

EXPRESSIVE MEANS OF ACHIEVING FLORAL AVATAR IN DIMITRIE ANGHEL'S POETRY

Cosmina Andreea RO U¹

***Abstract:** Dimitrie Anghel is remarkable in Romanian symbolism for his special approach of the flower universe, especially for his frequent identification with the floral element considered to be the avatar of the poetic. The escape in the garden – as a space of withdrawal in ideality – is achieved through dream, in a symbolic way, abundant in expressive images. A representation of an identity discourse, the dream suggests the space of human being originating retrieval through continuous metamorphoses, a space of the human souls' transmigration.*

***Keywords:** symbol, flower, imaginary.*

In his diversity, the symbolist poetry's theme expresses a nonconformist and an inadequate attitude, an incompatibility with a prosaic, mercantile and philistine world. The symbolist poets reveal the *spleen*, the solitude the neurosis sustained by a full props specific to Symbolism, which fades the immediate support of these states arising from the poets' objection of the world.

The loneliness motif descends from Romanticism and is enriched with the melancholy of silence, with undecided and uncertain gestures, with heavy sadness especially in Dimitrie Anghel's poetry in which we can see his refuge in the garden.

Love, as a literary theme, is not framed in the context of nature by the symbolists, although the poets will find a connection in communicating their feelings through their predilection for fragrances and music. The intimate side of love poetry is underlined by the presence of the objects in the literary works of Al. Macedonski and then cultivated by D. Anghel, N. Davidescu, Ion Pillat, Ion Minulescu. It appears here the chamber, the paintings, the buffets and the library.

A well known floral universe we can see in D. Anghel's volume: "In the Garden" ("În gr din "), where the flowers remind us of the dead, of the love constancy, and the garden is an idealistic refuge of man's frustrated consciousness. Named by Mihai Mo andrei "the gardener of our spirituality flowers" (M. Mo andrei, 1938: 8), Dimitrie Anghel is framed in the autochthonous Symbolism (Lucia Bote Marino, 1966: 329).

Dimitrie Anghel is remarkable in Romanian Symbolism context through his special approach of the flower universe. He considers the chosen flowers' garden as a space of withdrawal in ideality and he frequently identifies himself with the floral element which he transforms in an avatar – interpreted exclusively as a metamorphosis, devoid of any negative connotation. D. Anghel's imaginary is symbolically, conventionally and analogous represented through the reality transfiguration after the poet's terror in front of the constraining reality and the common concreteness.

The escape is achieved by means of flowers' fragrance using the poet's emotional memory (as M. Proust does) which explain his predilection for the world of flowers in a page of prose in "The Story of the Troubled" – "Povestea celor nec jiti" (Iulian Boldea, 2011: 19):

¹ University of Pite ti, racosmina@yahoo.com

Eu mi-alesesem lumea florilor, cîi în lumea lor mi-am petrecut copilăria. Mi-adeceam aminte de grădina minunată unde am trăit, de murmurul sonor al ipotului, de freacă a arborilor, de toată risipa de petale de o înprătie necurmat vîntul. Imi aminteam simpatiile pe care le aveam pentru unele flori și antipatiile neajudecate pentru altele. Pentru mine miresele erau gândurile lor tainice, felul lor de a vorbi, și eu aș putea ghici pe întuneric, noaptea, cînd e mai puternic mirosul lor, ce floare anume mi-l trimite, și mai tîrziu toate amintirile acestea s-au redeptat și m-au chinuit, și asemeni strălucirii lor am cîntat-o în cuvinte, în alcătuirea minunată a petalelor ce formează rozul, ori un crin, am cîntat s-o redau în strofe. (D. Anghel, 1989: 97).

The poet is so close to nature that he frequently identifies himself with its elements – usually with the aristocratic spirit of the white lily and, at a certain point, with the oak through an allegory – “The Oak and the Mistletoe” (“Stejarul și vîscul”), dedicated to a critic. The oak is the symbol of steadfastness and persistence over time, of power, of masculinity, of immortality and it was dedicated to Hera in ancient times; the Dryads were oak nymphs. The oak’s heavy wood was compared to incorruptibility. Associated to the potential to live long, it symbolizes power and eternal life.

However, the floral avatar motif is significant in a text whose title is intriguing and seems to anticipate it: “Metamorphosis” (“Metamorfoză”), a poetry from the volume named “Fantasies” (“Fantazii”, 1909) and also in the poetry named “In the Garden” (“În grădina”) from the homonymous volume (1905). Instead, in the “Death of Narcissus” (“Moartea lui Narcis”) the poet finds his human avatar.

I, now, submit “Metamorphosis” (“Metamorfoză”) for analysis (Anghel, 1989: 51). In this text, the imaginary transposition is achieved by an impersonal verb used to imply the detachment desire “și se fcea că fără voie trăiam acum o viață nouă” (p. 51). A modal phrase – “fără voie” is added to this in order to emphasize the irresistible force of floral narcosis, followed by apocope – “fără de veste”.

The dream motif involves the escape from the real space, the refuge in a permitted, deliberate way by placing, in the first verse, the verb in mai-mult-ca-perfect “lăsașem să mă-adoarm crinii...” (p. 51) – assuming some causative idea for what is to come through the intervention of the olfactory: “seară dulce” in which the lily’s fragrance emphasizes its narcotic power.

The parallel, imaginary universe fancied by the poet in which everything is possible is represented by a nominal group “o viață nouă”. We easily identify here the floral avatar by the chosen flower – that is superior and aristocratic. It is a symbol of purity, perfection, mercy and majesty in most cultures; the lily, once symbolized light and male principle, it is the flower of glory and death also. The flower description focuses on an interesting visual contrasting image: the pure, superlative white – emphasized at a morphemic level by tmesis: “atît de alb eram subțire” – “abia scriam o umbră” (p. 51), promoting, at the same time, the desire to be eternal according to the *scripta manent* dictum and the inability to detach from the previous life’s calling – writing.

The dream begins in the first verse with the expression of desire (“voind”) and it is enhanced by repeating a verb in gerund in the beginning of the second stanza: “Vîndînd trăiam cu ei acuma” (p. 51) – suggesting the anchoring in the present moment and the inclusion in the vegetable kingdom through the comparison: “și eu un crin ca dîndii”. We identify the lily’s preciousness in the final verse of the first quatrain which contains both an epithet and a metaphor: “Îmi întindeam voios potirul și prind o lacrimă de rouă” (p. 51).

In the dark, calm atmosphere, under the guardianship star of the night and reverie (“subt lun ”), playfulness comes through a personified epithet: “m-alinta galnic vântul” (p. 51), and also the reconciliation with itself: “tihn se f cuse-n mine i cald inima i bun ” (p. 51).

The metamorphoses idea is reiterated – “sub alt form , s -mpodobesc i eu p mântul” (p. 51) – as an aesthetification, utility, attractiveness way, forgetting the overwhelming feeling of rejection, of loneliness, of futility.

The temporal coordination, by reference to context, is achieved by a relative adverb, “when”, introducing the following indication: “o mân pal [...] / S-a-ntins vr jma s m frâng ” (p. 52). Instinctively, such an inferior human being: “the pale hand” (“mân pal ”) – in visual contrast with its shadow (“umbra sa”) – descends above the lily (representing a part of the whole – “gr mad ”) anticipating the thanatic: “Ca subt imboldul unei forțe necunoscută i fatale, / S-a-ntins vr jma s m frâng ”. The mild extinction (“Muream tihnit de-a doua oar în lini tea od ii tale”, p. 52) is achieved in a favourable and comfortable environment (“cu fața calmă între perne”, p. 52) in which the poet had taken refuge – his lover’s chamber. As in dream and as in reality, the soul’s extinction involves the detachment of flesh/body and its subsequent materialization in “another perfect and eternal form” – “alt form des vâr it i etern ” (p. 52) preserving the notable essence at a lexical-semantic level by synecdoche.

The superior man is searching for the perfect form to identify to until merger and which form to reflect his essence of his aspiring to the transcendent - “Eu ca o pulbere de aur m-am ridicat u or subt lun ” (p. 52). The identification is often made by explicit comparisons and metaphors. The reiteration of the process, of the agony is achieved through the repetition of the indicative verb – “muream” (“I was dying”) – that gives a durative note reflecting the manner of experiencing, of feeling the agony. We can easily observe the abundance of the indicative verbs in the first person singular in each verse of the first two stanzas – they constitute the poetic marks.

The semantic context of the stylistic figures, especially of the comparisons and personifications, includes specific elements of Dimitrie Anghel’s Symbolism: nature (“m-alinta galnic vântul”, “alb ca o z pad ”), the vegetal element (“Eram i eu un crin ca dân ii”), the human element (“f cându-ți brațele cunun ”), the abstract element (“Muream tihnit”, “mi cându- i umbra.../Ca subt imboldul unei forțe”), the intertwining of the human and the vegetal elements until identification (“Eu ca o pulbere de aur”).

The common element of the comparisons that have vegetal elements imply the idea of *purity* by colour (the adjective *alb* – *white*, the noun *z pad* – *snow* – which emphasize by contrast the night’s chromatic) to which the human being embodied in lily is associated to. In comparisons the noun is predominant and it is also part of another stylistic figure, which is a metaphor: “Eu |crinul| ca o pulbere de aur”.

There are obvious, at the prosody level, the equal measure of the syllables – 18 syllables, the cross rhyme and the iambic rhythm. The phonological level has the apocope – “f r’ de veste” and the paronomasia – “fatale – tale” (p. 52), alongside of the usual flow that gives the poetry an elegiac tone.

In an extensive analysis of Dimitrie Anghel’s style, G. C linescu wrote down:

Simbolist, în fond, Dimitrie Anghel este mai autentic decât alții, cu toate acele contrasturi i amestecuri ce constituie o personalitate. [...] Pentru c Anghel i-a intitulat o culegere de versuri Fantazii, a r mas un fel de cli eu critic c poetul este fantezist. Fantazia lui Anghel e fabulosul alegoric, îns din ea a derivat i un imagism. (G. C linescu, 2003: 608, 610).

Thus, the dream represents the immersion in the continuous metamorphoses space, a souls' transmigration space, a metempsychosis space, but, especially a space of human being retrieval of originary self. The returning to real space through ritual extinction of the lily requires openness to new metamorphoses but it also has the significance of trauma because of the ideality and originating painful rupture. The anchoring in the past, in the archetypal times, is performed by Dimitrie Anghel using the symbols with mythological reference: Vestals, Hera, Oedipus, Narcissus, Midas etc.

Through connections (*correspondances*) the author manages to fully express the relation between the poetic – representing the micro and the world – as a macrocosmic universe which are interpreted by symbols at the receptiveness level.

Bibliography

- Anghel, D., *Versuri în proză*, Ed. Albatros, București, 1989;
Boldea, I., *De la modernism la postmodernism*, Ed. Universității „Petru Maior”, Târgu-Mureș, 2011;
Bordeianu, M., *Versificația românească*, Ed. Junimea, Iași, 1974;
Bote Marino, L., *Simbolismul românesc*, Ed. pentru Literatură, București, 1966;
Călinescu, G., *Istoria literaturii române*, Ed. Semne, București, 2003;
Coteanu, I., *Stilistica funcțională a limbii române*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1973;
Moandrei, M., *Dimitrie Anghel, poet al florilor*, Universul literar, Anul XLVII, Nr. 44, 17 Decembrie 1938.