

FROM THE METAPHOR OF WATER TO CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN ENESCU, EMINESCU, BLAGA AND THE ROMANIAN SPIRITUALITY¹

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SUMMARY. In the work of George Enescu, nature is regarded not as an intrinsic reality, but rather as an array of elements permanently interacting with the human being, giving birth to a complex connection, sometimes manifested through a harmonious communion, other times garnering dramatic dimensions. Of all the primordial elements, the symbol of water marks Enescu's entire creation, illustrating the complexity of the relationship between man and nature: from the serene and melancholic pages of his youth, that broach the romantic genre of character miniature (barcarola), to the works characterized by a nostalgic and introspective component with a touch of memoir (in *Childhood Impressions* or *The Villageoise Suite*), all the way to the tragedy in *Vox Maris* – whose similarities with Oedipus require further investigation. Starting from the symbol of water, certain correspondences could be established between Enescu, Eminescu, Blaga and the Romanian spirituality.

Keywords: Enescu, music, water, sea, river, symbolism, Eminescu, Blaga, Romanian spirituality

Symbolism of Water

Essential in the formulation and perpetuation of life, water is, in most mythologies, the primordial element that stood at the basis of evolution from undefined Chaos to orderly Universe. Under different guises, from a vast body of water, the seeds of life emerge (Sumerian, Vedic, Egyptian or Iranian mythology); the same body of water precedes the creation of other elements, such as light, sky and earth (Mesopotamian culture, The Old Testament). A metaphor of both

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eternity and ephemerality, water is perceived as constantly moving, its maximum motility being also supported by the fact that it's the only element that exists naturally in the terrestrial environment in all three possible forms of matter aggregation (solid, liquid and gas). The presence of water in mythology is varied: primordial waters, diluvium waters, living water, dead water, rain water, ritual water. The absence of water is often equated with the lack of a rejuvenating factor; being associated in some mythologies with the idea of death or Inferno (many cultures claim that the dead are always thirsty). At the same time, water is one of the four elements of ancient Greek philosophy (water, air, earth and fire).

Throughout history, culture has assigned water a symbolic meaning that varies according to the characteristics of particular populations (emphasizing its importance as drinking water, source of food, necessary element for cultivating crops or as catastrophic event). Maybe not unexpectedly, if water is the origin of life (materialization, coming into being), it can (through the metaphor of the river Styx, whose numerous versions are found in several cultures) provide a gateway to the after world (dematerialization). Apparently, we could observe two different variants of the aquatic element: beneficial water (purifying, healing, nourishing) and malevolent water (storms, floods culminating in deluge, pungent waters); actually, the situations when this essential element seems to threaten life, often prove to be, on a more general plane, moments of rebirth, reorganization and initiations of a new cycle (the universal flood had a cathartic function, its symbolism being reiterated in several immersion rituals – such as Christian baptism – signifying the “renewal of life”). Symbol of all possibilities, water is, in global mythology, the substance “where all forms are born and return, through regression or cataclysm. [Waters] were at the beginning, they return at the end of every cosmic or historical cycle.³ /.../ Waters purify and regenerate because they annihilate history.”⁴

Because the aquatic element plays such an important role for every living being, the water references in folk culture aren't limited to the archaic layer. Used since ancient times to explore and conquer new territories, water is intimately connected to the course of history. As a consequence, oral cultures include many legends in which water is the frame of the action: let us remember the well-known stories of Sinbad the Sailor or the legends of the Vikings. If we talked about water as a mythological symbol and as an element of epic processes, we cannot overlook the lyrical function of water, of evocation, through the correlation that can be easily established between a certain aquatic context and different associated emotional states.

³ Eliade, Mircea, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (1949), Transl. by M. Noica as *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1992, p. 183.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

The Presence of the Aquatic Element in Fine Arts

An element of such important presence in various cultures will naturally transgress to the field of fine arts, whether we're referring to literature, visual arts or music. The subjects abound, many of them being appropriations and reformulations of folk sources. From Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* or the medieval *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg to the famous *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, to *Moby Dick* by American author Herman Melville or to some of Jules Verne's novels⁵, water is the main theatre of operations. Only in the Romantic era, along with the appreciation of nature, did the aquatic element reach the status of main subject for the work of art. The American Edgar Allan Poe (in the poem *The City in the Sea*), the French Lamartine (in the poem *Le Lac*), Victor Hugo (in the poem *Eclaircie*) or the English John Keats (in the sonnets *On the Sea*, *To the Nile*) and J.M.W. Turner (in paintings such as *Fisherman at Sea*, *Fishing Fleet*, *The Grand Canal - Venice*, *Slave Ship*, *The Evening of the Deluge*) are only a few famous examples of artists deeply fascinated by the multiple aspects of water. Impressionist painters (especially Claude Monet, the painter of water lilies, but also of the work *Impression – Soleil levant*, the one that gave the name of the movement and depicted the sunrise and the sea) and the Symbolist poets (Verlaine, Baudelaire) continue to be enthralled by its infinity of facets.

Generally following the same course, water appears in music first as an auxiliary element, setting the frame or the backdrop of the action in a baroque piece such as Händel's *Water Music*, but also in romantic works that adopt folk themes or legends, such as *Peer Gynt* by Grieg (after Ibsen), *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov or *The Flying Dutchman* by Wagner (after a story by Heine). As a storm, proposed by Vivaldi (in *Seasons* – the summer storm part – or in the concerts RV 98, 253, 433, 570, all of them entitled *La Tempesta di mare*), but also by Beethoven (in *The Pastoral Symphony*), the aquatic element is placed in a more complex ensemble, entailing a combined action of wind and water⁶.

Water is attributed the status of intrinsic and central element of the discourse, in a memorial vision that utilizes predominantly descriptive formulas, in the piece *Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este*, included in the third notebook of Liszt's *Years of Pilgrimage*. An important step is made with works such as the prelude for *Das Rheingold* by Wagner or *Vltava/Moldau* by Smetana, where water, as a main character or unique subject, tends to surpass its condition of natural element, dallying with the idea of personification. A coalition between the aquatic environment and the beings that inhabit it can be seen in the famous *Aquarium* in Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals*.

⁵ *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, *The Mysterious Island*, *Propeller Island*, *The Mighty Orinoco*, *The survivors of the 'Johnathan'* etc.

⁶ Beethoven's work can be assigned possible symbolical connotations, which suggest interferences between the course of nature and the trajectory of the human destiny.

But its heyday, a time of maximum exploitation of suggestions that water offers musicians, in its manifold forms of manifestation, is beyond any doubt, the Impressionist era; besides works such as *Jeux d'eau* (1901, inspired by Liszt's piece with the same title) or *Ondine* (from *Gaspard de la nuit*) by Ravel, Claude Debussy's creation clearly distinguishes itself through its preoccupation with capturing as many facets as possible of this permanently morphing element: the prelude *La cathédrale engloutie* (1910), the works *Reflets dans l'eau* (1905, from the cycle *Images*), *Poissons d'or* (1907, *Images*, second notebook), *Sirènes* (1899, from the cycle *Nocturnes*), *Jardins sur la pluie* (1903, from the cycle *Estampes*) or the vast fresco *La Mer* (1905) represent different aspects of the aquatic environment, whose complexity is impossible to render. Stemmed from the desire to identify "le plus totalement, le plus intimement qu'il est possible à tout ce qui est"⁷, Debussy thus creates a hymn for nature, accomplishing in his music "une grande osmose panthéiste"⁸. His novel vision on time, close to the Oriental perception, focuses on the extension of the moment and the minimization of Cronos' vectoriality. And water, which symbiotically unites the dimension of eternity with that of continuous transmutation, is the ideal medium to suggest stillness through movement. If in the Classical-Romantic era, music was generally "built on the necessity to finish a course from one initial state to the other, evolution in which the process of transformation often acquired a greater importance than the final 'destination' /.../, Debussy's music is created through contemplating the instant, seen as a suspended and immobile moment, whose microscopic lens unravels hidden beauties. The movement in his music is 'stable', 'non-directional', like the "stagnantes et réfléchissantes"⁹ waters and dissimilar to the "courantes et printannières" ones"¹⁰.

The Presence of the Aquatic Element in Enescu's Music

Before stepping into the subjective territory of considerations regarding the symbolism of water in the creation of the Romanian composer, we can distinguish three stages that the presence of the aquatic element marked in Enescu's work (in his childhood, returning in passing in his adolescence and representing, in the years of his adulthood, an important part of his preoccupations), and these stages follow closely what we identified as the main roles played by water in the history of music.

⁷ Claude Debussy, quoted in Harry Halbreich – *Analyse de l'oeuvre*, p. 539.

⁸ H. Halbreich – *Analyse de l'oeuvre*, p. 539.

⁹ Vladimir Jankélévitch, quoted in Michel Fleury – *L'impressionnisme et la musique*, p. 211.

¹⁰ Lupu, Olgața, *Ipostaze ritmico-temporale în muzica primei părți a secolului XX (Music in the First Part of the 20th Century - Rhythmic-temporal Hypostases)*, Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică, București, 2005, p. 29.

1. Childhood – water is present as an auxiliary element

Firstly, we will document with a smile the two sketches of the waltz for violin and piano *The Danube is Great* (actually, “a succession of *potpourri* waltzes”¹¹, of which only the violin part was finished), written when he was seven years old. From the same category, the *Donau Walzer*, for piano and violin, written in his pre-school years or at the beginning of his Viennese studies: probably “an exercise to familiarize him with an element of musical form: the period”¹², whose segments are marked with letters in the text. The subject continues to raise his interest, since also written during the pre-school years are the three versions of the waltz *The Danube Flows*, again for piano and violin, with only the violin part finished. The constant appeal to the formula of waltz connected to the river Danube must be related to the influence some popular works during that era had on the child (such as the *Waves of the Danube* by Ivanovici, composed in 1880, familiar to Enescu since the age of four¹³).

2. Adolescence – water is present as an auxiliary element, with a lyrical function

The time associated with his Parisian studies sketches a new stage, in which Enescu composes three versions of barcarole: *Barcarole* and *The Theme with Variations* for violin and piano, four hands, of which only a fragment was kept¹⁴, both pieces unfinished¹⁵ (the work is placed by Clemansa Firca, approximately between 1896-1901); *Barcarole for Piano* (written at Cracalia, in 1897, at sixteen) and *Courte Barcarole* inserted as a fourth piece in a suite for piano four hands (dated 1898, Paris). His appetite for this miniature romantic genre is explicable, taking into account the romantic atmosphere induced by the calm, dreamy, prone to reverie wave of the characteristic ternary rhythm, in perfect harmony to the age of the very young composer. The barcarole is joined, in the form of pluvial waters, by the moment of *the night storm* in his first autobiographical work (*The Romanian Poem* op. 1), composed when he was sixteen years old.

3. Maturity – water is present as a central element

A third stage, of full maturity, deeply influenced by the catastrophic moments of the Two World Wars, comprises four works in which we identify the presence of the aquatic element:

¹¹ According to Firca, Clemansa, *Catalogul tematic al creației lui George Enescu (Thematic catalogue of George Enescu creation)*, vol.I, Editura Muzicală, București, 1985, p. 143.

¹² Firca, Clemansa, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 152.

¹³ See G. Horia - *Maestrul Enescu ne povestește cariera și ne vorbește despre debandada de la operă*, published in: *Rampa nouă ilustrată*, București, 1, nr. 55, 29 octombrie 1915, p. 1 and reproduced in *George Enescu – Interviuuri (George Enescu – Interviews)* vol.I, p. 74.

¹⁴ We must note the presence in the third measure (violin) of the motive “x” (characteristic for Enescu, being at the same time a form of diatonic or inverted chromaticism), also present in the varied re-take, measures 26 and 28.

¹⁵ According to Firca, Clemansa, *op. cit.*, p. 176-177.

- the poem *Vox maris*¹⁶, op. 31 (the first sketches date from 1925-1929, the orchestration being started probably after 1931¹⁷)
- the tableau *River under the Moonlight* from the *Third Suite for Orchestra "Villageoise"*, op. 27 (1938)
- the tableaux "*Backyard River*" and again "*Night Storm*"¹⁸ from the suite "*Childhood Impressions*" (1940)
- *The Fifth Symphony* (written down, without the orchestration, in the months June-July 1941, the *first* part being subsequently orchestrated almost in its entirety¹⁹, in which one of the versions of the poem *Mai am un singur dor ("De-oi adormi curând")/ One Wish Alone Have I ("To Soon Fall Asleep")* by Mihai Eminescu (that states the poet's wish to die beside the sea) plays an extremely important constructive role.

Two of the works are connected to the innocent environment of childhood, whereas the others broach the issue of death, of transgression: a paradoxical juxtaposition at first sight; a natural connection taking into account the context, in relation to the composer's conception on life and world. The next considerations refer mainly to aspects that can be related to this third stage of creation.

Enescu, the Artistic Movements of Early Twentieth Century and the Spirituality of the Romanian Village

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the artistic horizon is teeming with various movements and styles, many of them connected – Impressionism, Neo-Classicism, Neo-Romanticism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, Existentialism –, some of them (Impressionism, Neo-Classicism, Neo-Romanticism, Expressionism) also manifested in music (along with others, such as atonalism and twelve-tone serialism). Can we associate Enescu to any of these movements? The firm answer is no, Enescu himself being aware of this fact: „People have been puzzled and annoyed because they have been unable to catalogue and classify me in the usual way /.../, and people are annoyed when they cannot readily classify one.”²⁰. This reality is noticed by his friend, Marcel Mihalovici: “Dear Master, you also have a second enemy: you don't belong

¹⁶ The poem is part of a greater project, comprising three poems, possibly entitled *Voix de la nature* (see: Bentoiu, Pascal, *Capodopere enesciene (Masterworks of George Enescu)*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1999, p. 349).

¹⁷ According to Bentoiu, Pascal, *Breviar enescian (Enescian Breviary)*, Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică București, 2005, p. 98.

¹⁸ See: Gavoty, Bernard, *Les souvenirs de Georges Enesco* (1954). Transl. by R. Drăghici & N. Bîlciorescu as *Amintirile lui George Enescu*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1982, p. 25.

¹⁹ The composer Pascal Bentoiu completed the orchestration.

²⁰ George Enescu, in: *The Program of the Symphonic Orchestra in Chicago, 1931-1932 Musical Session*.

to any group or avant-garde movement. And one sees the importance assigned to this word by the press and audience. Not that Enescu didn't know even the slightest detail about contemporary music. He simply wanted to be himself."²¹

We can identify in Enescu's work certain features of early twentieth-century currents, but we cannot include Enescu in any of them.

With Impressionism, Enescu has in common the interest in nature, honesty and simplicity as a refusal of grandiloquence; but, unlike the Impressionists, Enescu doesn't express the amazement of the city dweller who discovers the picturesque nature²²; for Enescu, born in the countryside, nature is not an exterior reality that impresses the senses, but a reality imbedded in the deepest layers of his being. For Enescu, as we will see, ahistorical nature signifies origin, that *illo tempore*, whereas for Debussy the suspension of time is made through engaging with the present, through the dilatation and contemplation of the moment²³.

With *Neo-Classicism*, Enescu shares balance, the interest for the universal, since he sees the world "as a stable whole, tied by coexisting relations"²⁴, but cannot be considered an objective spirit and (with very small exceptions) he doesn't borrow the classic language or patterns; in regard to *Neo-Romanticism*, Enescu is truly interested in synthesis, in the perception of the whole rather than the detail, he is subjective, emotional, sometimes melancholic, he lays emphasis on the symbol (especially in his auto-biographical works), but he doesn't have an unbalanced nature, he doesn't enjoy fantasy or frenzy and doesn't tend towards an art of unresolved tensions or open forms²⁵.

If we could trace in his creation certain *Symbolist* characteristics (a particular sense of mystery, of ineffable, the subtle way in which he manages to

²¹ Marcel Mihalovici, in: *Amintiri despre Enescu, Brâncuși și alți prieteni*, p. 41; reproduced in: Cosma, Viorel (Ed.). *George Enescu în memoria timpului (George Enescu in the Memory of Time; texts by different authors, 1930-2000)*. Editura Casa Radio, București, 2003, p. 113.

²² According to Petraș, Irina, *Teoria literaturii (Theory of the Literature)*, Editura didactică și pedagogică, București, 1996, p. 56-58.

²³ Other differences between Enescu and Impressionism were signaled by Constantin Stîhi-Boos in his study in *Centenarul George Enescu* (p. 371-377): the fact that in the creations of Impressionist composers, the bi- and pluri-thematic developments (specific for Enescu) only appear in early works or very late ones. Moreover, the researcher emphasizes the different role of the storm in *The Sea* by Debussy ("the pictorial-picturesque"), in comparison to the dramaturgical-functional role in *Vox maris*. The same researcher, in his study *Analytical Specifications about "Vox maris"* (Enesciana II-III, p. 187-192) notices a dynamic, temporal, vectorial-irreversible conception in Enescu's work, while Debussy's vision (*La Mer*) is characterized by a spatial exposure, suggesting the idea of reversibility, of cyclical renewal. Without denying the researcher's considerations, I express my opinion that, in Enescu's case, we're dealing with temporality (the tragic event) that is finally absorbed by the idea of eternity, permanence, by trans- or meta-historicity.

²⁴ Vianu, Tudor, *Romantismul ca formă de spirit*, in: *Clasicism, baroc, romantism (Classicism, Baroque, Romanticism)*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1971, p. 265.

²⁵ Petraș, Irina, *op. cit.*, p. 82-89.

suggest the finest nuances of emotional states and maybe a particular idealism), we can observe even more dissimilarities: Enescu doesn't despise tradition and he is reluctant to exaggerations, to the aesthetic of the ugly, to the revelation of the universal mystery through the synergetic action of the senses²⁶.

Enescu isn't an *Expressionist* either, the emphasis of the line, desperation, disenchantment, the lack of solutions and generally a pessimistic outlook on the human condition being completely alien to him²⁷; on the contrary, in his vision, man is more powerful than destiny; and if we find an unusual intensity of expression in certain pages of *Oedipus*, this is because it is necessary to emphasize a stage in the character's evolution and it is not an extended state of mind.

There is no similarity between Enescu's style and currents such as *atonalism* or *twelve-tone serialism* (Enescu being, on several occasions, in favour of a music based on sonic centres), *Futurism* (continuator of Dadaism, manifesting against tradition and morality and idealizing the culture of machines²⁸ or *Surrealism* (another continuator of Dadaism, proclaiming the primacy of chance and the absence of logic, morality or any type of aesthetics²⁹). Although he is concerned, like the Existentialists, with being and believes that the responsibility for one's choices and eventually for the course of life is individual, Enescu isn't burdened by metaphysical angst, anxiety or the premonition of the void that birthed us³⁰; for Enescu, the choice can be difficult, but not uncertain: an honourable man can maintain his dignity, despite the sometimes absurd society or destiny.

Enescu's roots are not found in any of the movements that inspired his age, although certain influences or rather affinities can be noticed. His roots aren't even grounded in the soil of the cultural centres (Vienna and Paris) where he was formed as a musician – although the contribution and consequently, their influence cannot be overlooked –, but can be found much deeper, in the spirituality of the Romanian village, which he grew up with. If most European creators are infused with the artistic and philosophic accomplishments of individualities, being thus shaped by patterns, movements and fashions pertaining to history, Enescu had the opportunity to drink from the fountain in which all the remarkable creative energies of a nation met: folklore and the vision of the peasant on world and life. Therefore, the vocation of universality, balance, the flight from history in some cases and the search for support in a-historicity, eternity and universally valid truths came naturally. Enescu isn't interested in the individualistic temptation of the creator born in the Renaissance – a knight on a lone journey to find the ultimate truth. Enescu despises originality for its own

²⁶ Petraș, Irina, *op. cit.*, p. 91-95.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 43-46.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 46-49.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 95-100.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 40-43.

sake³¹; he is never a lonely traveller on the meandering roads that lead towards the meaning of life, but has as invisible ally the vision of the multi-millenary anonymous Romanian creator, surviving the zeitgeist that prevails and conquering the times that torment him. Enescu is and considers himself to be part of an entire tradition ("the roots of the present being hidden"³² in the past), which protects him from the "only great danger that threatens man's spiritual life /.../ [which is] loss of the feeling of moral continuity, misunderstanding or despising the past, the stupid disregard of values once conquered by people."³³ Even more valuable is this position in a time when the values of humanity seem to be shattered by the global tragedies in the first part of the twentieth century.

When Great Spirits Meet

We cannot fail to notice the extraordinary correspondences in the area of conceptions on life, world, death, destiny and attitudes, between Enescu and other two great spirits of Romanian culture: Mihai Eminescu (born in the same region of Northern Moldavia) and Lucian Blaga (his contemporary). Their work is based on a common archetypal layer (the spirituality of the Romanian village), joined by a high-level Western professional formation. The affinities between the three don't depend on the existence of a direct contact; not even of one based on creation (although Enescu was a fine connoisseur of Eminescu's oeuvre, we have no information to confirm a connection between the Romanian composer and Lucian Blaga³⁴. What bring them together are the common roots that represent infinite sources of inspiration, having as effect (at least in Enescu's case) the crystallization of language through appropriating some characteristics of Romanian folklore (modalism, the parlando-rubato rhythm etc.). "Because not by borrowing expressivity and essential features of folk melodies had Enescu attained a vision on nature and life corresponding to the vision of the people from which he arose, but on the contrary, the similitude with this vision, shaped in the first part of his childhood and deepened, of course throughout the years, determined him to choose precisely the particularities of the Romanian folk melody as the most authentic and personal means of expression."³⁵

³¹ "Originality is obtained only when you don't seek it." *George Enescu*, in: Gavoty, Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

³² George Enescu, in: Gîldău, F., *De vorbă cu Maestrul George Enescu, în America*, Cleveland-Ohio, 25, nr. 93, 19th of April, 1930, p. 1, text reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 202.

³³ Vianu, Tudor, *Studii de filozofia culturii (Philosophy of Culture – Studies)*, Ed. by G. Ionescu & G. Gana. Editura Eminescu, București, 1982, p. 462.

³⁴ The similarities between the two have been observed by Cornel Țăranu, when referring to the "idea of return to childhood" (p. 29) and Enescu's *waving time*, as a complement to Blaga's *waving space* (p. 35), in: *Enescu în conștiința prezentului (Enescu in the Conscience of the Present)*, Editura pentru literatură, București, 1969.

³⁵ Niculescu, Ștefan, *Reflecții despre muzică (Reflections on Music)*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1980, p. 147.

Mircea Eliade's observations regarding traditional spirituality – the village as *axis mundi*, centre of the world and placement of the most important values and beliefs on the course of a primordial, sacred, cyclical time, which avoids and isn't influenced by history, being constantly recuperated through renewal and rebirth rituals – are valid, with suitable additions, not only for the spirituality of the Romanian village, but also in regard to the conceptions of the three creators. Although this type of spirituality is no longer characteristic to urban cultures (such as the European and possibly a future version of our own culture), it was still vibrant in early twentieth-century Romania.

Here and beyond. Fleeting and eternal

"There is no existential break, no chasm, for Romanians, between this world and afterlife, between the present and eternity, only customs or more likely a gateway"³⁶. "Romanians have a saying /.../: *The clock tolls and strikes, while time stands still, timing. /.../ Only man evolves: time stands still.*"³⁷. "No historical accomplishments, no major successes /.../ give the measure of time; but the feeling that, in the end, there is a plan according to which all historical turmoil is a waste and loss."³⁸. Like in all traditional civilizations, Romanians defend against history, "either by abolishing it periodically through the repetition of the cosmogony and the constant regeneration of time or by assigning historical events a meta-historical meaning."³⁹. "Forget history, if you cannot live through it. Forget and have faith"⁴⁰.

Likewise, for Eminescu, in whose creation Constantin Ciopraga observed "the propensity towards the primordial and original", "harmony comes from the communion with the whole /.../, from the rediscovery of world's primordial unity"⁴¹, the apparent vectoriality of history is actually cyclical and events are ephemeral waves: "Time goes by, time comes along,/All is old and all is new;/.../ Waves that rise can never hold; /.../ Past and future/ Are sides of the same coin,/ See the end in the beginning/ Whoever knows this should learn."⁴².

³⁶ Vulcănescu, Mircea, *Dimensiunea românească a existenței (The Romanian Dimension of the Existence)*, Ed. By M. Diaconu, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1991, p. 108.

³⁷ Noica, Constantin, *Pagini despre sufletul românesc (Pages on the Romanian Soul), Pagini despre sufletul românesc (1944) (Pages on the Romanian Soul)*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1991, p. 9.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 10.

³⁹ Eliade, Mircea, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, p. 177, quoted in: Todoran, E. *Lucian Blaga – mitul poetic (Lucian Blaga – the Poetical Myth)*, Editura Facla, Timișoara, 1983, p. 132.

⁴⁰ Noica, Constantin, *Eseuri de duminică (Sunday Essays)*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1992, p. 56.

⁴¹ Ciopraga, Constantin, *Eminescu, "poetul nepereche" (Eminescu, "the Unpair Poet")*, in: Eminescu, Mihai, *Poezii (Poems)*, Editura Junimea, Iași, 1990, p. 714.

⁴² Mihai Eminescu – fragment from the poem *Glossa*.

For Blaga, “the boycott” of history signifies the retreat from history as an “exterior” event, in an ahistorical life⁴³. What Blaga, the man for whom “eternity was born in a village”⁴⁴, understands as “the terror of history”, has an identical meaning for Enescu: “as a man, during the war, I saw the combatants as mere victims of the fever of conflicting ideals? I was dominated by a physiological terror”⁴⁵; “after the war, humanity has taken a path far from what I think it should have been /.../ the true physiognomy of the world. I am offended in today’s world by the material, brutal and even athletic side. I see /.../ neglect of morality, kindness and human understanding. After the war, I started to distance myself spiritually from other people. For me, humanity has decayed, morally speaking /.../. Hence, we started the war. Nowadays, the world lives without an ideal. /.../ I no longer agree with man.”⁴⁶. Under the same circumstances (the two World Wars), both Blaga and Enescu resort to returning to the original space, as a form of spiritual resistance, as an inexhaustible source of energy, of renewal; and this original space is represented, on one hand, by the micro-cosmos of the birthplace, by the native lands (*The Village Suite, Childhood Impressions*) and on the other hand, by the macro-cosmos of primordial elements (*Vox maris, The Fifth Symphony*). Utilizing *the myth of eternal return* – with different versions in the work of the two creators – Enescu and Blaga offer humanity the solution to “re-create” and “re-build” order in a decomposing world.

The Personification and Sacralisation of Nature

In myths, fairy tales and daily life, the Romanian peasant is capable of communicating with everything that surrounds him: “all the things in this world are beings and have something to say to whomever knows how to listen”⁴⁷. For Eminescu, “through concrete and mysterious signs where the aquatic and astral are manifested, a natural archetype is brought to life, rooted in the experience of primordial times. The spring and the sea, the moon, the stars, the skies participate in a type of innocent religion, without /.../ limitations of time and space”⁴⁸.

Likewise, in Blaga’s poetry, “The fountains and lakes open their eyes and listen, /.../ the waters, the mountains, the fields find their tongues again, the

⁴³ According to Lucian Blaga, quoted in: Eugen Todoran, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁴⁴ Lucian Blaga – the poem *Sufletul satului* (*The Soul of the Village*).

⁴⁵ George Enescu, in: Dianu, Romulus, *Cu d. George Enescu despre el și despre alții*, in: *Rampa*, București, 13, no. 3148, 23rd of July 1928, p. 1 and 3; reproduced in *George Enescu – Interviuuri II* (*George Enescu – Interviews II*), p. 239.

⁴⁶ George Enescu, in: Biberi, Ion, *Lumea de mâine. De vorbă cu George Enescu*, in: *Democrația*, București, 2, no. 21, 25th of March 1945, p. 1-2; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuuri II* (*George Enescu – Interviews II*), p. 109.

⁴⁷ Vulcănescu, Mircea, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁴⁸ Ciopraga, Constantin, *op. cit.*, p. 709.

plants and minerals are transfigured⁴⁹. As for the Romanian peasant, in the same manner, order is equated with sacra ("Holiness is somewhat immanent. It passes through everything. The sun is sacred. The sheep is sacred. The house is sacred. Everything in its place and time, in order, with a purpose, is sacred."⁵⁰), for Blaga nature is the image of Divinity, since "God, the invisible, to manifest himself, is forced to put on shapes and colours. Everything is a manifestation of divinity /.../ The picturesque is thus a revelation."⁵¹

For Enescu, "the soul of the community is imbedded in everything"⁵², and the connections with deep Romanian spirituality, that Nicolae Iorga deciphers in *Oedipus*, represent, according to the composer's opinions⁵³, the most accurate analysis of his music ever made. Music in the spirit of Romanian folklore cannot be created through the superficial appropriation of certain intonations, but "only after generations of artists will be inspired by our nature, our sparkling nights, by the shepherds that sing or the dogs that bark."⁵⁴ The feeling that gives the unique colour of Romanian folk music "is inspired by our hills and valleys, by the special colour of our sky, by the thoughts that torment us and at the same time, kindle our yearning"⁵⁵. Certain suggestive titles of some autobiographical pages written by Enescu stand as proof for the unseen strands that bind the composer to mysterious nature, inanimate objects or elements, in which a part of his emotional being was abandoned and which have left a strong mark on his soul.

The Childhood Village as Original Time and Space

Taking into account the biogenetical law, which states that ontogeny (the development of the individual) repeats the phylogeny (the development of the species), we notice that for every one of us, the space and time of our childhood correspond to the mythical time and space of the primeval epoch. The return to this space-time signifies the discovery of the world's origins, renewal and rebirth through re-setting the time and space back to point zero. In the work of the three great personalities (Enescu, Eminescu, Blaga), the space and time of childhood are indestructibly tied to the reality of the Romanian

⁴⁹ Băncilă, V., *L. Blaga, energie românească (L. Blaga, Romanian Energy*, quoted in: Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.* p. 104).

⁵⁰ Vulcănescu, Mircea, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁵¹ Blaga, Lucian, *Spațiul mioritic*, in: *Trilogia culturii (Trilogy of Culture)*, 1936; Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1969, p. 267.

⁵² *George Enescu*, in: Iliescu, Leontin, *Maestrul George Enescu*, in *Universul*, București, 31, no. 289, 20th of October 1913, p. 1-2, reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 60.

⁵³ See: *George Enescu – Interviuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 55-57.

⁵⁴ *George Enescu*, in: Șerban, Al., *Muzica românească. Interviu cu George Enescu*, in: *Flacăra*, București, 1, nr. 47, 8th of September 1912, p. 369-370, reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuri II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 218.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 216.

village, to which Blaga, elected in 1937 as a member of the Academy and “having no precursor to eulogize, as it is customary”⁵⁶, dedicates the famous “Eulogy of the Romanian village” (as Noica remarks, “the most personal of all contemporary Romanian creators praises all that is impersonal, anonymous, ahistorical in the Romanian spirit”⁵⁷).

The image of the childhood village is thus laden with a double meaning, being the personal correspondent of a primordial space-time (childhood), as well as a reservoir of Romanian spirituality. The childhood village appears, at all three creators, as a mythical and magical place: an enchanted land in Eminescu’s poem *As a Boy I Roamed the Forests*, a “village of wonders” at Blaga, a space-time whose complexity and emotional load refuse the enrolment in an objective reality, truly coming into being only in the mind and soul of Enescu: “Sir, don’t bother to look for these places in the school atlas. /.../ Cracalia and Liveni Vîrnăv belong entirely to my memories”⁵⁸; “My childhood was heaven until seven years old, when I stayed with my mother and father and lived a sweet and luminous dream”⁵⁹. “The world presented itself as a whole /.../; during my childhood I was more sensitive to colours, atmosphere and ambient rather than the melodic element of music”⁶⁰. I believe that Enescu’s explicit return to “the country in his heart”, to “his beloved village” in *The Suite “Villageoise”*, completed in 1938 and *Childhood Impressions* (written down⁶¹ in April 1940), isn’t just an expression of his nostalgia for his country or birthplace – because Enescu felt the need, like Antheus, to replenish his energy by contact with his native land –, but also a reaffirmation of the values threatened by history⁶² (the composer often expressed his concern regarding the ascending tension generated by the rise of extremist movements, culminating with World War II).

⁵⁶ Noica, Constantin, *Pagini despre sufletul românesc (1944) (Pages on the Romanian Soul)*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1991, p. 27.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ George Enescu, in: Bruyr, José, *Un entretien avec... Georges Enesco* (in: *Guide de concert*, Paris, no. 24, 13th of March 1936), quoted in: Niculescu, Ștefan, *Reflecții despre muzică (Reflections on Music)*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1980, p. 148.

⁵⁹ George Enescu, in: Massoff, Ioan, *George Enescu intim*, in: *Rampa*, București, 16, no. 4131, 26th of October 1931, p. 102; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 218.

⁶⁰ George Enescu, in: Biberi, Ion, *Lumea de mâine. De vorbă cu George Enescu*, in: *Democrația*, București, 2, no. 21, 25th of March 1945, p. 1-2; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuri II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 112.

⁶¹ Enescu always had in mind several projects and the decision to give priority to one of them depended on various factors.

⁶² Leaning towards Blaga’s vision: “our country always remains intact within us” (words spoken by Blaga in 1940, in the introductory speech of the *Philosophy of Culture* course at Cluj University, temporarily moved to Sibiu. Manuscript quoted in: Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 126).

The Metaphor of Water in George Enescu's Creation

The unity of vision of the three creators, stemmed from the existence of a plane of values, beliefs and archetypes in accordance with those of traditional Romanian spirituality, determines the same harmony of prevailing conceptions in regard to the symbolism of water. This is why I will begin with a few considerations regarding the symbolism of the aquatic element in the creation of Eminescu and Blaga, most of which can be translated to Enescu's creation.

For both Eminescu and Blaga, water is a type of proto-matter, a primordial, eternal substance, closer to cosmic nature than earth or forest, having sacred attributes⁶³. If Eminescu sees eternal water ("Eternal is only the river: the river is a god") also as the "image of eternal changes"⁶⁴ (*movement in stillness*), Blaga considers it an essential element of cosmogony, according to Romanian folk myths⁶⁵. Especially at Eminescu, the sea offers "the promise of redemption through integration in the deep"⁶⁶, in the poem *One Wish Alone Have I* (the basis of *the Fifth Symphony*), sketching "a specifically Romanian effect /.../, a way of symbolical incorporation into water, a return to the oscillating *raw matter* that is the sea."⁶⁷. Another associated element to water is the moon that symbolizes for both poets, the mystery of knowledge as revelation (opposed to knowledge as accumulation of scientific information). In this sense, the physicist Niels Bohr, one of the founders of quantum physics, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1922, ironically made the following claims that would make any supporter of Cartesian knowledge meditate: "there are two types of truth, profound truth and superficial truth, and the function of Science is to eliminate profound truth."⁶⁸. Precisely in this search for the profound truth, did the three great spirits of Romanian culture meet. And the symbolism of water only shines new light on this consonance.

For Enescu and for the Romanian peasant, the meaning of water is generally identical: being one of the main natural elements, water is inscribed in the general communion of man with nature, as a metaphor of a primordial unity that survives through the network of secret connections with everything that surrounds us. In this context, where death doesn't represent an end of the road, a finish, but only a transgression towards reintegration in the absolute whole, the

⁶³ Ciopraga, Constantin, *op. cit.*, p. 715, 718, 721.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 715.

⁶⁵ Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁶⁶ Ciopraga, Constantin, *op. cit.*, p. 715.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 718.

⁶⁸ Gardner, Howard, *Mintea umană. Cinci ipostaze pentru viitor (Five Minds for the Future)*, (2006). Transl. by Ciocănelea, R., as *Mintea umană – cinci ipostaze pentru viitor*. Editura Sigma, București, 2007, p. 30.

presence of water appears as a trans-historical element (we are born, we get attached to places, people, elements etc. – *The Romanian Poem*, *The Suite “Villageoise”*, *Impressions* –, only to merge once again with them – *Vox maris*, *The Fifth Symphony*), while the association of storm-sunrise in *The Romanian Poem* and *Impressions* is eloquent, in Enescu’s view, for the way nature knows how to balance itself.

Certainly, we cannot exclude possible influences that other composers’ works treating the theme of water had on Enescu. However, we must not forget that the spirituality of the Romanian village was, during Enescu’s life, still vibrant. In shaping his conceptions, the native ambient had an undeniable priority, as the composer Ștefan Niculescu states (see note 35), as well as Enescu himself (see notes 54, 55, 60, 73). The possible subsequent influences materialized in secondary layers, of lesser depth and force.

Another aspect that bounds Enescu to the Romanian traditional spirituality is that, in his entire creation, water is never seen independently, but is permanently associated with the human element, explicitly (*Vox maris*, *The Fifth Symphony*) or implicitly: the adult or the teenager that remembers his native lands (*River under Moonlight* in *The Village Suite* or the storm in *The Romanian Poem*), the world of childhood seen through the eyes of the bygone child (*Backyard River* or the *Night Storm* in *Impressions*), the presumptive existence of a boatman, of a couple of lovers (*Barcarole*) or dancers (childhood waltzes). Despite the expressiveness of titles or subtitles, Enescu’s music is never properly programmatic, since in no situation does the word decide over the development of music; the word is used in a metaphorical way, as a symbol that triggers a range of memories, emotions, etc.

The metaphor of the river

As a river or creek (in *The Suite “Villageoise”* and in *Childhood Impressions*), water is part – as for Eminescu or Blaga – of that mythical time-space of the childhood, corresponding to the beginning of time and safeguarding Romanian spirituality. Especially in these autobiographical works (the “*Villageoise*”, *Impressions*), water doesn’t remain a neutral, external element, but appears refined through the filter of his own memories. Enescu doesn’t describe exotic landscapes only tangentially connected to him, but things, elements and beings that have influenced his coming into being. Like Blaga, it isn’t a nostalgic evocation, but a “topography /.../ filled with mythological places”⁶⁹, through which the “living metaphysics” of the village – that is “a way of thinking the experience of the world”⁷⁰, thus giving “meaning to the universe”⁷¹ – forever

⁶⁹ Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

remains “sheltered in the soul of the child”⁷². Since, as the composer once said: “I have never left my country, I took it with me”⁷³.

The association of the aquatic and the lunar in the tableau *Backyard River* in *The “Villageoise”* not only accentuates the tight connections between lunar and aquatic rhythms, but approaches, through the association of the two archetypes, the metaphor of reflection⁷⁴, also used by Edgar Allan Poe, symbolizing the double, the reversal of the image and the two-way terrestrial-cosmic communication, here and beyond: “Reflection is naturally the factor of reduplication, the bottom of the lake becomes the sky, fishes become birds”⁷⁵. The same association between the aquatic and lunar element is used at the end of the script for *Vox maris*: “The moonlight glistens in the sea.”⁷⁶, suggesting the entry in a normality beyond the event/chronology.

The metaphor of seas and oceans

Since attributes such as *eternal* and *primordial* are first associated with seas and oceans, the metaphor of water as a meta-historical element, through which the “boycott” of history or the retreat in the world of values beyond time can be accomplished, becomes more evident in works such as *The Fifth Symphony* or *Vox maris*.

The presence of the marine element in Enescu’s oeuvre somehow raises questions on the origin of his interest for this element (the creation of *Vox maris* spanned over several decades and had priority in front of other projects). Of course, up to a point, the sea can be, like the river, integrated as an autobiographical element, judging by the frequency of the composer’s travels overseas⁷⁷. The repeated contact with the sea and the ocean must have had a strong impact, determining him to trace, in an interview, a parallel between the complexity of music and that of the sea: “The sea is also a form of music. /.../ Music is also a sea, in which feelings and ideas, hopes and inspirations,

⁷² Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁷³ *George Enescu*, in: Vessereau, Marguerite, *Sufletul românesc al lui George Enescu*, in: *Roumanie – terre du dor*, Paris, p. U.F., 1930, p. 107-111; reproduced in: Cosma, Viorel (Ed.), *George Enescu în memoria timpului (George Enescu in the Memory of Time; texts by different authors, 1930-2000)*. Editura Casa Radio, București, 2003, p. 301.

⁷⁴ The way Enescu uses the motive “x” (a sort of signature, possible metaphor of the face’s reflection in the water?) in *Backyard River*, at the level of micro- and macro-structure, would probably require a separate study.

⁷⁵ Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁷⁶ *George Enescu*, in: Gavoty, Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁷⁷ Cosma, Viorel documents, in: *Eseuri, exegeze și documente enesciene (Essays, Exegeses and Documents about Enescu)*, the composer’s first encounter with the Atlantic Ocean in 1905 (p. 209), an accentuation of the sea’s presence “after 1923 through the frequent crossings of the Atlantic Ocean in order to give concerts in the US” (p. 8) – at least 16 times (see p. 210) –, as well as the fact that the 1946 journey “took place on the turbulent waters of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean” (p. 82), while every crossing lasted about 30 days.

conscious, subconscious or unconscious life fret⁷⁸. Was the simple collision between the musician and the water of seas and oceans enough to determine the preoccupation for the aquatic element in works such as *The Fifth Symphony* or *Vox maris*? Probably not; simple biographical facts had no great resonance in his works, had they not been connected to his own conceptions.

However, if in local anonymous mythology and lyric, the theme of the spring/creek/river appears frequently, including under the guise of a version of Oedipus' myth⁷⁹, the theme of the sea or ocean is seldom found. As observed before, Blaga notices this in the only cosmological myth existing in these lands⁸⁰. Instead, we often find it in Eminescu's lyric, where it is associated with the reintegration – through death – in the universal. Definitely, the symbolical and philosophical value of the sea in Enescu's creation also crystallized under the influence of Eminescu's poetics, which is a direct source of inspiration for *The Fifth Symphony*. With a mention that Enescu's sensibility for the vision of "the last great European Romantic" on the sea cannot be random; the composer resonates with this vision because he relates to it, since it is not a particularity of the poet, but constitutes a derivate of typical Romanian thinking, that greatly influences Enescu's conception and implicitly, the two works (*Vox maris*⁸¹, *The Fifth Symphony*).

His desire to realize a musical version of the Romanian legend *Master Manole* (and, according to some sources, of *Ewe-lamb*⁸² is well-known. Also obvious is his attraction towards myths, legends or biblical subjects (*Oedipus*, but many other youthful attempts, such as *Ahasverus*, *Antigone*, *La vision de Saül*, *Daphné*, *La fille de Jephté*): "I was preoccupied with Antigone /.../, then Icarus /.../, Master Manole. /.../ All these themes were actually one: Man, sovereign by force of his dignity."⁸³ Eminescu's poetics thus represents, for

⁷⁸ Cristian, Vasile, *Câteva impresii notate de trimisul nostru special care a însoțit, în tren și pe vapor, înaintea plecării în Statele Unite, pe maestrul George Enescu*, in: *Ultima oră*, București, 3, no. 595, 14th of September 1946, p. 1-2; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuuri II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 175.

⁷⁹ *Lostrita* – version of *Oedipus*' myth, originating from the area of river Bistrița (lostrita being a fish that exists only in this particular river) and thoroughly analyzed by Lovinescu, Vasile, *Interpretarea ezoterică a unor basme și balade populare românești (The Esoteric Interpretation of Some Romanian Folk Tales and Ballads)*, Editura Cartea românească, București, 1993, p. 46-84. We don't know if Enescu had knowledge of this myth (it is possible, since its area of dissemination – Bistrița area – was near the rural zones he frequented, especially Tescani), but certainly he shared some of the vision of its creators.

⁸⁰ Todoran, Eugen, *op. cit.*, p. 53-54. The previous observation (regarding knowledge of the myth) is also valid in this case.

⁸¹ See the scenario presented by Enescu in: Gavoty, Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101.

⁸² Cornel Țăranu – *op. cit.*, p. 31 and 39. See also *George Enescu – Interviuuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 177, 264-265.

⁸³ *George Enescu*, in: Istratty, Edgar, *Când cânta, părea un fulger înmărmurit, Magazin*, 29. VIII. 1970, p. 4, reproduced in: Viorel Cosma – *George Enescu în memoria timpului (George Enescu in the Memory of Time)*, texts by different authors, 1930-2000). Editura Casa Radio, București, 2003, p. 101.

Enescu, a joyous meeting of Romanian mythological elements – that he clearly knew thoroughly and already belonged to his own deep archetypal plane, borrowed from folk spirituality –, with the intervention of new autobiographical elements (love – *The Ghosts*, the direct presence of the sea – *Vox maris*, *The Fifth Symphony*). An avid reader and fine connoisseur of Eminescu's complete works, Enescu focused on the creations that continued his own conceptions and preoccupations: one of the versions of *One Wish Alone Have I* stands at the basis of the finished, but only partially orchestrated *Fifth Symphony*, while the poem *The Ghosts* (creation remained in the project stage) is built on the theme of the conflict or relationship between Man and Destiny, (theme that appears in *Oedipus*, *The Ewe-lamb* and *Master Manole*), Eminescu's characters also being inspired by mythology (this time, eternal love, in death and beyond it, is preferred to the life that entails the separation of the two⁸⁴).

We could say that *Vox maris* is even closer to the folk vision than *The Fifth Symphony*. Because, if Eminescu's poem *One Wish Alone Have I* represents a version of the myth of the ewe-lamb (the death of the shepherd in the field, seen as a wedding, somewhat equivalent to the moment of reintegration in the universal, in the proximity of the sea), *Vox maris* can be considered as a conjunction of elements from both myths (*The Ewe-lamb* and *Master Manole*) with nuances borrowed from Christianity. On one hand, in *Vox maris*, the parallel between the death of the shepherd in the field and the death of the sailor at sea is obvious: the aquatic element, that "always manages to exorcise fears and transforms any Heraclitean bitterness into lullabies and soothing melodies"⁸⁵, replaces the multiple correlations that suggest a cosmic reintegration (stars, mountains, fir trees⁸⁶) in the folk ballad. On the other hand, in this work the idea of sacrifice appears (present in both myths, but absent from Eminescu's poem and thus from *The Fifth Symphony*), an idea that has always attracted Enescu (see *Oedipus*), maybe because of its mythical and religious undertones.

The sacrificial act is a "fundamental institution in ancient religions"⁸⁷ forming a great variety of roles: of "worship, gratitude, persuasion, forgiveness or redemption"⁸⁸ some agrarian cults, sacrifice eases the constant reiteration of the primordial act of cosmogony; similarly, "in the Vedic tradition of India, sacrifice is the essence of creation, starting from Brahma's self-sacrifice, necessary for the

⁸⁴ Potopin, Ion, *Interferențe Enescu-Eminescu*, in: *Enesciana II-III*, Editura Academiei R.S.R., București, 1981, p. 185.

⁸⁵ Durand, Gilbert, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (1960). Transl. by M. Aderca as *Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului*. Editura Univers, București, 1977, p. 88.

⁸⁶ Mircea Eliade underlines a subtle difference between the maternity of waters and that of the earth: waters are at "the beginning and end of cosmic events", while the earth is "at the origin and end of any life" (*op. cit.*, p. 241).

⁸⁷ Kernbach, Victor, *Dicționar de mitologie generală (Dictionary of General Mythology)*, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1989, p. 521.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 521.

creation of the world⁸⁹. Also in Christianity, Jesus sacrifices himself for the well-being of others, for their redemption (endless existence) and for the perpetuation of eternally human values. In Romanian folk mythology, the sacrifice of the shepherd reaches in the end cosmic dimensions in the process of reintegration in the universe, while the offering of Anna in *Master Manole* symbolizes the destruction of the terrestrial factor (the body of the wife represents the master's immanent existence) and the survival of the spiritual element (in Manole's case, the durable creation, the work represented the existence beyond Time⁹⁰. We could talk endlessly about self-sacrifice in Enescu's biography, on one hand of his generous acts for the poor, the injured or his own colleagues, in order to perpetuate ethical and human values more important than individual life (solidarity, friendship, collaboration, honour etc.), demonstrated through many direct confessions; on the other hand, through the way he sacrificed "his pleasures, his health and simple joys of life"⁹¹ in order to place all of his resources on the altar of composition.

In *Vox maris*, the sacrifice of the sailor – as a continuation of the oath of faith previously uttered by the hero⁹² – is so openly and naturally carried out, without the fear of death (which is not frightening, but represents the union with primordial nature, like in *The Ewe-lamb*), that it almost goes unnoticed⁹³. At the same time, the sacrifice in *Vox maris* is assumed, consensual (like in *The Ewe-lamb*), carried out with a sense of duty, whose fulfilment is more important than anything ("I had only one /.../ preoccupation: to fulfil my duty"⁹⁴; "In realizing this kindness, loyalty, honour, friendship, correctness are included. Let us all do our duty and the world will regain its major sense"⁹⁵. Despite the apparent

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 521.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, p. 339.

⁹¹ George Enescu, in: Cristian, V., *Un geniu autentic al artei românești*, in: *Femeia și căminul*, București, 2, no. 22, 6th of May 1945, p. 7; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviu II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 133.

⁹² To facilitate understanding I will use the French translation, although it contains evident omissions compared to the Breton original: "Je ne veux pas subir le ténébreux supplice/De votre mort, terriens!/Je veux, lorsque mon sang gèlera dans ma veine, au suprême calice/De la mer m'abreuver/D'un fiel au goût puissant."

⁹³ Contrary to the scenario presented in *Memories*, in which the sacrificial act of the sailor is evident ("A siren howls in the distance. It's the alarm! Cries are heard in the middle of the storm. The boats are lowered in the sea. The sailor comes forward, grabs the oars and heads out in the direction of the screams. The people on the shore follow for a moment the boat that rides the waves. Suddenly it disappears. The waters have engulfed the small boat, sinking it. /.../ The sea has swallowed its prey" – *Amintirile lui George Enescu / Les souvenirs de Georges Enesco*, p. 101), in the score the few remarks (such as *Les canots à la mer!*) are not as eloquent.

⁹⁴ George Enescu, in: Grindea, M., *Maestrul George Enescu vorbește "luptei" despre criza artei*, in: *Lupta*, București, 10, no. 2996, 1st of November 1931, p. 2; reproduced in *Interviuri I (Interviews I)*, p. 229.

⁹⁵ George Enescu, in: Grindea, M., *George Enescu*, in: *Cuvântul liber*, București, no. 19, 17th of March 1934, p. 6-7; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviu I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 243.

uselessness, this sacrifice is close to Christian spirituality, through the transfer of responsibility from the custody of Destiny to that of Man⁹⁶; the attempt to save his companions doesn't stem only from the continuation of the sailor's wish, but has the purpose of fulfilling the internal becoming of the hero, process that entails, through the individual decision, the sacrifice of the perishable element (terrestrial existence), thus ensuring the survival of trans-historical elements (spiritual, cultural and social values). Once again a connection to the folk legend *Master Manole* can be established, keeping in mind that, in *Vox maris*, the cosmic, eternal factor, is not the creation, but the profound idea of maintaining the human condition, dignity and high spiritual values that define Man. Sometimes, an immense tension builds up between human values and the cold, indestructible laws of nature/ destiny/history (see *Vox maris*, *Oedipus*, and also the two World Wars). But we always have the freedom to react: Enescu's lesson (at the same time deeply Romanian, Christian and eternally human) is that man can overcome his destiny not necessarily by changing it, but through the way it adamantly keeps one's values beyond immanent existence, sometimes choosing self-sacrifice: "Humanity, throughout the ages, has fought against fatality /.../ and has somewhat managed to vanquish it. Through battles, terrible suffering and through the faith religion gives us. This is *Oedipus* in my view: fight until the end, without doubt, without complaining and expecting nothing in return."⁹⁷ The profound message and at the same time the philosophical component of this work⁹⁸ is the assertion – devoid of any grandiloquence – of an attitude, of a life choice which follows the traditional Romanian vision (mixing elements of mythological and Christian nature) and that validates the choice made by Brâncoveanu, for instance: not to give up the eternal ethical-human values in the face of exterior pressure. The result is a model whose connections with the tragic historical events of early twentieth century must be accentuated in my opinion, especially when they complete confessions of the composer: "my view is that in stormy times you have to be where you were born"⁹⁹ (one must observe composer's presence in the country during both wars and the association *storm-war*, with possible echoes in *Vox maris*). And in the same vein: "it is appropriate

⁹⁶ Enescu confesses on several occasions that he is deeply religious.

⁹⁷ *George Enescu*, in: Ghibu, Onisifor, *La cina cea de taină*, text reproduced in: *Viața Românească*, no.8, 8.VIII.1981, p. 20-32 and in: Cosma, Viorel, *George Enescu în memoria timpului (George Enescu in the Memory of Time)*, p. 282.

⁹⁸ Maybe a parallel between *Vox maris* and Hemingway's short story, *The Old Man and the Sea* (written in 1952) wouldn't be irrelevant. There are similarities (the sea, the old sailor/fisherman, experiences at the border between life and death), as there are differences (for Santiago, the skill, perseverance and knowledge of his opponent ensures not only the re-gaining of the community's respect, but also the daily, bodily survival; for the old sailor in *Vox maris*, the storm signifies the tragic end). I believe both works impress, most of all, through *silent heroism*.

⁹⁹ *George Enescu*, in: Cristian, V., *Un geniu autentic al artei românești*, in: *Femeia și căminul*, București, 2, no. 22, 6th of May 1945, p. 7; reproduced in *George Enescu – Interviuuri II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 129.

to be concerned not only with music, but with everything that belongs to the history of battles fought by humanity. Only through this focus, will you be able to plant humane values and humanity in your spirit and start from here in your artistic expression. /.../ since without faith and humanity, art cannot be born.”¹⁰⁰

Let us add that the ancient mermaids that appear in the end are considered funereal deities in Greek mythology, helpers in the process of dying, whose cult was connected to Persephone, the wife of Hades, herself associated not only with death, but also with the regenerating force of nature, vitality and rebirth¹⁰¹.

Moreover, I think it's important that in *Vox maris* the emphasis isn't placed on the human element¹⁰², but on the natural one (water): the title is neither *The Sea* (like at Debussy), nor *The Sailor and the Sea*, but *The Voice of the Sea*, the aquatic element being personified¹⁰³; the proportion of characters is reduced, by placing them in the backstage or by cutting short their interventions. Hence, Enescu sees things from a double perspective: the individual one, in which case personal option is vital and who, by fulfilling his duty and thus keeping his human dignity, answers the call of the sea; the trans-historical one, in which the impact of the tragedy, of the hero's sacrifice is modestly restrained to the dimension that any passing historical event should have, while being engulfed by eternity and Absolute (in support of this idea are, to a certain extent, the architectures of the two works¹⁰⁴). A similar vision to that expressed in a late confession¹⁰⁵, when the composer repeats the metaphor of the terrestrial-cosmic reflection or if you'd like, life-work: “Upon reaching the shore, I look behind me at the ocean of life: the waves that get lost in the distance and everything that is left is a clear mirror that reflects the sky – my sky: music”.

¹⁰⁰ George Enescu, in: *Uj Kelet*, Cluj, 20, no. 265, 21st of November 1937, p. 8. Translation from Hungarian: Theodor Sugar. Text reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuri II (George Enescu – Interviews II)*, p. 66-67.

¹⁰¹ Kernbach, V. *op. cit.*, p. 545-546.

¹⁰² As the scenario formulated in: *Amintiri (Souvenirs)* would sound, p. 100-101.

¹⁰³ Which once again leads us to the connections with traditional spirituality.

¹⁰⁴ In *The Fifth Symphony*, the ending “from the entry of voices to the final measure, there is only a re-telling, a recount of those depicted in the first movement of the symphony. Through this, the score captures /.../ a certain transcendence and conceptual unity” (Bentoiu, Pascal, *Capodopere enesciene / Masterworks of George Enescu*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1999, p. 591). Somewhat similar, the sixth section of *Vox maris* (75/2) repeats the material of the first section, followed by “echoes of the catastrophe” (see: Bentoiu, Pascal, *Capodopere enesciene / Masterworks of George Enescu*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1999, p. 351.).

¹⁰⁵ George Enescu, in: Gavoty, Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

Using the metaphor of the water¹⁰⁶, in all its complexity and diversity of meanings, Enescu speaks of the native lands as a geographical, historical and spiritual reality, of Man and Destiny, of Time and Eternity, of how to remain human despite the waves of life¹⁰⁷: “I continue to dream of a world that operates on the principles of order and hierarchy, *the only means of developing humanity. Unfortunately, we don't see the sublime lesson that nature offers us, the universal hierarchy in whose absence the Earth would collide with the Sun.*”

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¹⁰⁶ The existence of a possible correlation between the theme of water and the use of the heterophonical syntax in Enescu's maturity works (suggested by the composer Corneliu Dan Georgescu in a short discussion) is worth a separate investigation, since heterophony doesn't appear in all the works connected to water, but we can find it in works that are not specifically connected to the symbol of water.

¹⁰⁷ *George Enescu*, in: Massoff, Ioan, *George Enescu intim*, in *Rampa*, București, 16, no. 4131, 26th of October 1931, p. 102; reproduced in: *George Enescu – Interviuuri I (George Enescu – Interviews I)*, p. 217.

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