"SCRISOAREA I" *BY M. EMINESCU. THE VEDIC COSMOGONY ROOTS*[1]

Abstract: "Scrisoarea I" *published in Literary Talks magazine, was considered to be Eminescu's confession for his faith in cosmogony. A mere comparison of the texts can reconfirm that* ***The Creation Hymn II from The Rigveda X,*** *129, is a source of inspiration for Eminescu's representation of the cosmogonic world. The cosmogony of the poem balances between two ideas: one is a reflection on the uselessness of the human endeavour in general, while the other one stresses upon the incapacity of the Thinker's effort.*

Keywords: *cosmogony, meditation,existence.*

Scrisoarea I (The First Epistle) appeared in *Literary Talks*, on first of February 1881 (*Perpessicius* edition, 1939: 130; 1943: 172-173), being the oldest amongst *Epistles* with a version dated from the period he had studied in Berlin (ms. 2259, I6I-I63 f.), which contains elements of other *Letters (* Murăraşu, 1982: 214).

The First Epistle is one of the most pleasing meditations from the Romanian literature, and Al. Vlahuţă saw a rapprochement between Eminescu's poem and *Pilgrimage* of Al. Depărăţeanu:

> in the poem The Pilgrimage, as well as Eminescu's First Epistle , the poet becomes a philosopher. He thinks that dept and coldness are the vanities of the world and they are bitter and unspeakable, while the disgust overwhelms him. Both (teacher and pilgrim) humble and shivering, floating in the same psychological atmosphere, with the same passion for truth, and the same role in poetry ... So it's true that great minds meet together (Perpessicius, *op. cit.*, vol. II: 211).

The beginner, in philosophical meditation, was N. Scurtescu, the author of poetry *The Thinker.*

In the literary works of the researchers, the cosmogony from *The First Epistle* was in their attention, establishing ties with the essence of thinking in poetry and the studies that Eminescu made abroad (Grămadă, 1914: 177).

The most noticeable similarity between Eminescu's creation and the Indian Vedic hymns is represented by the echoes of the valuable two cosmogonic poems of our poet**,** *The First Epistle* and *A Dacian's Prayer.*

A simple text reading certifies the fact that *The Creation Hymn II from The Rigveda X,* 129 as the main source of inspiration in the picture of our cosmogonic poet (Itu, 1995: 14).

Besides the sources indicated by Eminescu, heard the Weber, a professor at the University of Berlin, taught Sanskrit grammar and Vedic hymns, commented Kalidassa and the vedic hymns (in the summer semester of 1873), where the poet was present, Iancu Alecsandri, in a letter sent to Maiorescu, showed that the possible knowledge creation hymn, translated by Oppert, professor at Collège de Asiriologie France: "Do not therefore care that I take full consideration of Eminescu's works, I will confine to underline the clash of ideas, a few lines of kinship between the text of a document *Satire I* and a chaldean text translated by Oppert, professor at the College de France Asiriologie, [...] Anyway, the document, that you extract from Histoire Mr. E. Israel Sedrain, one of the most famous writings on those dark times: *Fragments d'une*

[1] Marius-Valeriu Grecu, University of Piteşti, mariusgrecu33@yahoo.com.

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collection of tablettes cosmogoniques, intitulées, du premier mot a Cause, les 'tablettes jadih' (Enuma). After reproducing 20 lines from *The First Epistle*, I. Alecsandri writes:

> Neither we nor Eminescu, regret that he inspired himself from the wonderful sources of antiquity, that we were given (without imitating text so laconic and dark) the richest and most brilliant picture of the world creation. And he did well, because the poet, regarding his skeptical writings, suddenly rises to a lyricism that would call heroic happy when his soul entered within the grand mysteries. (*A letter of Iancu Alecsandri addressed to him*, Paris, 1884: in magazine, *Convorbiri literare* 1884; Murărașu, D., *op. cit*.: 216).

And Teohari Antonescu reminded the *Rig-Veda*:

> In a hymn of the *Rig-Veda,* of course the newest and perhaps most beautiful poetical product of the entire collection of hymns philosophical and 'who began in the same time reminds us the philosophers of ancient Greeks from the old Greece, the German mystics of the Middle Ages, or the philosophy of Hegel ', and has served the model of Eminescu in *The First Epistle* - in this hymn the poet answers to the question' who is the god that our sacrifice?

replied with a word of doubt as to the existence of god he entered the order chimeras.

> Atunci ființă nu era, nici neființă, nici marea văzduhului, /Nici bolta cerului albastru în înățimi nu era /Dar, cin' le-nvăluia? și unde tăinuit stătea cel nepătruns? /Era noianul apelor; era genune? /Atunci moarte nu era, nici nemurire, / Nici nu deosebea noaptea adânca de ziua luminoasă, / Căci fără suflu trăia Unicul în sine, / și-n afară de dânsul era golul' nepătruns. / Iar pretutindeni era întuneric, o mare de întuneric, / și tăinuit într-însul zăcea totul fără viață, / Cu spațiul fără zare era pustiul țărmuri / Când Izvorî Unicul din duhul căldurii. / Tot atunci născutu-s-a și apriga dorință, / Care germenul gândirii fu și al plăsmuirii. / Iar proorocii, ei înțelepții, cugetând descoperiră / Între a fi și a nu fi legătura cea veche. / Raza ei o urmăriră departe, pân' la capăt: / Să fie oare prăpastia adâncă, să fie, pe-nălțimi? / Căci firea zăcea la fund, iar sus puterea și voința. / Dar cine știe și cine poate spune, / De unde răsărit-a firea-ntreagă? / De nu cumva târziu născutu-s-au zeii? / Dar cine poate ști dincotro și când au apărut dânșii? / Numai cel din care lumea-ntreagă s-a croit, / Ori că el însuși o clădi, ori că n-o plăsmui, / Cel care din înălțimile cerului firmamentul cârmuiește, / El singur numai știe! Ori poate nici el nu știe // (Antonescu, Teohari, in magazine *Convorbiri literare*, 1899:119-120; D. Murărașu, *op. cit*., 216-217).

Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, making annotations on lines 41-50 from *The First Epistle***:**

> La-nceput pe când ființă nu era, nici neființă, / Pe când totul era lipsă de viață și voință, / Când nu s-ascundea nimica, deși tot era ascuns [...] / Când pătruns de sine însuși odihnea cel nepătruns, / Fu prăpastie? genune? Fu noian întins de apă? / N-a fost lume pricepută și nici minte s-o priceapă. /Căci era,un întuneric ca o mare făr-o rază, / Dar nici de văzut, nu fuse și nici ochi care s-o vază. /Umbra celor nefăcute nu-ncepuse-a se desface / și, în sine împăcată stăpânea eterna pace! [...] //

He approach the text from F. Lenormant (*Manuel d'histoire ancienne,* in vol. III, p. 618), with the Vedic cosmogony, and asked: "Why Eminescu for describing our solar system, made use of an Indian cosmogony , instead of modern evolution theory, which may in the end to give as much a pessimistic material? Perhaps this cosmogony is more plastic; and, indeed, it is admirably expressed plastic cosmogony in poetry". (Gherea-Dobrogeanu, 1967: 177). Eminescu knew the works of Eug. Burnouf (Bhagavata Purana - *Histoire poétique of Krichna,* published in Paris in 1840), from which we quote a few excerpts on cosmogony: Bhagavata:

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> J'étais seul avant la création et il n'existait rien autre chose que moi, ni ce qui est, ni ce qui n'est pas (pour nos organes), ni le principe alimentaire d e cette double existence; depuis la création, je suis cet univers; et celui qui doit subsister quand rien n'existera plus, c'est moi [...] (p. 275) (Murăraşu, D., *op. cit.:* 217).

Eminescu himself left us a fragment entitled *Inder's Cosmogony* in his notes taken at the courses of history and literature in the Vedic religion, in fact a translation from German of *The Creation Hymn of Rig-Veda*. The theme of cosmogony approachesr Eminescu by the Indian text, but the source of the Vedic poet emerges through the artist's talent for genius.

If we compare Eminescu's verse: "In the beginning, while there was not being nor non-being" with the Indian, "then neither nonentity was nor ", we see a similarity, but the brand of Eminescu's originality "will lie throughout the cosmogonic picture appearance, when the poet is detached from the Vedic sources, certain passages from *The First Epistle* by sending us to Plato, Aristotle, Hesiod, Kant, Laplace, Schopenhauer and others.

The starting point of The First Epistle, emotionally and ideologically, has to be reported to a passage from *The World as Will and Representation* by Schopenhauer (*Additions to the Book III, chapter XXX*).

Why the seeing of the full moon has such a soothing and uplifting effect?
Because the moon is an object of intuition, not of will. (...) The Moon is great, makes us wishing for greatness, goes and sees everything but it does not participate. Therefore, to its will, its misery faithfully, is clear and leaves instead of pure knowledge (apud idem, *ibidem:* 225).

In Eminescu's words the expression "your light, virgin" in verse: "Thousands deserts sparkle under your light, maiden," is accessible and has a tone of invocation, answering with the verse 16: "How many overheads full of thoughts, thinking do you see!".

Eminescu, being a great admirer of Shaskespeare, found "consistency" in thinking. Greatness, glory, wealth, masters and beggars, all is doomed: "Deopotrivă-i stăpâneşte raza ta şi geniul morţii", idea that emerged and *The Pilgrimage* of Depărăţeanu: "Precum striveşti pe câmpuri furnicile mărunte."

The old teacher, which would have first thought Eminescu was E. Kant:

"Iar colo bătrânul dascăl, cu-a lui haină roasă-n coate, /Într-un calcul fără capăt tot socoate şi socoate (...) /Universul fără margini e în degetul lui mic //" Verse 42: "While it was lifeless and will" has its origin in *Creation Hymn* **(**"philosophical content").

The moving "point" that decides to move out of chaos is Kama: „And from the Chaos' vales he sees / How in an immense ring / Round him, as in the World's first day, /Lights from their sources spring // ".

The Indian concept of "creating the world" is followed by Eminescu, as stipulated Cezar Papacostea (Papacostea, 1929: 24-25). According to Alain Guillermou, "Eminescu has kept in this cosmogony, neither the notion of creative powers, nor the principle of love that cause the appearance of humans".
He gave up equally to this point of view too optimistic and pessimistic , as well as at the Cosmogony that the poet keeps in ***The First Epistle*** being neutral "if we can say so" (Guillermou, 1977: 310).

The First Epistle ends up with a violent criticism made in the first person, criticism that reflects the major problems of the poet's philosophy.

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