**ȘTEFAN VLĂDUȚESCU**
University of Craiova

# FLORI DE MUCIGAI / MILDEW FLOWERS – *THE MOST NON-EMINESCIAN VOLUME OF POETRY IN ROMANIAN LITERATURE*

*Abstract: The study takes into account a basic change of hierarchy in Roumanian lyric: Tudor Arghezi's ascendant above Mihai Eminescu. „Mildew flowers" emerges as the most non-Eminescu's volume of poetry of the Roumanian literature. The research involves six conceptual instruments: the thematic figure, the poetic reverie, the lyric situation, the symbol, the mythologization and the vision. Relying on these it is first emphasized how, in „Mildew flowers", the textualizing and the poetic reverie has generated four symbols (the symbol of the nail, of the dark, of the wall and of the dizziness). Then it is a demonstrated how these have induced four figures of evanescence, of the slow disappearance (the figure of reclusion-of prison, the figure of the time anomaly, the figure of the calm sorcery and the figure of a raivy country) and how these figures are perceved as visions (of the reclusion-of prison, of the time, of the sorcery and of the rain). Finally it follows thas mythologization has emerged. It is concluded that, in Arghezi's work, the prisoner has become a myth, a dandy.*

*Keywords: Arghezi, Flori de mucigai, thematic figure, poetic reverie, lyric situation, symbol, mythologization, vision.*

## 1. Tudor Arghezi's ascension

"Arghezi is, showed Eugen Simion, the most original poet whom we have produced us, Romanians, in the twentieth century" (Simon, 1984, p. 109). His work as the critic Gabriel Coşoveanu claims is "one of the great creations of the 20th century" (Coşoveanu, 2009, p. 90). Something new, we believe, came after 1975 Romanian poetry pantheon. To manipulate a Călinescian image, it is the fact that after 1975 Arghezi pass Eminescu in the second desk.

The most non-Eminescu of poetry volumes written in Romanian is *Mildew flowers*, metaphor of a world in fully evanescence. The same idea of the evolution of the critical reception for the two most important Romanian poets, the literary critic Ion Buzera asserts: "Arghezi is our first great poet noneminescian, as Macedonski is the first great poet antieminescian. Tudor Arghezi thinks and writes poetry totally in other mentalo-affective-cosmological structures than Eminescu" (Buzera, 2010, p. 112).

## 2. Concepts and work hypothesis

Our analysis requires six concepts: figure, poetic reverie, lyrical situation, symbol, mythologizing and vision.

Definition of thematic figure, the figure of thought in general, a constellation of tense images. After a definition of Franco Rella, in *Myths and figures of modern* (Rella, 1981, p. 134), the figure is "articulating, \traction and structuring pull together several images of thought." Figure is shown to be, therefore, an engram, a scheme - as Gilbert Durand (Durand, 1977, p. 72) - a fundamental condition of the spirit and form of sensitivity. We meet in a poem either sensitivity figures or figures of thought. The thematic figure concept, rarely used in Romanian criticism (see E. Simon, Ion Pop, Eugen Negrici, Lucian Raicu, Alexandru Călinescu şi Nicolae Balotă) has neither us nor west a finalized status.

The concept of figure can be met with different meanings in philosophy (at Ludwig Wittgenstein), in linguistics (at Louis Hjelmslev, A.-J Greimas, Maria Carpov) in



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hermeneutics (at Paul Ricœur), in structural style (at Michel Riffaterre ), in the philosophy of culture (at Franco Rella), in the old and the new rhetoric (the group M), in literary criticism (Jean-Pierre Richard, Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette, the Tel Quel Group) and in studies of painting (the Pierre Francastel and Dan Mihăilescu).

If the figure is a constellation of tense image, the vision is a linear series of images. Here is the definition of G. Călinescu: "a whole serie of images give a vision" (Călinescu, 1941, p. 725).

The poetic reverie, says Gaston Bachelard in *The poetics of reverie*, is "a state, a state of soul" (1974: 13). "Poetry, says Bachelard hereinafter, is the dreamer and his world. Briefly, with a vengeance, the reverie poetizes the dreamer" (Bachelard, 1974, p. 13). The poetic reverie is argued to be the state of soul produced by the poetry receipt.

Jean-Paul Sartre defines in *The Imagination* (1940), the situations as "different ways to refer to the real" (Sartre, 1969, p. 309). The situation would be, therefore, a way to refer to the real.

Finally, the concept of mythologizing comes from Carl Gustav Jung; he believes that "Mythology is the expression of a series of images by which manifests life archetypes. (...) Mythologizing means turning in the myth of a fact "(Apud Evans R. 1968: 32). So mythologizing would coincide with the myth constraining function assumpion, by a fact, by an image; this mythologizing is the foundation of the poetry. Myths, as a series of images, as "life archetypes", are some collective reveries. Mythologizing is about this also at Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* .

Our work hypothesis is that in the *Flowers of mildew*, the poetic spirit is in a limit situation. The limit situation produces a poetic reverie. The poetic reverie is manifested through images, and the images either mythologize or restructure in the vision and figures.

In practice of thematic figuring we used Jean-Pierre Richard's experience from *Poetry and depth*, *Eleven studies about modern poetry* and *Microlectures*, as well as that of Eugen Simion of *Romanian writers today* (vol. II) and *The Poet's morning*.

**3. Existential situation**

Arghezian creative spirit, Arghezian being spontaneously adopts an attitude of cruelty and aggression towards the world. The expectation and passivity lesson is unknown him. The universe is perceived to materially and temporally mode, not under a sacred code, but as an action induced by what Crişu Dascălu professor called the "profane code" (Dascălu, 2009, p. 32). Fully, Arghezian lyrical simulates a restless desire for power, it is a continuing and irrepressible challenge of the exterior. The tropisms and engram of this lyrical are amplified, sent to a repressive apparatus, we should say, deadly. Minimum sensation get through the way from insignificant to colossal: audible becomes deafening, flickering becomes blindness and fine tactile turns in tough tactile. It is a law and technique: everything is turned into painful, cruel, menacing.

Sensation cruelties are produced by a procedure that we should call balance by negative reaction; contents of this procedure is as follows: the creative spirit is unbalanced, in the creative process, to balance it must strike the outside, the world, the objects, to explode. Its reaction toward the exterior is destructive, it caresses to hit, it is sweet to be unforgiving.

In Nichita Stanescu, items will make corners and will terrorize the poetic spirit. In Arghezi, the poetic spirit terrorizes the objects, the outside. The Arghezian world is a world in terror. The terror that feels poetic spirit itself is a reflex of the terror that he himself exercise it. Poetry is born of loneliness, of uniqueness. The loneliness means unique. The Psalms means inability to be unique, to be alone: to not be alone, the poetic spirit makes and is himself God. So, God is creation and suffering of creative spirit. Antiquity convey the idea



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that the gods are creations of human being. Arghezi pair this idea with a Nistzsche's idea : "there is no God, because I would not accept to be myself that one".

The Arghezian spirit is self, simultaneously, slave and master. The Nichitastănescian situation repeats it, in a way, the Arghezian one, writes Nichita Stănescu: "I pray to myself / I pray to be: / Show yourself".

**4. Symbols and figures**

Existential situation presented is the situation of *Mildew flowers*. Arghezian happiness is that one to terrorize the universe: he breaks up the world and remount it in reverse than would be normal to do. If he wants to be gentle, he will be unbelievably aggressive, and he wants to be cruel, he will be suave (Bold, 2005).

Suaveness and innocence are mythologized in *Mildew flowers* they trigger the fundamental poetic reverie, that from which derive the evanescence figures. Let us not forget that for Hjelmslev, the figure is also "a non-sign that enters in a system of signs, as part of" (Hjelmslev, 1967, p. 89).

Cruelty to Arghezi has an effect of suaveness of ingenuity. G. Călinescu in "*History of Romanian literature from its origins to the present*" in 1941 refers only the outside of things, "the artistic effect consist of capturing the suaveness under slum expression " (Călinescu, 1941, p. 730).

Some symbols presides the Arghezian reverie: the nail symbol, the wall symbol, the darkness symbol, and the dizziness symbol. All four of them are met in the poem that opens the volume *Flowers. of mildew*. The nail is the symbol of the effort to write, of the effort to be true. By the nail is written "book".

The book is modulated with two types of writing: a superhuman one, angelic, a writing of the text and the right hand, and another one subhuman, a writing of subtext and the left hand. In fact, it could make a simultaneous reading on the codes of all four symbols, considering that the "symbolic irradiation" noticed by Sorin Alexandrescu, to Arghezi acts in entire volume (Alexandrescu, 1971, p. 167-183). It might do a reading "stylistic redundancy" as advocated by Michel Riffaterre in *La production du texts* (Rifaterre, 1971, p. 259), a reading of the codes as do R. Bartehes in *S/Z* or even a projective reading of text in text; Our belief is that all these types of reading applied to the volume *Mildew flowers* would find the same figures: the evanescence figures.

The effects of symbols undetermine the functioning of the figures. The second and the third symbol are the symbol of the wall and of the darkness: "They wrote by nail on plaster / On wall of empty alcove / In darkness, in loneliness."

Loneliness is the fundamental situation at Arghezi. The wall symbolizes the weight and limitation of the writing, as well the producing thinking mobile. The wall does not want to be a "defensive retreat", we does not find in him signs to denote "the defense intentions or those of privacy" that assigns it G. Durand (Durand, 1977, p. 209). It is the symbol of isolation. The darkness represents as G. Durand shows, the time and the disorder, it has the " symptomatic value of anguish of the anguish" (Durand, 1977, p. 108-110). The Arghezi's darkness is pure in Sartrian sense "Pure, says J.-P. Sartre, i.e. without interference and without mercy" (Sartre, 1969, p. 356).

The dizziness, fourth symbol indicates the abolition of daily condition and integration in the hallucination, in the writing reverie and happiness.

The symbols undermine, but also modulates, at the same time, the figures; modulations occurring within isotopes that correspond them in semantic level. The figures belong still more of semiotic than semantic.



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**4.1 Figure of the time anomaly**

The first of the evanescence figure is the figure of time anomaly. The hours are empty, the seconds are filled of time until to saturation: time expands or contracts. The temporality closed, broken: "neither the clock tower does not the what's the time" (*Two starvelings*). Time no longer relate to the clock. The Arghezian clock indicates the space hours and of suffering (Bold, 2007).

In the darkness and solitude, in isolation, the clock stops, fails or forgets to show time. The human time is his suffering time, is time of his situation in the Arghezian poetic universe. The Arghezian human consults an infinity of clocks, when they would want to consult himself; he is sick of time, she is sick of clocks. His disease is the lack of hours or the dissemination of hours in the dust. The genuine time of Arghezian human is "the beyond clock". The *The beyond clock* poem figures the anomaly: the time is time that is measured; there is not lived time, just only measured time "In heaven / Strikes the hour of bronze and iron. / In a star / Strikes the velvet hour. / Near regale epitaph / Strikes the sound of time of dust. / This night, sister. / It never strikes any hour "(Arghezi, 1980: 148-149).

Mildew flowers are flowers that never flourish: for them the time anomaly is definitive. "The language, and in this sense Heidegger and Hörlderlin are right, is its most dangerous good" (Heidegger quotes and comments Höderlin on the essay *Hölderlin and the essence of poetry* in Heidegger M., *Origin of the artwork*, 1982, p. 195).

The clock of every object from nature is the clock of his fundamental living: there is not only one time in the universe, but as many times as many items. This is the Arghezian anomaly. In the poem *At bowling*, time of poetic self lives with the fear of confrontation with objects time: "The clock kept silent stunned". The poetic procedure for obtaining the time anomaly is called by Hugo Friedrich "dislocated attribute " (Friedrich H. 1969: 216).

The Arghezian being knows no time, because his time is a time anomaly. Nietzsche illustrates the night of the time anomalies (we quote by the Italian edition of his works, "is part of the night in which the solitary will say: listen, now time has stopped. In all nightly vigils (...) it proves a strange sense of amazement (... ) a species too short or too long, in short, the impression of a time anomaly (...). From one to three of the night do not have the clock in brain (...) at that time of night where there is no time " (Nietzsche,1964, p. 254 and p. 256).

**4.2 Figure of a rainy country**

In *Spleen and ideal* by Baudelaire we meet the following lyrics: "I'm like a king of a rainy country / rich, but helpless, young and yet old."

The horologe, the clock shows the random time of day and of the nature fascinated by sunset. Time is consuming the life: the world has no needed reason to exist. Mildew flowers brings us with mind to the rain mechanisms at Bacovia's *Lake dwelling*. Isolation, anxiety and decay that is producing the rain are mechanisms, poetic tools, i.e. elements of a figure.

Every figure of the rain is a figure of the slow shock. At Arghezi rains throughout history, people are crowding, they are destroyed, they are killed and fall in love under the rain. The rain umbrella saves from extinction both rain and history. The darkness itself seems to rain, when the rain falls in the dark. Symbols irradiate figures: "It was dark. The rain was beating far, outside "(Arghezi T., 1980: 118).

Rain is an effect of darkness. In rain, the night density decreases. Is it right to say that the entire volume seems to be written in the rain and darkness, the two dense states of matter. The rain and darkness had limits: here it rains, outside, not; here it is darkness: beyond is day.

The rain and darkness function such as poetic housing, such as prisons. The Arghezian poetic spirit is locked in the rain and darkness.



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The living and writing time is the same time with the prison time: "In the cold and mud / Pass thieves in convoy, in twos, / By chains crawl at foot / Working sort of sweat marshes / Broth is ready. / It's evening. It's rain "(*Dinner*) (Arghezi, 1980, p. 121).

What is mythologized in *Mildew flowers* is the thief, the inmate. "Arghezi shows Nicolae Manolescu (Manolescu, 2008, p. 626), legitimates artistic, but also moral, the trivial periphery of the thieves, gypsies and convict. "The Arghezian inmate is a dandy, a figure of the lost time. He is fundamented Arghezian hypostasis, he is candid man (rather subject of a candor reveries), he is the man without memory, the subject of an oblivion reveries. He fights with the time in one way: forgetting. Any blame should satisfy him, forgetting short it. Sure, the thief is a hero who finds the paradise in the lost time. For he is true, that who loses wins. He can be free only if waste the time.

The vaults is for poetic spirit, the cell, the prison, the time which struggle through transition weight. The themes of this volume are burdened by a strange feeling: that of security in punishment. Arghezian punishment is a curable disease.

The prison is the "magic mountain" of *Mildew flowers*, and "the magic mountain" is the reverie that produces the closure constellation. Non-communication is an obsession that modulates the images in rainy country figure. The feeling of evanescence constitutes the security system of the Arghezian world. It creates the image of an absence without salvation. The gray and rainy world, here time stands raining and to destroy: "The rain beat in tent well / (...) Beat the citadel of sky and moon" ("Gypsy Camp": Arghezi's gypsy camp illustrates the rain itinerary).

### 4.3 Figure of calmness sorcery

The status of rainy country is the status of the world evanescence. Under the terror of looking, the world seems to cover of wizardry, everything loses its contour, the profile, limits and essence. The figure of calmness sorcery crowded the images of metamorphosis under the pressure of unfinished. Things with limits and full of mystery have uncertain status, undecided; incantation invalidate their uncertainty. Normal things are ripe, mature. "Raw tools" of sorcery give their innocence, candor, return them to the fundamental reverie, as in poetry *Lache*.

The Arghezian prison, because it can be rewritten, re-imagined, because it is an existential situation, it is not a hell. (A contrary view is Nicolae Balotă in chapter regarding *Mildew flowers* of his book Arghezi - Balotă N.: 215-247).

Calmness sorcery is, above all, *Unprofessional pussy* (analyzing isotopes of this poetry teacher Emilia Parpală express an interesting point of view and confirmatory, 1984). Calmness sorcerers are also *Rada*, and *Tinca*, and *John John*.

### 4.4 Figures of the prisons

Darkness looking destroys the communication. The tragedy of the modern world is manifest impossibility of experience transmitting. The Arghezian prison, effect of closing in the dark is the geometric locus of non-communication. Here everyone is a monad, each is closed itself. Death is the only way of communication: "In the cellar with the dead, John is beautiful, / Lying naked on stone, with a tender smile" ("Ion Ion") (Arghezi, 1980: 126).

The night monster kills without mercy; the walls close any communication gate. The Arghezian human time is the time in which it is not possible sedimentation and experience transmission, because sensations succeed without filling the hours and stop in the resonance moment. The communication channel has been amortized. The existential report gives the poetry *Two starvelings* in which a prisoner is lacerated by a dog in their fight for food, while the other inmates bet this victory. Arghezian humanity is inhuman. According to Michel Foucault, the prison serves as a "machine to turn individuals" (Foucault, 2005, p. 293). At



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Arghezi, the prison is not the place where people are locked to expiate a guilt, prison is a form of solitude and reflection. It is not a changing environment, but a meditation one. On the other hand, the place where inmates stay is not only a reflex of internal feelings. Every man makes his own prison. "The enclosure, shows Eugen Simion, has opposite effects: protects, but also reinforces the feeling of loneliness" (Simon, 1976, p. 78).

The Arghezian technique returns always the poems goal to the dark zone, to imprisonment and darkness, to the loneliness zone of the world. In poetry, humanity specialize; "human life" as a poetic figure, says Geoffrey Hartman in *Poetry Semantics* (1979), is a midpoint, indeterminate, situated between two poles which "threatens constantly to make to disappear" (Ricœur, 1969, p. 325).

Evanescence images interpose between what Paul Ricoeur called in the *Conflict of interpretations* the "desire to be and the effort to exist". The only human desire in the evanescence regime is the desire to be. To exist suppose a consciousness and an introspection that world evanescent destroy them.

At Arghezi does not exist internalization: love equates to destroy him. Creative spirit loves too much the objects create to not cancel. Just so he feels really creative. The Arghezian creation, under evanescence pressure, has a dual action to make history: to make it and to destroy it. A broken world is still a world.

**5. Conclusions**

In *Mildew flowers*, the creative spirit, the Arghezian being is in a difficult situation, in prison, in suffering in solitude. Suffering produces a reverie of innocence, of candor and solitude in which irradiate magnetic four symbols: of the nail, of the darkness, of the wall and of the dizziness. These symbols undetermine and modulate the functioning of the figures. These symbols would turn over a proactive reading, non-violent figures in vision. The loneliness reverie structures and articulate images under tense in four figures of evanescence, the slow disappearance: the figure of time anomaly, the figure of the calmness sorcery, the figure of the rainy country and the figure of closing. A critical signs that vision perceive figures: view time, witchcraft, rain and closure.

Evanescence has in this volume a statute of permanence, it is a hybrid sensation: of the disappearance and weight, of effort into extinction. The world in evanescence does not disappear, it lives its evanescence It mythologize the status of hybridization and inmate image, of the thief. At Arghezi the inmate is a myth, a dandy.

*"Mildew flowers"* has a recurrence and recovery effect of tradition and of experience of a world in dissolution: that of the prison. We have to imagine Arghezi clear and confirmatory, like any writer. He got on to convey an incommunicable experience and thus to impulse us to reflection.

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