# *THE NEGATIVE DYNAMISM OF THE IMAGINARY IN BOGZA'S REVOLT/REBELION*

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***Abstract:*** *Geo Bogza a representative poet of the Romanian avant-garde contributed to the reneval of the Romanian poetry by lyrics full of complex meanings and symbols. The meanings and symbols. The contemporary poet makes his mark like a rebel against the traditional ideas since the firt phase of the rebellions creation. In the ostentaton and moralizing period the poet of creative exasperation proves to be a craftsman in the overlap of legendary and historical vital plan.*

***Keywords***: *effects, imagery concept, words, exasperation, dream*

Bogza's work can be studied only from avant-garde experience. With a large opening to the world and considering human existence in the universe as an extraordinary state given by man's ability to think, Geo Bogza prevails in literature through determined civic attitude and meditative background of his poetry.

Geo Bogza's poetry offers inexhaustible interpretative suggestions by nonconformity and triviality of lyrics, by meditations on life and death, by originality and authenticity of style. By the "model" meaning given to the word, Geo Bogza is among modern poets, contemporary with the great figures of the twentieth century.

Nicholas Steindhardt identified a series of significant effects of Bogza Geo's poetry: the solemnity of lyrics (the constant effects of cutting the phrase, metaphors and outrageous imagery, proclamatory rhetoric effects, effects of blatant rebellion, effects of enhanced report, fantastic effects including real effects, effects of modern exuberance, effects of cosmopolitanism and geographical references, surreal effects, banal and commonplace effects, contrast effects, apocalypse effects, diverse effects, shocking effects, apostrophizing effects, effects of alternation between Solemn – Common - Daily, the contrast between serious and petty etc.

Doru Scarlatescu finds a special relation between Bogza Geo's subjectivity and "reality" and "literature". Bogza turned the poem against "literature" during the menacing period by appealing to "that pervasive force of the nude fact, without sentimentality and stylistic adornment", unlike the literary pages written in adulthood exposing obsessions and nightmares. The poems of the youth, which described a nude, hallucinatory reality, determined Dumitru Micu to name them true "copies of nature".

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In the first stage of creation, Geo Bogza wrote in exasperation, wrote because he felt he had a duty to the world in which he lived. At first, "I wrote in exasperation - Geo Bogza confessed- and today I am writing for completely other reasons, larger than any other that have

Geo Bogza's poetic universe hosts the concept of imagery that captures the relationship between the poet and the word. The poet, by means of a few symbols such

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as "the ship", "the sea", "the stars", "the sky", "the maiden", "the oil world", "the earth ", "the love", “the street”, “the city”, lyrically relates both to himself and the world around.

The volumes that followed – Offensive Poem - (1933, Publishing House „Unu”) - keep the same menacing spirit. Adept of the dramatic language, the young avant-garde poet "has approached new themes, unsuspected in Romanian literature till then, he wrote a scandal literature, adopting instruments of rupture to make his adhesions and loves more precious.(Martin, M :*România Literară,* no. 42/1986: 4)

His poems were generated by tensions, sometimes unbearable, full of youthful nihilism. Bogza spoke about love, about death and despair in his own style.

The incisive poetry was his concern throughout the period of writing the poems from “ Sex Diary” and “Offensive Poem”. Written in the first person, "Sex Diary" is designed in a sharp and convulsive way. The central idea of “Offensive Poem” revealed “the confidence in their own generation, questioned the existence of a necessary life and the devotion of our ancestors, the conscience of unimaginable forms, and the understanding of echoes with anticipated retrospective repercussions over the contemporary soul, the gratitude shown to the words, the option for the miracle of blather and for the pencil as sharp as a sword." (Petrov, A "The key to Bogza" in *România Literară*, no. 45/1986:5)

In poems of this period, the poet blended many elements of avant-garde manifestos, the confrontation with the false morality, challenging views and the broad vision of the cosmos. Many of his symbols "considered to be obscene, the images and the lyrical stories were part of the hymn dedicated to humanity and life."( Ignatovich, “Skeptical S. Optimism” in *România Literară,* no. 45/1986:5)

he originality and the novelty of his poetry were in accordance with the influences of the European context, the expressionist and surrealist elements revealed his passionate attitude towards his love for life, his euphoria, rebellion and need to say shocking things by their names, to sing happiness and to directly express his outrage.

His lyrical universe derived from a harsh obscene and trivial language, and “from turning poetry into epic and endowing non-literary texts.” (Zamfir,M"Geo Bogza – Steps of Lyricism" in *România Literară,* no. 16/1984:12)

Bogza reconstructs this world in his own style by producing phantasmagoric, biblical and iconoclastic effects. Geo Bogza’s imagery ensures deep correlation between giant and small, between allegory and hostile destiny, between world and spirit and their complementary valences.

oung Bogza’s poetry distinguishes three levels of honesty: violent honesty present in *Poemul Invectivă (Offensive Poem), Poem Petrolifer ( Oil Poem)* and in *Cântec de revoltă, de dragoste şi de moarte (Song of Revolt, Love and Death),* melancholic sincerity in *Ioana Maria,* and meditative candour in poems of the third stage. Before it had any poetic value, the poet’s revolt is a manifesto defying the expression of social and aesthetic controversy. Nicolae Steinhardt sees Geo Bogza as a "poet of the effects of elation, grandiose, solemnity, exuberance and pathos" and he identifies two phases in his lyrical creation: one of solemn rebellion and another which he called it the albatross phase, corresponding to the period in which blatant rebellion was replaced by moral elements in parabolic or allegorical texts.

We cannot say exactly where one stage ends because many constituents of a stage are found in the other. The lyrics overlap some elements leading to the formation of surreal and expressionist effects, or related to scandalous imagery as well as effects of aesthetic and social revolt.

Strong surreal effects are present in *Song of Revolt, Love and Death* where the pale maiden is compared to "a flower of vitriol of neurasthenia".



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“Pale maiden with your smile as an autopsy / like a flower of vitriol of neurasthenia / pale maiden kin to autopsies and flowers” (*Song of Revolt, Love and Death*).

His entire work is interspersed with elements generating effects of apocalypse, of antithesis between ordinary and solemn, between serious and petty.

The poems in *Sex Diary* suggest a violent grotesque vision in a dominated society: “I found thick mud everywhere / even in pious monasteries decayed / where icons smelled rancid”. (*Downhill*)

The carnal infernal depicted in *Offensive Poem* is completed by the terrestrial infernal in *Oil Poem.* His lyrical creations in the volume *Offensive Poem* show degrading and humiliating aspects: incest, terrible love, wild instincts. The poem is a manifesto of great metaliterary value.

The poet expressed "existential" dismay in a comprehensive picture of the cosmos with his greatness and disaster. When he was an adolescent he was struggling with the laws of the universe. Exasperation expressed by the poet was a general dismay of the whole generation dominated by anxiety, anguish, despair and constant alert. The "biological destiny" of the universe tormented the poet because the splendors of the world no longer obeyed the internal laws, but were subject to cosmic forces directed by man. Privileges of the new society were: death, madness, suicide, neurasthenia and insomnia. The whole poem is considered a picture of the universe, drawing around key ideas, which bind and complete themselves.

The main character is the “pale maiden”, symbol of the privileges which oppose the common condition in the universe. The young maiden appears in three phases. The first aspect is the beautiful young woman who impresses with tenderness and virginity:

"Pale maiden with nostalgic legs, / with legs like a dazzling fireworks game" (*Song of Revolt, Love and Death - III*).

The second aspect is the autumn equinox, a time when the dry land of summer sun is waiting for ripe grains of wheat and when the "vegetable cycle ends on a new virgin land, bestowed to receive the seed" (Chevalier, J; Gherbrant, A., 1994, 34-38):

"And the elegiac triangle of cranes, the unique moment / of autumn equinox" (*Song of Revolt, Love and Death - VII*).

The third aspect is when the maiden reveals other than bodily virginity, a virginity unknown that brings the end of the world:

"Pale maiden kin to the great disasters / of love / I sing your frown virginity as an unknown star / like a comet that brings the end of the world”.

The maiden is the most encountered being in the poems. It appears both in terrestrial microcosm with her nostalgic legs and teenage love, but also in the universal macrocosm as an unknown star, as a comet that brings the end of the world. *Song of Revolt, Love and Death* is established as a kind of ode organized around the pale maiden. The cosmic core is womb, ocean, nebulous and even a red bloody star that can adhere to a future generation every night. Space is populated as in visions of expressionist nightmares, of images of apocalypse, where signs of the end appear.

Plants are distilling the poison of the earth, the trees are coffins. The new vision is applied to the erotic feeling that reaches extreme meanings:

"I seek your breasts that hurt me in my dream till suicide / knees like a legendary country, a country in flames." (*Song of Revolt, Love and Death - IX*).

Changing the theme registry, Geo Bogza discovered the destroying fire that was hiding within his soul and in the oil tanks, in the tanks of crude oil. This raises the poet’s interest for the world of oilmen. There is a complementarity between people and



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oil, defined by the unifying fire. The land of Buştenari with people, with wells, with oil, was exploited lyrically in modern language and realist spirit. *Oil Poem* is a glorification of the violence and ugliness of this land. The world of oil is especially highlighted by the events in the poems: *The mysterious murder from Buştenari*, *Sick oil landscape,* and in the volume *Nicolae Ilie ( Epitaph, The Mistresses, Terror ).*

*Oil Poem* depicts the environment full of well lights and the reality of explosions that burst in the wells from Buştenari. In this vast poem dedicated to oil, the poet moves from exasperation to praise, from revolt to adoration.

A particularly fertile aspect is the psychological configuration of the poet that highlights, on the one hand the parallelism between man and landscape, and on the other the parallelism between landscape and man.

In all the poems dedicated to oil everything is hot: hills, wells, and people. The earth “gasps”, "flicks", "sweats", "tosses", "moans" and sheds its black suppuration. "Oil such as the stone, fire, earth or water, is one of the primary substances that exalts the writer’s fantasy ".(Balotă, N:112)The poet makes a brief testimony about Bustenari village, which at first was "a village of thieves, a nest of robbers", about "the world and other people, their sufferings and ideals", about his crimes, about the drillers burned in flames, but also about oil, a seething dirty mass." The whole poem is a poetic confession of the self. The poetic self is strengthened by the use of the first person personal pronoun "I":

"I, this one, shall speak to you about oil and his crimes / I, who is sordid and violent "( *Oil Poem*).

Drills are like lovers who drill out the bowels of the earth: "Drills, my girlfriends so hungry / they pierce the heart of the earth and suck his entrails ruthlessly."( *Oil Poem*)

The poet’s soul, black and full of indignation, is likened to a hole from where black and flammable oil springs up. The poetic ideas emerge from the self. The subjective side of the soul, inseparable from the self, is the feeling, which is a generator of poetry. There are identified “intense emotional states”. “The self is tormented by a creative conflict which ends depending on the relation between the self and the world.”(Rusu,L.1969:89).

The oil landscape is in a permanent tumult both at the surface of the earth and in its core where everything “groans, rattles and roars”. Both the black oil that gushes out of it as festering from a wound and “loud hysterical laughter, with satanic gurgle” produce a continuous general frenzy. In contrast with this euphoric state there is the infernal world caused by the evil and wicked oil that once it bursts from the core of the earth “unleashes its crimes, abomination and wickedness.” The hills blackened by oil produced strong madness defined as “an indistinct mixture of panic and ecstasy”.(Pelin, M:1970) The poet illustrates a desolating landscape in his poems, with dirty people, with crimes, with thousand of widows, with thousand of infamies, “with drillers burnt alive, with murderers, with brothers in infamy”. The spirit of oil life is hidden “in oil tanks, in the dark soul of all those people, a spirit that sometimes flares up at a glance, in a fire. There seems to be an identical destiny between people and drills. Sometimes they burn together and then the oil life is something epic.” (Vitner, I.1953:26)

“The external fire, an infernal fire, corresponds to the ardent inner fire, a fire like a sacrifice, which means complete knowledge, illumination.”(Chevalier,J, Gherbrant, A:1994:65) Meanwhile, the fire is exploited in its negative aspects: “it darkens and chokes because of its smoke, it burns, consumes, destroys […] the fire that smolders and burns everything is opposed to the bright flames and symbolizes the



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subconsciousness, the chaos, the fire in hell, briefly all forms of psychological regression." (ibidem)

Dark views arise from the four poems dedicated to the driller Nicolae Ilie. The macabre spectacle takes place around the fire causing burns. The punitive fire, as if from hell, brought tragedy, disfigured the drillers. Life takes the form of an apocalypse.

Metaphorically speaking, the fire generates purifying sufferings. Through these sacrifices, the earth full of evil is purified. People are "tested" in order to reach salvation. The boy killed by "a flame of fire" has "black hands like burning coal" and eyes without eyelids. The poet uses the phrase "flame of fire", which in biblical apocalypse means "sons of God".

The earth inferno is an extension of the underworld, an inferno painted in gruesome sequences, "justified by the faith in atonement of sins in anguish that causes horror."(Bârsilă, M:2006:63) The earth boils on two levels: one of the oil that gushes out and the other of the prostitutes. "The devil of oil plunders people and nature equally". (Regman, C.:1966:212).

Bogza blends his life experience with meditations on life and rebellion, concerning himself exclusively with reality, veracity. He aims at presenting some aspects of human life, mostly humble, "in a language lacking in the commonly admitted elements of poetry." (*ibidem*).

Geo Bogza, the poet called by Mircea Martin "an arsonist of consciousness, a visionary of language and literary conventions"(Martin, M :*România Literară*, no. 42/1986: 4) remained "deep down his soul a man who appreciated continuity far more than rupture, and negation was just a phase of integration"(ibidem)

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