

## **REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE IN DIMITRIE ANGHEL'S POETRY**

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**Abstract:** *In the two published volumes, Dimitrie Anghel is some kind restrained in presenting feminine images. Although having clear and acknowledged influences, the feminine images, formed since his childhood (the model was the suave image of his own mother), is rarely seen in his writings. Even in his prose, "Portraits", is predominant the male image that influenced his existence, but not as deep as his mother's which became a symbol of his expressivity. The feminine can be easily identified by the mythological female characters, the vestals or the chatelaine lady, but mostly through the floral diversity – at a semantic level, and at a linguistic level the feminine is detached from the originality of the Moldavian language specific to the beginning of the 20th century.*

**Keywords:** *symbol, feminine, flower, odour.*

In the social, historical and cultural context, the literature showed gender differences: female literature - written by women and feminist prejudices falling under, sometimes misogynist and male literature - written by men. However, in the current literary context these "types" of literature are validated according to the aesthetic criterion. This issue was not registered in the prewar period, and the only "intervention" of the female lies on the imaginary level of male writer.

This duality is not relevant in the literature and the subtext of this attitude is a false lens regarding the ethos of literature.

In the two volumes of published poems, Dimitrie Anghel is reserved in presenting the female images. Although with clear and obviously acknowledged influences, the image of femininity was formed since his childhood (the model was the suave being of his own mother) is rarely addressed in his writings. Even in the volume of prose, "Portraits", prevails the male ones which influenced his own existence, but not as strongly as the motherly one which became a symbol of his expressiveness.

Feminine is identifiable by the appearance of female mythological characters, the chatelaine or vestals, especially through floral diversity of sung gardens – on the semantic level and on a linguistically one, the feminine emerges from originality of specific Moldavian language of early twentieth century.

Such as literature written by women, the poetic of Dimitrie Anghel is unable to transgress the difference of gender, it has its own identity distinct notes, most likely come from a particular vision of the world.

The couple rarely comes to fruition and love as an actual human feeling departs by eroticism field, moving towards textualism in the light of the exclusive magic function of the word.

The feminine that provokes the imagination of the poet reaches the psychological side, causing him to express himself, textually, the perception, the state, the feeling or the

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euphoria. During time, linguists have shown superior referential capacity of the male over the female as an expression of thought generating of social behaviors and artistic productions. Thus, assigning grammatical gender is a reflection of a certain vision of the world, a projection of imaginary, where the feminine is seen as a generator founder principle, an axis mundi.

In the area of Christendom there is the natural valorization of the feminine with reference to the Virgin Mary or to the Greek-Roman mythology (Gaia / Terra) for which there is a constant interest. Ignored in the feudal age, the woman becomes remarkable in the literary world, the center of social and artistic life being in a constant competition with the masculine overwhelmed by its success with the establishment of Christian love.

The modernity of the Anghelian poetic brings a new approach to the feminine in the literature of the age. "The Flower Poet" idolizes her, the life-bearer surprised in different ways.

From ancient times, the woman was considered to be inferior to the man, which is perpetuated in the collective consciousness and it is found in the middle of the 20th century, by P. Constantinescu, in a study regarding the feminine from Camil Petrescu's work: "fancy animal is the woman, lower soul, temptation of senses and distress of balance" (P. Constantinescu, 1970: 250). But modernity intervenes remarkably in the text of Simone de Beauvoir, "The Second Sex", from 1949, which introduces the idea of approaching a woman as being different from a man, not inferior to him.

The sublimated desire directed to its transcendence could be designated by the words of Goethe: the eternal feminine ("eternal-feminine"), a psychological archetype.

Being thought to be based on particular essences, the woman is more connected than man to the soul of the world, to the first elemental, cosmic forces; it embodies human aspiration towards transcendence. The woman is the manifestation of the natural instinct with a great emotional potential and energy eminently capable of cultivating and enriching spiritually. With Christian and mythological reminiscences, the feminine symbolizes the light and caste energy, the ideal (the authentic and pure feminine), the kindness and the courage.

The philosophical concept attributed to the feminine by Carl Jung is *anima*, an aspect of unconscious, a personification of all psychological female trends of the soul of a man (*animus*) the vague feelings and moods, intuitive, prophetic (like the priestesses of the ancient Greece), unlimited capacity of loving, excessive irrational sensitivity, the relationship with the unconscious. Symbolically, anima could be the chimeric dream of love, of happiness that distracts you from reality. A negative aspect in relation to masculine / *animus* is the destructive tendency of making remarks of caustic, poisonous, cruel, that do nothing but devalue everything.

The lyrical imagery of symbolic figuration has a fluid boundary between life and death, between dream and reality. As distinct signs of the imaginary universe are: the presence of phantasms, fantasies, characters from the Romanian or Greek-Roman mythos; the changing of some court poetic masks being in some hypostasis sometimes confusing (real human being, mythological, representative of the vegetation) making it original and unrepeatable. Revelation through metamorphosis or under the guise of death aims to glorify life. Loneliness is the lyrical feeling that permeates most acute and lyrical texts which is a

way of opening the way to transcendent.

Dimitrie Anghel's imaginary pulses of reality and of its own biography in the first volume of the lyrics, however, by disposing the lyrical self-moving towards unreality, towards the fantasy which fills the imaginary space of the poems, especially in the second volume.

The poet's lyrical speech relies on suggestion, symbol, feeling; it is sometimes allegorical (as in "The oak and the mistletoe").

The Eros has a higher frequency correspondent in Thanatos, and its ambiguity involves adopting the euphemism. The euphemism of death is accomplished; the sleep is the gateway towards death, the edenic vegetation.

The poet has a symbolic vision, creates a reflective poetry that finds its true expression in the chant of cultivated sensations, nature being invested with sensuality under the mask of poetry of nature. Reflexivity deepens by looking for the sense that represents a path of the imagined haunted fantasies and the delusive need for purity.

The mirror of the poem is covered by exaltations and crashes, by mystical combustion that stifles time and spats it, by probation in the depth of the ego and of the poem, searching a new lyrical expression.

The own imaginary semantics is the motif of the mirror developed by Dimitrie Anghel in "Chrysanthemum". Here "the tired-looking mirrors", speechless, tremble "in tears", a refusal to acquire the much-desired silence. Near the mirror the flowers "pass" die "sorrowful" and the girl who made the "godly" exchanging is also "shaky and pale" and it is compared with the vestal, the old priestess. The mystic gradually penetrates, the mirror being catching and retaining undisclosed secrets, wasted dreams and experiences like the passing vegetation that induces the idea of death. The feeling of the sad resignation is accentuated by the personification of death "coming to call you" (G: 11) at the time of awareness: "it will be late to understand what it means" (G: 11). The crying of acceptance purifies the soul that is imminent associated with the beneficial rain that cleans ("as the face of the waters when it rains", G: 11) under the touched sunlight to provide heat and light in the fall - in the preamble extinction.

The mirror symbolic beyond reality is vast contextualizing the relationship between reality and unreality, of credible and imaginary through functions of objectivity, recognition, representation or symbolic registration in the preferred category. The symbolic expression summarizes since the middle Ages, moral upper realities of collective psychology discovering the spiritual realities.

The mirror is a magical gate between reality and illusion, or a replica of reality, a sign of the lyrical ego that wants to look at its true essence, a symbol of retrieval but also of death in the idea that beyond the life it begins to reflect of it which includes unknown dimensions. However, Dimitrie Anghel uses it as an attribute of self-knowledge, although it may reflect only an appearance, may contain an indication of truth and not the truth in its subsistence.

The mirror denominates the double ambiguity and manipulation, starting from the biblical myth of the falling of the first angel, Lucifer, mirroring the God in the simulacrum. It has magical, mystifying or creative powers, the mirror reflecting in a misleading reality, the subject reflected being only an apparent lack of reality or it could transform, go beyond

mimetic subject, to interpretations, revelations or phantasmagorias. By releasing, the mirror provides a change of substance (because the elements/ images are perceived inversely but symmetrically); move from identity to alterity thus stressing the mental imbalance “and the mirrors show themselves with infinite sorrow” (F: 53); the mirror of the water – in the fountain (“silence”, G 20), the moon like a mirror” (F: 38).

The symbolic vision from a religious perspective implies the concession of ambivalence: the reflection of God or the instrument of the devil.

Modern perception speaks of people as mirror carriers (of positive or negative universes) - in the view of Nicolas Schoffer; but Mircea Cărtărescu, in the “Dazzling”, sees the mirror as a hologram, and in each of the fragments it is the whole such as of the fractal theory; dual mirror perception evolves into tridimensional.

A mirror reflects and enhances the light combating the darkness and the game of mirroring involves temptations and danger.

The Reflective Perspective (“I Think of Thoughts”, G: 13) is anticipatory or premonitory and revealing truth that is hard to accept: “And that next year, perhaps, the forehead that so gentle you hold it/ You are not hold it on my arm anymore, and this thought kills me,/ And dearly is your sweet and soft bosom like the crumb of a loaf.” (G: 13). Even when love becomes weak, the fear of losing a loved one is mainstay.

The night catches color; in the apparent lack of light the color persists: “It is night, a violet night” (G: 17). Violet is a bright, intense color from the serious, grave state of uncertainty.

Named by the “sweet” epithet, the night is nevertheless “driven out of a seraglio, by an odalisque” (G: 17). Odalisque introduces here the exotic, oriental openness to that paradoxically which it is not a large area, but rather it sends limitation and obedience.

Light and darkness are also complementary but antagonistic too “of white mist clusters,/ (...) like scared birds/ Stretched have their white wings and lost in silent night” (G 21) making an oxymoron.

Always the extinction of flowers is associated with that of the day, coinciding with dusk, nightfall, night, and presupposes the reason for evoking: “Now there are only reasons for memories” (G: 19). Sometimes the death of flowers corresponds to the end of the love story; vegetal elements allegory, seldom dumb, as in “The one”. “The hidden pains” prevails roses with the whole meanings of human correspondent: “Two roses as two friends (...)// Like them, remember, stay together... But you should not remember:/ Closed eyes have dreams”, “And the new life begins from a purple of roses” (G 15). Hope and smile mask the pain “in her smile hides a non-interrupted agony” (G 16), crying is hidden “violet stripe”, one that betrays suffering.

Flower, garden, love, death, mirror, light, fragrance, vestal, chatelaine are feminine representations of the Anghelian's imaginary.

In the poems of D. Anghel the fragrance engulfs the feeling overflowing the power “after the rain”, “Beyond darkness of the sweet night and full of mysteries” (G 11) enhances gradually to peak “naive wrath of flowers”, a fight rule of flavor volatilized into the night over all the space that “smell love and death.// smell death and the love (...)// covering again the garden with its darkening mysteries” (G: 12). “Sweet fragrance” will also have original attributes: “It does not smell of flower or spell, but it is only longing”, (F: 54)

despite the attempt to escape synonymously here with forgetfulness.

Memorable and dominant is the fragrance with its generating power of reverie or evocation: “- The triumphant, the basil has dominated alone” (G: 11) giving a mystical, religious note: “As a miraculous church smells the serenity conquered for a moment” (G: enveloping the atmosphere of fantasy: “the wind smells too” (G: 13).

The wind is the bearer of “smelly messengers” (G: 25), until death also acquires the smell: “A sad smell of roses that die on branches, forgotten” (G: 25). Hamlet reacts at the fragrance too, to understanding and accepting the calling.

Often the smell is insinuated by the mere appearance of plants/ flowers: pearl/ lily of the valley, bay/ laurel, basil. It is present in the happy moments, but also in the last moments of the Narcissus: “Like a dead soul of looseness,/ A gentle fragrance in the air gently sneaked/ (...) floating far away” (F: 34), persisting beyond life, in memory.

The light alternates with the darkness, usually under the seal of the olfactory sensual: “Inside me, when it is dark and when it is light is again” (G: 13); even the wind is perfumed. The lyrical ego is subject to correspondence, and sleeps “under the guise of a fern” leads to fantasy with a “grieving thought” driven by the sunlight. The symbolism of the exit from darkness is found in the initiation rituals, as in the vegetal drama in which the seed comes out of the earth as a plant. Genesis means enlightenment, ordering chaos, knowledge, truth, and hope; light is a symbol of life, a means of discovery and decipherment of the mystery, faith.

The coexistence of opposites makes one of the terms to be observed by overcoming the other, recognizing perpetual oscillation between the two regimes of imaginary, mystical concepts, two aspects of the same universal principle.

In Christianity, the primordial light identifies itself to the logos which order primordial chaos, a knowledge without intercession. Both its manifestation in cosmic order and in the interior lighting, the light follows the darkness. The return to the original is accomplished by the abolition of the duality and the reconstitution of the primary unity according to the Taoist principle.

The sunlight is the expression of the heavenly power, of fear and of human hope; light in general can appear both as a male epiphany and a female one. In the Christian tradition, the dove that embodies the Holy Spirit is considered an expression of light, and the light is revealed mythology and like Venus – a female principle.

In all the traditions of the ancient and mythological peoples, a divine nature was attributed to the divinity, the light representing also the transfigured knowledge to be acquired.

Appearing in different shapes and shades knows also the representing by “sun rainbows” (G 14), a bridge between the man and the divinity by which a link is eternal, the rainbow is called metaphorically “the smile of God behind tears of heaven”. The rainbow is an expressive sign of divine language, and in Romanian folk culture is a heavenly dragon that draws from rivers, seas or wells and is able to change the state of things in the universe. In the “The burbling of the fountain” the rainbow is the delight of the children, and its wretchedness is plagued by the poet “like a child” that holds “the Arian thread”, alone wandering and listening to “voices coming from beyond death” (G: 15). The inner solitude is transposed into elements of nature - the “ruin of the rainbow lights” in antithesis with “an

eternal song like the murmur of the well” (G: 15).

The solitude is also dominant in “Sunday” sad poem of self-awareness - the poet who is content with the status of a “Sunday-Holy / (...) sad and desolate” (F: 52) in which he regrets “the little step of the beautiful” (F: 53) that is not coming. The mirror is the one that reflects the long gone days when he did not know how to enjoy the presence of the “one who was still standing to find a bridegroom” (F: 53).

The loneliness is also acknowledged and accepted with “supreme irony” in the absence of light when the one who, as if anticipated, reveals its disappointment: “In the black shadow, the piano stands with the teeth pulled outside/ It rages like a monster who wants to tear me” (F: 53).

The adored and glorious feminine is, in most cases, inaccessible. Flowers alone are omnipresent and comforting; and it alleviates sadness and causing fantasies “and girls throughout the world are not to get dressed with the most beautiful dresses” (G: 7), each being endowed with the chosen attributes: “The lily anoint on the forehead, leaving it the king mantle” (G: 7), “The chicory was given the serenity of the human eye” (G: 7), the shyness, the mourning and the “restless” were given to the roses.

Flowers are considered the joy of life that goes beyond this: “If it had not been at least a flower, what would we have planted on graves?” (G: 8); they are a “miracle”, proof of sincere love: “And what I would give you today to remember me!” (G: 8, “Flowers”). The blossoming marjoram is “the harsh ashes of the story” (G: 8).

All the flowers, regardless of the status offered, have a discreet existence and such an extinction: “they pass in secret” (G: 8). The marjoram conceals “both perfume and poetry”, but “they die in secret how they lived their whole life...” (G: 9); “A forgotten sunflower blossoms and fades away/ The ornament of the rays is gone, slowly” (G: 9). The disappearance of flowers leads to contemplation “- How hard should be the sleeping from the dust of heap” (G 10).

The plant concentrates hope, the vital breath that can fight the darkness “and it is enough in a garden / a flower to cheer a single soul that dreams” (G: 9), “when the mournful sun sets”, what “sent the last kiss by thoughts” (G: 10).

The atmosphere is filled with sound element “proceeds a song from branch to branch and a soft whisper from offspring to offspring” (G 13) from the gentle sound to the pronounced strong musical instruments “fanfares sounding loudly, shaking off the plane-trees” (G: 17), and “A distant drum sounds like after the battle” (G: 17).

The musicality is reproduced by the sound that knows the whole range of intensity: from full silence to the “murmur of the thunder” (G: 23) or the well (G: 14,15), to the song “frozen by the north wind” (G:23), soft and strong, of the creatures or instrumental of the lira, a “voice of water” (G23), the wind or of the loud fanfare “uproar of trumpets” (F: 37) theorbos, “the sirens sound” (F:44)

The nature howls contributing to the musicality” sweet uproar/ “branches are shaking “,” slightly as the water rustle “(G: 18) or the beating of the wings.

Quietness is enticing, and the garden is projected under the image of a hermitage “where life died of melancholy” (G: 18). The only disturbing thing could be “the voice of the cricket” (G: 19), but neither this one does not disturb “so much harmony in the uninterrupted, holy peace” (G: 19), and the wind is “silent” and turns the garden into a

“sweet poem” (G: 19). Here the sound is imagined only by the appearance of some elements that can produce sounds: cricket, wind, lyre, harp, “charmed” word. There is silence: “Today I cherish the silence of death” (G: 19), the hypothetical death being overcome by the existence of roses that “drizzle diaphanous petals” (G: 19).

The poet is subject of dream tyranny using the dialectic dream-daydream in the building of imaginary worlds. Saving from the ruined dreams (“collapsed”), and the close connection with the “story time of passing time” (G: 14) under the “ruin of rainbows” is performed only by the “thread of Ariens” (G 15), the binder of both worlds marked by the passing of the time in contrast to the stability conferred by the “murmur of the fountain” considered “eternal” (G: 15). The Fountain water is “the living water”, the symbol of eternity, through the perpetual generation of life. The mythological female character with the help of whom it is realized the error on “alleys in vain” (G: 15) shows him the way as in the legend of Theseus who manages to get out of the labyrinth of the Minotaur.

Another feminine representation is the mistress that appears in texts such as “Fantasy” (beloved) and “Hymn” (words) or “Mistress” in the “Enchanted Cup”.

The theme of remembrance evolves into the evocation of walks through the Luxembourg Garden when “One word lead to another, and a thought called for a remembrance” (G: 17), poetry begins with a rhetorical interrogation: “Do you remember (...)/ (...) how dearly was with me?” (G: 16), her beloved being already a reminder: “And if I still find out some news about you from strangers” (G: 17).

Quietness is established with the insertion, and, personified, “sings”, making an unusual oxymoron.

The idea of a sound is reproduced by echo or notes (the “the hours”, F: 32) with the clear intention of potency of the feeling nurtured for chosen one: “You are lovely for me” (F 32). Sometimes, the chosen one is only suggested: “an adored hand” (F: 33), “an unseen hand” (F: 36).

The sea also represents the feminine principle with its temperamental manifestation. Life-giving water “trumpets its anger”, “it is playing writhing pearls” (F: 37).

The sea symbol always assumed motion, a dynamic that is essentially life, it was linked to the mystery of the deep water, to the unseen world and fabulous imaginations, fear of the unknown. Water is the universal symbol of fecundity, of horizontal thinking; contains the primordial seed with all the signs of further development, but also all the resorption threats. In the same time it is equally deadly, it is both creative and destructive; death combats with water rebirth, the primordial element of regeneration and purity.

At any level, love produces excitement, confidence, courage, euphoria of invincibility “unwilling to believe that in nature/ anything can stand against you, when a kiss is so sweet” (G: 23), but registers gets grave and grim with the perception of imminent death: “For death passes everywhere, and death is everlasting silent” (G: 23).

In “My Companions” Ofelia is recalled for unmistakable gesture that was “thrown” “the treasure of picked flowers in the sad field of madness...” (G 27) to the satisfaction of Hera, “virgin tender”, which tends to immortality and where “empires die and fall golden wreath”. The eternity is represented the “only by the wreath of laurel leaves” (G: 27) by raising the level of sensorial olfactory human.

In the “Mother’s curse”, the poem that concludes the first volume of poetry, the

feminine is best represented in allegorical level. The symbol of the mother, the procreatrix, life-giving, is enhanced by the symbolism of the flower and the bird that bears it (like a pigeon in the Christian faith). *Mater dolorosa* (the mother suffering) calls with any means at its disposal, estranged child.

The words, generally, accede relieving. They are called “the only mistresses” or “diamonds”, “jewel”, under their weight and value, “through the mouth and harp of Orpheus” (F: 30), there is the expression of feeling, “love and hatred”).

In the second volume, “Fantasies”, the female presence is better outlined: “a blond girl with a diaphane face”, “a too beautiful and proud chatelaine” (F: 35) placed in a context that makes it inapproachable and inaccessible. It is sometimes seen as an icon, venerated without, however, accessing it. Love is also imagined, joining the beloved one being projected into the imaginary: “we loved a moment under the imaginary branch” (F: 36).

“The nocturnal” presents the beloved, for the first time, ashamed: “The beautiful (...) gathers her beautiful shirt in the plaits/ and hides her body under her lace foam: (F: 38). In Dimitrie Anghel’s poetry, love is not physically consumed, but it is projected at the mental level, often hypothetical.

In the “The dream of sepia” the female representation assumes Semiramida and it is realized under the sign of reverie as in “Reverie”, where the desire of to be “of the last life messengers” (F: 42) falls under the sky “red as the fire” (F: 42) proving only to be an unrequited dream: “I kissed piously this little hand.../ What has a house moldered on a fiord edge” (F: 42).

A reinterpretation of the myth of Pygmalion is foreseen in the remains of the statue brought by the waves to the poet (“The gift of waves”, F: 43), “the beautiful hand”, “her finely hand carved it with love”. A design of steady love through the used material (“the marble is so clear and clean”), the sincerity and the innocence, the purity of the desired feeling to remain as the material from which it was made: “dreaming that maybe once/ this is what it remains after the death”(F: 43). It is also here and other female representations embodiment such as the ghost, the queen or the star.

Other times, the female presence is perceived objectively in its domestic life through the specific objects that the poet encounters and which are generating memories: a glove, “your fan and your little mirror” - “the best friend of a woman”, “the two roses,/

Which slowly died in the water from glasses/ Increasing my sorrow with two memories” (F 46) - causing suffering: “He is so mope and pitiful”(F: 47).

The poet is subjected to love and, implicitly, to his beloved, the adored one, calling her “Mistress”, as if she had been stripped of a “metempsychosis” and “disappeared” then “with my pink May rose, with the latest and the most beautiful rose” (F: 49). He is capable of sacrifices and great things, acquires unpredictable powers to be close to her: “Let me rush on you/ on this deck full of colors” (F: 51) - the rainbow that breaks before the dream is fulfilled, which causing anguish: “Fools are dreamers, God!”(F: 51).

Having too much love, metamorphosis is possible: “I came back in another form, to beautify the earth too” (F: 51), reincarnation in vegetal form, the return to life, the triumph of life.

The predominant masculine representation is the poet (either by himself or metamorphosed in lily, oleander or Narcissus) and refers to the feminine, sometimes

embodied in the cold impassible statue, in this context, an ample introspection leads to the rhetorical question: “But should he have the ray of divine fire?” (F: 46). Re-anchoring in the immediate reality is not achieved by the principle of Dionysus, but the daily life which had been interrupted by this thought when contemplating the fountain whose water seemed to tend toward transcendent continue undisturbed, “as rhythmical as the pace of Alexandrine stanza” (F: 46) - at the same rhythm of poetic dreams.

Subtlety of female presence and its effects causes a beatitude slightly disturbed, but the desire that the feeling persists despite the loneliness is so great that it determines the poet to resign: “If only I feel you as a perfume” (F: 58), “Step slowly... say nothing” (F: 59) or “Blaming echoes would answer to you” (F: 59) – the greatness of the feeling transcends time.

In the Anghelian’s feminine paradigm enrolls various representations of significance for the inner structure of the poet and his poetry, but the focus is represented by the mother, a sacred image of his poetic existence.

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