

**“OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA
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DOCTORAL FIELDS: THEOLOGY**

**DOCTORAL THESIS
-SUMMARY-**

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**« THE HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE
LIFE AND WORKS
OF VASILE VOICULESCU »**

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The present work has as its theme of study the personality and works of the Romanian writer Vasile Voiculescu, from an exegetical perspective, carried out both by means of theological and philological analysis and also journalistically.

For Romanian spirituality V. Voiculescu is not just an extraordinary representative of writing that was manifested in the prose and poetry, at the beginning of the 20th century but also a profound experimenter of mystical revelation, which he tried to fix and share with us through the letter and the logos of atemporality.

The aim of this research is to present the depth of V. Voiculescu's writing as a manifestation assumed and lived on the distance of the journey from communication to impart.

“Horizontally, Voiculescu has communicated with peers through the pen helping them with time and without time to become more emotionally rich, and vertically, he continuously ascended towards Divinity, resulting in perhaps the most beautiful type of cruciform communication from the Romanian spirituality space. He has constantly experienced in his works, travels from the written word to metanoia. He has traversed with thirst the stages of cataphatic and apophatic knowledge, succeeding in living his life with an unshakable eschatological faith”¹.

The justification of the chosen theme starts from lack of reference points and authentic models felt everywhere today in the social space and beyond. The academic Ms. Zoe Bușulenga's warning that “*we can't live without models*” in which case we risk to fail in an “*absolutely dramatic confusion*” should give us food for thought. Luckily this lack is not irretrievable, meaning non-existence, but one of approach, for the purposes of inassumption of these models, of forgetfulness or even indifference towards them. Far from going into conflict with the progress of times, what would simply constitute only in an unnecessary waste of energy, I consider that in the same time it is very useful to have an alternative to this Misanthrope travel.

According to the French mind Olivier Clement, who is rooted in the logic of the great ascetics of Christian East, the capital sin of this century is “*forgetting*” and the fundamental duty is “*to wake up people ... otherwise we become sleep walkers*”. Surely the pantheon of values is a rich one in the tradition of the Romanian nation, but V. Voiculescu's personality has a destiny that we considered too little exposed in the coeval spiritual space.

¹ GEORGE GRIGORIU, “*Spiritual evolution from communication to impartment in Vasile Voiculescu's work*”, în Rev. TEO, Editura U.A.V, Arad, 2013, ISSN 2247-4382, 55 (2), pag.122-140

Related to the size of his works and to his life, the act of inassumption of the voiculescian message is not only a capital sin in the emotional personal evolution of each one of us but also a regrettable cultural emptiness.

The hermeneutics and exegesis of this personality reveals to the reader a double perspective covering both the human aspect and that of literary and artistic expression. Thus we find a model to be followed, and also the spirit from the heart of letter, the beauty of an expression, replaced today by a vaporisable and condensed “*inebriation of words*”.

Faithful to healthy **Christian education** in which his first alphabet book was the **Holy Scripture**, V. Voiculescu reported himself to the surrounding universe, family, friends, patients, wildlife, pets or even persecutors from a unisonant perspective, in which he acknowledged the “*image*” of Divinity and the transition from “*existence to Life*”. Only so can be explained his double evolution, medical and in writing, on a unique range of identification with his archetypal model, but also the unyieldingness of not making any compromise for small or great advantages of life, an attitude that would finally bring him **martyrdom**.

As a doctor, he made from his patients a mirror in which he discovered **the calling** of “*the cross*”, he healed and fomented on sufferers, with time and without time, going right up to self-renunciation and risking his own health on the altar of healing others. Between “*forma mentis*” and the expression of grace, the voiculescian creed was that the doctor must be grateful to the patient because he offers the chance to do a good deed. Moreover, lacking any “*misanthropic inflection*” and following the **hristologic model**, he considers that the doctor must seek out his own patients, especially among the poor, deprived of possibilities, to ease their pains.

Everyone who knew him confirms the tremendous capacity that he had, to properly and very quickly diagnose the patients, give them the exact treatments, which obviously led to the promptly and blessed healing. This is why the Royal Family itself referred to his services. Although the situation could have been “*exploited*”, V. Voiculescu remained meek, both from a behavioural point of view as well as from a pecuniary point of view. He treated everyone with the same dedication, nay, did not hesitate to buy drugs from his money, for the sick or to offer them little attention himself in order to bring joy. He preserved this habit even after he retired, being still required by the sick.

Today, the name of Vasile Voiculescu “**the doctor without silver**” appears on the frontispiece of various medical conferences and meetings. A nice gesture, that requires a complete and profound willingness to the smallest details.

For those who invoke the famous phrase “*there were other times*”, surely the answer must not contradict but rather become a complement. There were indeed other times, hard times of

war, with epidemics and pests, famine, poverty and a huge lack of knowledge, and Vasile Voiculescu also had the responsibility of a long family with five children.

Considering the low level of education he started, after the **biblical admonition**, to **“teach the Gentiles”**. He led a **fierce campaign**, most with medical advice and methods for the prevention of etoniatry, that finds its applicability, especially today. He was a tireless seeker of alternative treatments available to all patients, in a period in which they were dying on the ends, due to poverty, education, disease or lack of medications.

He had a deep ecologist attitude, explaining how **nature can bestow blessings** on man as the essential source of harmony and health. Although, today might seem something normal, the voiculescian approach should be regarded from a interlinear perspective, in which this work represents a **pioneering activity**, but at the same time a volunteering activity.

Radio activity was anything other than a continuation of work done until then by writing. His shows, with a large impact on the public, but unfortunately unkempt today, aimed at both cultural and medical domains. Tens of thousands of people benefit from the **“Doctor’s”** advice, given that you could hardly find a hospital in the region. We can say without fail that, thousands of people found their cure, alleviation or discovered how to prevent situations that could have been fatal.

In parallel with his medical work he also manifested through the second side of his personality, that of a writer. His beginnings were under the sign of lyricism, having as themes of inspiration the biblical episodes, the history, the nature and love, and in the second part of his life he also manifested as a novelist, causing a genuine surprise among his fellow, by the series of stories, but also with the most known work, the novel **“Zahei the Blind”**.

The study of voiculescian works reveals the aspirations of a man in a **permanent dialogue with God**, an ongoing aspiration to knowledge. Contrary to various comments, the voiculescian creation is not characterized by tension but should be understood as an escalation of a passionate way, of a feverish inosculation. Is the christian’s dynamics engaged on the path of knowledge and improvement, with the stages associated with it.

Vasile Voiculescu knew exactly what he wanted and where he wanted to go. The interpretation of some dilemmas, as hesitations, does not represent anything other than the lack of a personal exercise in this uphill and it has nothing to do with Voiculescu’s attitude. The eschatological perspective, that is found from beginning to end in his works demonstrates the fact that V. Voiculescu has never put the problem of *where* does he have to reach, but only *how* can he reach that point. The God of his search, is not a philosophical entity, a scientific figment, or the fruit of some projections, but the personal, living God and that he had initially met in the

biblical readings, the God of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and then Christ of the New Testament, the Incarnated Son, meaning, the purpose and ultimate reality of any human reporting.

Aware of the power of the word, V. Voiculescu continually tried to put it in the service of “*the sacred ideas*”. Beyond its usefulness as a social binder, as a means of expression, the voiculescian word has a metaphysical meaning, reveals itself as a **blessing** that has its beginning in the creation act, in the divine Logos, but it can also receive the form of **excommunication**, of exclusion, when the rules are violated. Starting from this vision can be explained his extraordinary capacity to create a work that beyond its literary value represents a spiritual treasure, essential, without which we would have been much poorer.

The work of V. Voiculescu has a profound **cruciform dimension** and both of its arms have as common point the **Word, the creator - Logos**, which radiates like in a blending, mysterious bouquets of inward meanings, as libations on the altar of spirituality. On the horizontal, the voiculescian message continually urges to **communication and communion**, setting decks and landmarks, questions and as many answers, themes and ideas that lead to liberation from earthly ego and adamic sin. Vertically in a prometheic ascent, V. Voiculescu makes prayers out of his thoughts, carrying the reader beyond the spatial-temporal coordinates toward the **impartiment** in “*mid-afternoon Eternity*”.

A significant moment of his existence was the contact with 1940s Antim, a place that we could call, mistake-free the elite bastion of Romanian spirituality compared to the Communist roller. Here, Voiculescu was about to feel fulfilled, discovering an environment of inner search, which corresponded to the **hesychast** practice that he had taken. The concerns of those who formed the famous **Burning Bush** ignited their interest in the philocalical experience found in the patristic tradition and in the **Bible study**. Far from being an esoteric group, the academic and monastic community from Antim tried to provide an indelible balance within an area increasingly beaten by the vicissitudes of history.

The strength of that group was not reflected in any of the concerns of the mundane but in a methanoic attitude, in which man is redefined by the relationship with God, restoring the passage from “*image*” to “*sameness*”. In this framework the Russian monk Ivan Kulighin made his appearance, the one who will bring a touch of consistency to the movement through his experience in the **Prayer of the heart**. For the connoisseurs of voiculescien work this moment is not devoid of meaning, because his work will experience a profound deepening, valued as mystical. This way will breed *the stories*, works with a special symbolist complexity, which underwent a gradual path of knowledge, from its ancestral state, defined as an expression of fantastic literature, to a subtle theological level, well articulated. The **Last sonnets** will arise

now, works which could find a correspondence of ideas in the Song of Solomon in the *Old Testament*.

Although at the age of the Patriarchs, V. Voiculescu was arrested along with the other members of the **Burning Bush** for “hostile activity against the State”. The great fear of the authorities was that Antim grouping "would burn the Communists with their burning bush." Funny now, dramatic at the time, this explanation shows perfectly the condition of a society that gravitated towards soul calcification and inability to think.

For the old man Vasile Voiculescu, the warden years would mean the true journey of Golgotha. With inhuman experiences and difficult to replicate, the poet would go through his latest years as martyrs.

The road of hesychia he had embarked during his lifetime became now the way of holiness. Facing terrible trials, V. Voiculescu offered in response to all the hardships, the following statement: “*it was my cross*”. Subsequently, he confessed that in the absence of faith in God he would have found his end. In the nightmare of Jilava prison or in Zarca Aiud, the poet's concern was not for himself but for his fellows, the testimonies of those who were suffering with him being more than sensitive and persuasive. The statements of his family that remind us that in prison the poet was spiritually leaving the physical space of prison, to pray at one of the icons of his home, complete a portrait that should provide us with a serious subject of meditation whether **V. Voiculescu should be removed from the Pantheon of literature and moved to the Orthodox Synaxarium of Romanian spirituality**.

The structure of this work comprises three parts entitled: “**The Journey of Vasile Voiculescu from image to resemblance**”, “**The course from Communication to Impartment in Voiculescu's work**” and “**Through the logos of time**”.

In the first part, structured *in four chapters* (Chapter 1. To Zahia *it was born* from Antiquity, Chapter. 2. Axis mundi, Chapter 3. Vasile Voiculescu- “*doctor without Silver*”, Chapter 4. On Hesychia road) is about a resting place that **targets the human formation** of V. Voiculescu, experiencing and experimenting a lifestyle strongly anchored in the spiritual and traditional values. It is a chapter of personal communication and impartment on the map of human route from image to resemblance or from name to fame, which made V. Voiculescu to conclude in a hristic way: “*we ended up in desiring the white, true light, and I went out after it, staring at the sky*”.

The instruments used in this process are those of the **journalist**, who tried to articulate the elements of V. Voiculescu's life through **interviews, surveys, studies or field research**.

I succeeded in getting in **contact with people** who knew V. Voiculescu personally, not a very easy task, if we think that in the spring were 50 years after the disappearance of the great

writer, while the number of those who had the chance to be his contemporary reduces to a few people today.

For that purpose, **the meeting with Mr. Andrei Voiculescu**, the nephew of the great writer, in turn a reputable journalist, unjustly known and appreciated more abroad than inside our country, I considered it to be a providential one. He is now the heir of the copyrights and one who tries to send forth the message of his grandfather, though from a specific modesty of great characters he refuses to arrogate this merit.

V. Voiculescu's work as a doctor as well as a journalist could constitute genuine milestones for any person who wants to put themselves at the service of their fellows, walking in the footsteps of Hippocrates or Gutenberg.

Just like an initiates journey, which for V. Voiculescu later meant a journey to the eternity of ideas, **Antim Monastery** in Bucharest could not be missing from this itinerary, the place where you can still feel the flames of the **Burning Bush**. The absolutely unjust imprisonment at the age of 74 and the pangs felt under communism place V. Voiculescu in the category of martyrs of this nation who became complete on the way of holiness.

The initial goal of this journey was to embrace the profile of a personality that exceeded his condition, but also of the time in which he lived. Later I came to the **conclusion** that Voiculescu did not raise just above his time, like a medieval tower, but made an apostolic bridge, with intimate connections, beyond his contemporary space. In fact, what I was about to find out after years of research, the simple people, who read his works, would confess with serenity: **Voiculescu was a Saint.**

The second part structured in three chapters (Chapter 5. Communication and impartment, Chapter 6. The blessing and Chapter 7. The theme of the cross) represents an attempt of a primary **exegesis** on a significant segment of the voiculescien works, from the **perspective of the philologist with theological studies**.

It is an interpretation that might be useful, considering that **this dimension of analysis represents a novelty in the sphere of knowledge of voiculescien work**, without a full feature, but rather intimately close to his thinking.

The **three main themes** addressed are: **communication and impartment, the blessing and the cross**. Use of the word as a means of **communication** is doubled by V. Voiculescu by the need of impartment, a final stage that provides justification and purpose to interpersonal expression.

The work of V. Voiculescu has a profound cruciform dimension. Horizontally it addresses the readers, through the word, determining interpersonal connections, developing themes of interior knowledge that lead to metanoia, and then almost unsuspected, the Logos,

fermented in the depths of the soul, gushes vertically, like a white light, carrying the reader beyond the spatial-temporal coordinates, towards Divinity. In a deep exegesis, the etymologic doublet **communication-impartment** represents, in Voiculescu's work, the understanding key, not just fair but also necessary, for if in ancient times of oriental civilizations until the middle ages, alchemists were seeking the immortality formula and transformation of metals into gold, in Voiculescu's case, we'll see how he manages to turn the letter into traveller spirit toward eternity.

Founded through the **Word**, the world has not only material but also a spiritual structure, and this perspective provides a deep significance in the communication process that always implies communion. Even in the solitude of thought a man can communicate with Divinity, whose image is found in his structure.

The theme of **blessing** represents an extension of the word, which beyond its primary meaning of a good speech has also the meaning of a way of transmitting creative energy.

The concern for such a subject, implies a personal experience well anchored in the spiritual phenomenon, because in order to be represented in literature is necessary not only a language of the spirit but also a frame of exposure, with ample biblical and symbolic references.

Thus happened that one by one, come to life under his pen, maybe the most beautiful works of Romanian literature, of biblical inspiration: *The Fight with the Angel, The Rod of Moses, The Annunciation, Boulder Soup, The Fig Salvation, The Demonic of Gadara, The Truth, Judas Tree or Zahei the Blind*. Although there are works whose main themes subscribe to eschatology, the blessing is itself a theme and an essential component in the mechanism of articulation of the meaning of these topics.

The Act or gesture of **blessing** at V. Voiculescu triggers an exposure setting that removes the subject from the scope of the daily life of "normal" type. Basically, **the blessing is the creative energy** that provides the impetus for addressing an obsolete conventional theme. This implies a secret assumption of the Gospel of John, correlated with biblical report from the *Old Testament*, thus managing a bridge over the centuries, but also a cosmic recapitulation under the sign of Divine providence. Not incidentally are chosen the topics. Beyond the beauty of approach, but also of fidelity to the original meanings, the voiculescian message indicates a conscious assumption regarding the purpose and direction of the world, of its conveyance between alpha and omega.

Further more, the theme of the **cross** comes to complete the exercise of communication. The world is founded on the Word, and the Cross represents the altar on which communication becomes eternal impartment.

The theme of the Cross as a means of divine **communication** and **blessing** of the world is being developed by V. Voiculescu in what we might call "*the poems of the cross*", a series of seven poems, which practically outlines the message from *Judas' Tree*.

Entitled with suggestive names, the order of their writing, is as follows: ***The Cross-key, The Cross-Ark, The Cross-bride (the Crucifixion), The place of the Cross in the Holy Trinity, The cross-Remedy, The Cross-elevation, The Cross-yoke***.

For a fuller understanding of the message resulting from the **seven "poems of the cross"**, it is appropriate to insist a bit upon the symbolism of number seven, figure with special meanings in both the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*.

The third part, suggestively titled ***Through the Logos of time*** (Chapter 8. Critical Perspectives) attempts to provide a perspective of how the voiculescian message was and is perceived in the Romanian spirituality, both from a literary standpoint and also a theological one.

The entire prose of Vasile Voiculescu, as his lyrical universe are realms deserving to immerse in them as in a confraternity bath in which you purify yourself of any added or external ballast and out of which the human mind afterwards reaches metanoia. Without making any confusion between a literary text and a biblical one, V. Voiculescu, in his work, has exceeded the condition of the writer. He didn't use the art of communication only to transmit a valuable masterpiece but initiated us in a phase of knowledge that retrieves its logic in the commune act.

The Exegesis and Hermeneutics of his work demonstrates the human aspiration to know and meet God. This is done based on the specific circumstances of life, established on different cataphatic formulas, until the full formula of apophatism.

Vasile Voiculescu's work cannot be exhausted by the philologists due to theological subtleties used by the writer. These subtleties are likely to transform any analysis about V. Voiculescu in beautiful literary commentary that doesn't deplete its content. On the other hand, the Voiculescu's work should not be interpreted as a theological corpus, such a mystification not being desirable.

The eschatological dimension is obvious in Voiculescu's way of thinking, and this we meet both in his prose and poetry. This perspective does not reflect anything other than the continuous pursuit of the man Voiculescu to permanently overcome his condition. Willingly or not this also transferred into the message of his work, and this approach should be returned in any exegesis of Vasile Voiculescu's literary universe.

This approach was made from a **multidisciplinary perspective**. The **historical** part, the **philological** part, the **journalistically** and **theological** one weaving together to express a common purpose.

The desire to present the complex personality of V. Voiculescu has initially started from a scientific approach and stopped at the point where I understood that his message can be deciphered, only surpassing the letter's content, by a plunge in the bath of spiritual consciousness. *In other words, to return to the primary pattern of understanding, in which meanings are no longer desired for their meaning, could be the final meaning.*

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