli, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 870.

[26] André LaCoque & Paul Ricœur, *Penser la Bible*, Seuil, Paris, 2003, Romanian translation (used in this study): André LaCoque, Paul Ricœur, *Cum să înțelegem Biblia,* trad. de Maria Carpov, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 2002.

[27] "It is proper to note that the *eros / agapè* opposition has no exegetic basis. If *eros* is avoided systematically in the *Septuagint* that happens for reasons which don't concern the opposition between what we name erotic love and spiritual love; vice versa, the word *agapè* is frequently used for naming all kinds of love. Precisely this word prevails in the *Canticles.* Even if the one who created the *Canticles* thought only to write a poem meant to glorify sexual love it is sufficient the fact that this text was interpreted as an allegory of spiritual love by generations of readers and, more important, by the great mystics. This kind of reading made the *Canticles* the paradigm of the metaphorical understanding of the erotic love. It is the time to remember here that the signification of a text is in solidarity with the entire history of its reception." (Paul Ricœur, *Iubire şi justiție,* trad. de Mădălin Roşioru, Ed. Art, Bucureşti, 2009, p. 23).

[28] Paul Ricoeur, „Metafora nupțială", in André LaCoque & Paul Ricœur, *op. cit.,* p. 353.

[29] *See* D. Stăniloae, note in *** *Filocalia sau culegere din textele Sfinților Părinți care arată cum se poate omul curăți, lumina şi desăvîrşi,* vol. VII, traducere, introducere şi note Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Institutului Biblic de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucureşti, 1977, pp. 291-292.

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

the languages and spirit, any kind of split being diabolical to Voiculescu as well as to any evangelist. The reunion in spirit is a stair to the absolute unity of the divine. Therefore, the cycle of the *Sonnets*… becomes synonym in its spirit with the profound signification of Voiculescu's religious poems, of his short stories and plays."[30] This attempt on reunification, through the poetry from *The Last Sonnets…,* of the things separated since the first fall of humanity, problems aggravated with "the second fall"[31], is also pursued along our interpretation.

We will use, as a hermeneutical framework, the sonnet CCXLIV (90) - the last of the series which the poet wanted to be longer - as landmark in our study for two reasons: first, because, as in the case of the *Holy Bible* (taking into account the fact that this was Voiculescu's primary reading), a particular point of entrance is as good as any because it makes sense to begin with a familiar part or a part which sounds better at the first sight; the second is that Voiculescu went backwards when he wrote his first and only novel, *Zahei Orbul (Zahei the Blind).*[32] Therefore, let us remind that, anticipated by Perpessicius, the identity dilemma of that "Ocean of genius who drowns oblivion even" created many difficulties for those who were interpreting Voiculescu's sonnets. Sorescu concludes with a fertile solution in the foreword of the newest edition of *The Last Sonnets*…: "The initial and the final sonnet are using a first person whom is supposed to be Shakespeare: «And by their names, forefathers shook (*shake*) the spear (*spare*)» (but Arghezi too, who's motive from *Will* is picked up here: «These days the heavier quill I bear»); «Your life I haunted, me, hillbilly Will». But to whom is Shakespeare's avatar addressing? Who is that who is «The purest proof of my ennoblement», «the master, in glory wreathed chosen one», «the eternal sun»? The duality in unity keeps its mystery: The Loved One cannot be named."[33] Cannot be named, on the one hand, because He is Who He is. Cannot be named, although Sorescu names him in one of her earlier studies: "The sonnets contain, dispersed through the concrete notations and references to the sphere of reality, all data which permit us to give identity to «the hermetic prince». Not incidentally is he everywhere followed and limned by light, because he is the god of sun and light himself, Apollo, and his name should be taken etymologically as «universal father». When the poet calls his

[30] Roxana Sorescu, „Situația manuscriselor operei postume a lui V. Voiculescu", in V. Voiculescu, *Opera literară. Poezia,* Ed. Cartex 2000, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 16.

[31] "From a Jewish-Christian perspective one could say that even non-religion is equivalent to a «new fall» of the human being: the irreligious man has lost, it seems, the capacity of living his religion consciously, therefore, of understanding and of assuming it; but, in the depths of his being, the trails have not been entirely erased, as well as, after the first «fall», Adam, his forefather, the primordial man, still possessed enough wisdom to track God's traces in the world even if he was spiritually blinded. Following the first «fall», the religiosity crashed at the level of shredded conscience; after the second one, it felt even lower, in the depths of the unconscious, and it was «forgotten»." (Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul şi profanul,* trad. de Brânduşa Prelipceanu, Ediția a III-a, Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2005, p. 161).

[32] The last chapter of the novel was, initially, a short story which has been developed after. Voiculescu constructs a biography for the hero of this short story and, therefore, we have today a novel from this exceptional poet and short story writer. Zahei's quest is strongly influenced by the lack of love, an absence which represents, in our opinion, the essence of the novel. (V. Voiculescu, *Opera literară. Proza,* Ed. Cartex 2000, Bucureşti, 2003, pp. 483-609).

[33] Roxana Sorescu, „Eros şi magie în spirit renascentist", preface to V. Voiculescu, *Ultimele sonete ale lui Shakespeare. Traducere imaginară,* ed. cit, p. 70.

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

lover «my young sun» he is not using a metaphor, he calls him by name (…)."[34] Even if the image props used in *The Last Sonnets…,* peculiar to Renaissance magic and which are a must because here we are talking about an imaginary translation (interpretation would be the better word) of the Shakespearian sonnets, determines our minds to see an alchemist's workshop in a medieval burg - "Ever amongst filled athanors and flasks / With juice of words and longing strong odors, / Bent over essences whispering secrets." (CCXIX, 65) - , "the last magus" becoming "the first Christian" arrives on the threshold and he must speak the name of God in his prayer prepared from "word juices" and "great spheres music" which are boiling "in the tools of magic". This name must be spoken because otherwise all the hard work would be in vain: "Those are my secret psalms, a never-ending prayer / Within I've put beside Eternity with Love" (CLXXVI, 22). Even if the name is transcendent to any affirmation by discourse, it demands to be spoken, in the way in which we are invoking it in the name of the calling the Nameless One; the Name calls, demands but, in the absence of the descending *agapè,* or Blaga's "sophianic" – the descending transcendent – if we are to go on another level, *eros* is nothing but ardent élan overwhelmed by its own fervor. Not by chance chose Voiculescu the sonnet to be the expression of his entire poetic experience, experience which he had accumulated in great sorrow: "Into sour tears to craft heavenly venoms / And in gold balance of the sacred sounds / To find the elixir of yearned eternity" (CCXIX, 65). It operates here, in the poetic register, the shifting from the metaphysics of the Exodus (*Exodus* 3, 14) to the *theo*-logy of Love (*1 John,* 4, 8).[35]

On the other hand, returning to the sonnet CCXLIV (90), this equivoque manifests "between the word and the renunciation to word", as Lévinas[36] points out. If no word can call Him by name but only to invoke in the Name of God, there is but one appellation which would work and that is love (*agapè*), in which the unnamable offers itself as glory of the gift itself. To name the Loved one is, in the horizon opened by the objectifying intentionality, to desecrate the love itself: "to taint the sea", "to get you… down… into my deep humility". The profanation of "the undying sun" and that of "the celestial light" represents a "revelation of the hidden as hidden"[37], to love in order to know, to embrace in order to encompass the object of love into the structure of the subject. If love has something from the endless of the sunlight, from "the terrifying glory" of the peerless, it is because, on this level, "the Eros is not fulfilling itself neither as a subject who fastens an object, nor as a pro-jection towards a possible. Its movement resides in going beyond possible"[38], therefore, even beyond I - you (fame - humility) relation and towards that which has no structure in the act of being, in other words, towards an infinite which cannot be possessed. The love which stays in the satisfaction of

[34] Roxana Sorescu, *Interpretări,* Ed. Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1979*,* p. 126.
[35] About "the way in which God Who offers himself as *agapè* marks in this way the distance from the Being", see Jean-Luc Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, Quadrige / PUF, Paris, 2002, p. 123.
[36] Emmanuel Lévinas, *op. cit.,* p. 233.
[37] *Ibidem.*
[38] *Ibidem.*

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

possession dies precisely in what it thinks that it possesses, confiscating the very liberty for action and communion: "I do not ask for happiness, this numbness… / / From your love (…) I ask for total burning" (CCIX – 55). In the out of sight figure of Love, the loved one cannot be desecrated, lowered or possessed because – showing his grace in its "terrifying glory" – he "expresses his eminency, his dimension as majesty and divinity from whom descends,[39] without derogating from its mystery, as one could see in other sonnets, too: "Our love is sacred by its enormous height" (CLXXII, 18); remaining "near Eternity" (CLXXVI, 22), "Love is in the mortal flesh Almighty's seed" (CCXXXV, 81). The fact that love signifies and is, at the same time, the eternity achieves, with this supreme identification, the eternity as endless love working into the redeemed nature ("Through you I understand now all nature", CLXVIII, 14), "which gives all to the other and forgets about itself."[40] Love *agapé* which "does not speak itself only if is offering itself"[41], always – before any reciprocity accord – as purity of an unconditioned self offering.[42] If "love's the mere eternity to us given" (CLXXXIII, 29), then "I live forever" (CLXXXV, 31) into the light of a love "which has no winter and no dusk" (CCXXXVI, 82).[43] It is proper then to see the ascending state in which takes part human's love connected to the divine love; into this love one climbs, until the rarefied altitude of the gift offered to us freely, which cannot be won without a perpetual avulsion from the world and the elevation of the entire nature into the height of celestial meaning: "From soils foe to communion we rooted, / But summoned were we by the same sky' light; /... / With world below us we ripped all hawsers, / When, from the fierce azure climbed till the ruin, / Wide, love's lightning has stricken both of us" (CXCVIII, 44); "I ask / As one climbs mountains, to climb all heights of love: / And a new deepness to rise under each step / And with azure its wideness to encompass" (CCX, 56). One should see that the same amount gained in elevation opens, at the same time, a horizon into deepness, marking in this way the plenary verticality, *crucial,* reverberating transfiguration on the horizontal. Thus, the sonnet CXC (36) illustrates in the most pregnant way not just the span of divine love but, more than that, through the infinite of the One Who lightens by loving, the conversing sublimation of the being aspirated by the highness of transcendent: "My love is to me heaven and you, its endless luminary."

Our intention was to take a look inside of those fortresses built by a poet who asserts: "I build my sonnet, a citadel in cairns / With rhymes as crenels and any verse a wall" (CLXI, 7). And we did that in order to point out the elements of *eros* – the élan infused by divinity in all the moving creatures of this world – in its eternal struggle,

[39] *Ibidem,* p. 235.
[40] Jean-Luc Marion, *Fenomenul erosului*, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2004, p. 291.
[41] *Ibidem,* p. 292.
[42] "This horizon of the gifted love is always above and before us." (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Iubirea, formă a revelației*, Ed. Galaxia Gutenberg, 2005, p. 86).
[43] "All what it *is* is light", "and God is love, thus life and light through Himself", because "love is without beginning and without cause." (Dumitru Stăniloae, *Sfânta Treime sau La început a fost iubirea*, Ed. Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al B.O.R., Bucureşti, 2005, pp. 14, 25, 40). In Voiculescu's sonnets the *light* is not the attribute of the Apollonian, but the Johannine definition of the divinity itself as ante-being origin of all what exists. "The true light which enlightens every human who comes into the world" (*John* 1, 9).

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

battled to get into the Light of the peaceful *agapè*. In order to perceive, through Voiculescu's sonnets, the possibility of inhabiting, as children tracing the steps of the Son, the distance between the human kind and the Father Who permanently retreats, as a sign of Love showed to us - pinnacle of Creation to whom remains the infinite potentiality which results from choices, through the blessing of the free will –, this study has been inspired, partially, from the works of Marion. The nuptial, as it's seen by Ricœur in his parallel with LaCoque (an interesting dialogue between philosophy and theology on the grounds of the *Canticles*) helped us to point out the degree in which the allegorical interpretation of *The Last Sonnets*… (interpretation constructed by Anania on the basis of Origen's thought) is still valid in the virtue of the tradition which legitimizes it. In this way, we found that those "secret psalms" could and would be something more than a simple allegorical expression. They imply the *anagogic*, a revelation of something higher, the *agapè* love, into the light of something existent, palpable, the *erotic* love.

Arriving at the end of our short journey through the world of Voiculescu's fancied translations of Shakespeare's sonnets, a foray initiated from those "inner sceneries", we can say that *Ultimele sonete ale lui Shakespeare. Traducere imaginară* (*Shakespeare's Last Sonnets. Imaginary Interpretation*) is the keystone of Voiculescu's poetic architecture, which began modestly, according to some critics, but arched through time linking with the spirit of one of the titans from universal literature. The fact that the Romanian poet chose the sonnet as a form of expressing his entire poetic and life experience, experience brought through the purifying filter of pain and sorrow and ennobled by entwining with the world of the one who synthesized, better than anyone in this world, the gamut of feelings generated by love (feeling so much desired by all of us but, on the other hand, almost unbearable at its higher intensity), shows a courage matching the genius – and the confessed conceit – of this craftsman of the fallen words who tried to bring into the light an experienced - and assumed - reality through the agency of the Word which reverberated inside him.

References:

Balthasar, Hans Urs von, *Iubirea, formă a revelaţiei*, Ed. Galaxia Gutenberg, 2005

Dionisie Ps. Areopagitul, *Despre Numele divine. Teologia mistică*, Institutul European, Iasi, 1993

Doinaş, Ştefan Augustin, *Orfeu şi tentaţia realului,* Ed. Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1974

Eliade, Mircea, *Sacrul şi profanul,* Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2005

LaCoque, André, Ricœur, Paul, *Cum să înţelegem Biblia,* Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 2002

Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Totalitate şi Infinit. Eseu despre exterioritate*, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 1999

Marion, Jean-Luc, *Dieu sans l'être*, Quadrige / PUF, Paris, 2002

Marion, Jean-Luc, *Fenomenul erosului*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2004

Marion, Jean-Luc, *Idolul şi distanţa,* Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2007

Papadima, Ovidiu, *Peisajul interior din poezia lui V. Voiculescu*, în „Gândirea", Bucureşti, an XXII, nr. 7, august – septembrie, 1943

Ricœur, Paul, *Iubire şi justiţie,* Ed. Art, Bucureşti, 2009

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)

Sorescu, Roxana, *Interpretări,* Ed. Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1979
Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Sfânta Treime sau La început a fost iubirea*, Ed. Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al B.O.R., Bucureşti, 2005
Todorov, Tzvetan, *Teorii ale simbolului,* Ed. Univers, Bucureşti, 1983
Voiculescu, V., *Opera literară. Poezia,* Ed. Cartex 2000, Bucureşti, 2004
Voiculescu, V., *Opera literară. Proza,* Ed. Cartex 2000, Bucureşti, 2003
Voiculescu, V., *Ultimele sonete ale lui Shakespeare. Traducere imaginară,* tabel cronologic, prefaţă şi referinţe critice de Roxana Sorescu, Ed. Art, Bucureşti, 2010
Yannaras, Christos, *Persoană şi Eros*, Ed. Anastasia, Bucureşti, 2000
*** *Filocalia sau culegere din textele Sfinţilor Părinţi care arată cum se poate omul curăţi, lumina şi desăvârşi,* vol. VII, traducere, introducere şi note Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Institutului Biblic de Misiune al B. O. R., Bucureşti, 1977

Acknowledgement: *For Sorin Suciu, this work was partially supported by the strategic grant* POSDRU/CPP107/DMI1.5/S/80272*, Project ID80272 (2010), co-financed by the European Social Fund-Investing in People, within the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.*

BDD-A2900 © 2012 Universitatea Petru Maior
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:51:46 UTC)