Archetypal Situations of the Human Being facing Divinity in *The Psalms* of Tudor Arghezi and Ştefan Augustin Doinaş

Cristina-Elena PURCARU

Tout le monde se rapporte à la divinité en utilisant les mêmes modeles. L'idée d'oscillation estre „la foi et le déni", chez Tudor Arghezi, quelquefois de communion avec le Christ chez Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, représente le model ou l'archetype que chaque personne doit parcourir. Les Psaumes illustrent un rapport direct entre l'homme et la divinité, en percevoir Dieu dans les situations les plus surprenantes, en fonction de l'état poétique intérieure. En ce qui concerne la relation spirituelle avec Dieu, Tudor Arghezi et Ştefan Augustin Doinaş vivent une varieté d'états d'âme et d'attitudes idéatiques qui signifient „l'hypostases des psalmistes", donnant une breve definition des principaux événements pendant leur tentative de se faire entendus de la divinité. Ayant soif de l'absolu, Arghezi cherche Dieu comme une preuve, une certitude de la perfection. Il est rempli de doutes, de l'impatience, il Le cherche, il a de l'espoir, puis de doutes, il se sent vaincu. Doinaş sent une soif perpétuelle de divinité, de perfection, de miracle, comme le fruit défendu, ayant le désir de satisfaire la nécessité de divinité; il a des rêves avec Jésus et il se reveille soudain, il jouit de la communion avec le Christ.
Ces états internes sont vécus de chaque personne qui a le désir d'accéder à l'absolu, il y a des situations archétypales de l'homme devant la divinité.

Mots-clés : archetype, Psaumes, Tudor Arghezi, Ştefan Augustin Doinaş

Introduction

We all use the same patterns when we refer or relate to divinity. „Archetype" is a term used since ancient times and it is synonym with Plato's understanding of the term „Idea". Jung developed this concept into the notion of „psychological archetype", a powerful psychological mark which pre-exists in the human psyche, repeating itself endlessly, generation after generation, and dictating the way we function and perceive ourselves and this world. Jung considers that archetypes are not formed during a lifetime, but inherited as pre-existing shapes, consisting of „primordial images", „archaic residues", being mankind's native cultural heritage, of universal nature, bestowed upon each of us.

Tudor Arghezi's idea of oscillating between „faith and denial", or Ştefan Augustin Doinaş's thinking of a sacred bond with Christ, these are patterns or archetypes every man turns to and follows[1].

[1] C. G. Jung, *In the World of Archetypes*, translation from German, preface, commentaries and notes by Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu, „Jurnalul literar" Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994.

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The Hypostases of Divinity

The *Psalms* illustrate man's direct reference to divinity, as man perceives God in the most surprising situations, based on his inner poetic state.

Arghezi tries to get closer to God through denial, asking, sometimes imperatively, sometimes humbly, for palpable proofs regarding His existence[2]. The *Psalms* are conceived using a pathetic and derogatory language, with hope and despondency, interpreted by literary critics as the artist's haughtiness of rummaging with his mind in this fascinating universal mystery, and of convincing himself through solid evidence of the abstract existence of a supreme force[3]. For Doinaş, the poetry of the *Psalms* are created as a fictive dialogue, and sometimes a lyrical and confessional soliloquy based on a poetical parallelism between the two antithetical terms „man" and „God" that are always balanced. The result of this search for a balanced existence, is actually in favour of the deity who is asked to save the vulnerable man, exposed to all sorts of temptations. In the first psalm „How shall I greet you, Lord, with what entreaty?" fictitiously travelling in time, to an immemorial past, Doinaş evokes the image of the vegetal divinity from the mysterious dawns of mankind, when people prayed to a tree: „You were once a tree: now you are a stump of a tree", and he acknowledges that he does not know how to greet the god. He admits the fact that his destiny as a mortal man, is to resurrect the Creator, waiting for Him to bestow young trees on the stump of tree. The poet realizes that, even if he has risen from dust and ashes, the god of scorch knows no limits: „You wonder that you bring me to life from dust, soot and ashes" *(Psalm III)*, so instead of a ruthless and devouring divinity he would rather have a protective and close one.

In the *Psalms,* Arghezi illustrates just as well man's direct reference to divinity, perceiving God in the most surprising aspects, based on his inner poetic state. The literary critic Eugen Simion identifies in Arghezi's *Psalms* four meanings of deity: a religious one - meaning that God is almighty and encompasses every single aspect of life; a gnoseological one - the deity represents the absolute truth and the supreme ideal for the human being; an ethical one - the divinity watches over the „goodwill, and the will for beauty and truth" of man; an aesthetic one - God is the purifying dream of man: „You are my dream, of all, the beautiful one"[4]. In Arghezi's *Psalms*, God is generous and merciful, „the creator of a blessed world", a hypostasis also found in the lyrics: „God, my spring and my chants!/ My hope and my toil!"[5].

We also find in Arghezi's writings the presence of a somehow enraged God, but different from the Biblical one, that gets angry at the iniquities of men, „a Balkan

[2]Alexandru Andriescu, *The Psalms in the Romanian Literature*, The Publishing House of „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iaşi, 2004, p. 188.

[3] Mina Maria Rusu, *A Poetics of the Sacred (space, time and being at Arghezi, Blaga, Barbu),* Agata Publishing House, Botoşani, 2001, p. 83.

[4] Eugen Simion, *Contemporary Writers,* vol. I, Cartea românească, Bucharest, 1978.

[5] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1980, p. 42.

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overseer who commands and swears"[6]. The Pantocrator is a violent master, forever sullen. „It's the image of the prince, of the landowner in front of whom the serf-man trembles"[7]: „Your sacred mouth, which all Parents know,/ Has never opened but to curse us" *(Psalm)*. However, in another *Psalm*, this enraged God who quickly curses man is summoned in this way: „God, my spring and my chants". Again, we face the yearning for the Sacred as an absolute beginning, as the last source. It is the pathetic crying of the forsaken man, of the one that understands his mortal condition. During the „dreary years" when nothing but the divine cursing could be heard, paradisiac „chants" ring out. Thus, the sentence seems to be abolished, and reconciliation exquisite.

The same enraged God, but this time, in His hypostasis from the Old Testament, appears in Doinaş's writings as well, speaking in a thundering and striking voice („the lightning-strikes endeavor to be your eyes, and the thunder-strikes your tongue" – *Psalm XXVI*) or as a jealous and vindictive God: „I know You are jealous, terribly jealous/ on everything I have, and I gather and hold in my hands/ when I'm not holding You in my hands" *(Psalm II)*. This envious God always hinders man and He wants to remain unknown: „I feel you slipping away through my fingers/ …/ I always catch you putting obstacles in my way/ Behind me running". The poet asks God how he can grasp at Him in his abstruse way of being, without uttering a single word: „How can I grab hold of you, I ask, uttering now word at all?" *(Psalm XXVIII)*, just to conclude in the end, as a result of the deity's silence: „Or perhaps You, living amongst the living,/ don't know what You really are, either" *(Psalm XXVIII)*. As the poet defines divinity which is nothing of what it appears in flesh, he helplessly ascertains that he is forever doomed to inquiry: „God has accursed me to keep asking" *(Psalm XXXII)*.

The God that is hiding („Deus absconditus") is an idea retrieved at both psalmists. Arghezi considers that God is intentionally hiding from man, locked with locks and bars so the man cannot reach Him: „I try for a long lifetime to sit with You at counsel for an hour/ And you have hidden from me as soon as I showed myself/ Wherever I feel the threshold with whispered, sad prayers/ I find only hooks with locks and bars[8]". Given this depiction of divinity, the critic Nicolae Balotă states: „Deus being absconditus, the failure of His knowledge is not man's fault. The sacred is misunderstood, impossible to seize. All of His approximations are illusory. The religion offers only chimeras"[9]. This aspect is identified in the lyrics: „Because he couldn't understand You/ Their vanity of dream and clay,/ The saints have left word that they have seen You/ And that you were wearing a staff and a long beard". God cannot be expressed in human

[6] Nicolae Balotă, *The Work of Tudor Arghezi,* Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979, p. 173.
[7] *Ibidem.*
[8] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 33.
[9] Nicolae Balotă, *The Work of Tudor Arghezi*, p. 177.

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knowledge terms. His „knowledge" is pseudo-knowledge; it does not bring closer, but acknowledges farther away.

God cannot be known by the man, because he is created limited in feeling and intelligence. Being unknown, God is described by Doinaş only as alpha and omega.

In Arghezi' s acception, God is only a thought, a memory, a conception, the poet doubts His existence. Regarding the definition of divinity, Doinaş pays special attention to it: „But You - what are You: a fire? a cloud? a spirit?/ You're maybe the rumor of another sky/ or the terrible silence that hides/ in the high mountains" (*Psalm XXIV*). The poet senses the divinity as an uncreated and mysterious energy from another world inaccessible to us, that maybe it will be discovered by us when we deify: „Only when we chuckle serenely/ we will become God, like You,/ we - poor minds with natural boundaries/ we will finally know what You really are" (*Psalm XXIV*).

From faith to denial, from resignation to audacity, Arghezi crosses a long way of doubt, of seeking God, of whose existence he asks for tangible evidence: „Alone, now, in Your great story,/ I remain with You to keep measuring myself,/ Without wanting to be victorious,/ I want to feel You and to scream: «He exists!»[10]". Like Tudor Arghezi, Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, in his search, does not receive any answer, because the divinity was distant: „You, whom You have been, now You are not/ the nearest of all" (*Psalm LXIX*). God appears kaleidoscopically, under thousands of masks, always changing and unseen: „You, forever unseen await/ behind a thousand masks"[11] (*Psalm LXX*).

The Hypostasis of the Psalmists

In the spiritual relation with God, Tudor Arghezi and Doinaş undergo a wide range of moods and conceptual attitudes, that could mean „the psalmists' hypostases", briefly defining the main events of the psalmists in their attempt to be heard by divinity.

Arghezi feels he is a „protégé of God", gifted with poetic talent, while Doinaş considers that the divinity wants him to be a „convict in stripes", this is the reason why he reproaches God: „But You want me a convict: always in stripes/ marked by inherited sins/ exhausted, and guilty without any guilt"[12] (*Psalm IV*). Taking into account all these reproaches, in another psalm, Doinaş understands that true freedom is, paradoxically, in the circle of convicts: „But today I know that in our circle of convicts/ stays the shape of true freedom"[13] (*Psalm XXXIX*). Therefore, he asks God to let him have this punishment: „And I neither long for anything/ nor grief, nor afraid of anything: and I would not/ give my punishment in exchange for

[10] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 39.

[11] Alexandru Pintescu, *The Psalms of Doinaş or from Devoutness to Escathology*, in „The Family", March 2001, no. 3, p. 90.

[12] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 31.

[13] Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, *Psalms*, Albatros Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p 34.

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the world"[14] (*Psalm XXXIX*). Though Arghezi feels protected by the Divinity, he is still disappointed by the surrounding world that is shallow, petty, dominated by material interests. Therefore, the poet wants to die in obscurity: „I want to perish in darkness and in mold/ Unaffected by glory, terrible and disgusted"[15].

Moreover, Arghezi wants that his only spiritual support in his existence is God, for Him, he feels a burning love and his soul is in flames due to his passion for God: „My praying is not my praying,/ And maybe my man is not human./ I burn for you slowly, like a brand,/ I search for you silently, I picture You in my mind, I think about You"[16].

The poet feels he is tormented, confuse and alone. „His solitude is agony, there is a death and life fight, at the borderline of being, where there is no escape[17]". „I am so alone, God and oblique!/ A lonely tree forgotten in the field,/ Having sour fruit and leafage,/ Spiny and rough in my vivid grimness"[18]. The metaphor of the damned fruitless tree, hoping to receive the signs of blessings contains the complex of banishing human beings from heaven: of losing the communion of humans with God, of loneliness. Another consequence of the ancestral sin is illustrated by Doinaş's psalms: „Oh! Your Face and Your resemblance, -how they dribbled from my cheek"[19] (*Psalm IX)*.

The tragic condition of man banished from heaven, condamned to eternal suffering and tears is given by the fact that he cannot enjoy the goods of nature. In this respect, God tells him: „You will not drink from My Valley/ except for the situation in which you make the waves sweeter with tears"[20] (*Psalm X*). As followers of Adam who lost immortality, Arghezi and Doinaş vividly live the tragical condition of the man who is permanently under the sign of blame, judgement and punishment. Therefore, Arghezi is spiritually disappointed by the Divinity, while Doinaş fights for saving himself and balances the divine abyss with the abyss in his own soul, the endless dream: „You are abyss, God. But I am not afraid:/ the abyss of my soul calls me. You are abyss, God. I wonder, can the abyss/ fill my dream with Your infinity?"[21] (*Psalm XXI*).

In the psalms of Arghezi, the poet feels he is abandoned and he accuses God of having made the existence of human beings not only of life and death, but also of pain and love. Arghezi rises in revolt and accuses God of inconsistence, of alienation from man, he does not show Himself as he used to in ancient times, this is why man alienates from God: „Since The Holy Bible was written,/ You did not stepped inside our home./ And years die and centuries perish/ here under you, under the sky./ At that time, the angels took care/ Of the baby, the man and the

[14] *Ibidem.*
[15] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 14.
[16] *Ibidem.*
[17] Nicolae Balotă, *op. cit.*, p.163.
[18] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 23.
[19] Ştefan Aug. Doinaş, *Psalms*, p. 13.
[20] *Ibidem*, p. 14.
[21] *Ibidem*, p. 26.

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woman./ But God the eternal and the good,/ Has not sent me, since I started praying, anyone"[22].

From Arghezi's point of view, the man alienates from God, while Doinaş declares himself the support of the abandoned God: „Even if the basis/ of Your power is with the wind like millet/…/ you can count on me, the Abandoned one"[23] (*Psalm X*).

In the psalms of both poets, a deep thirst of absolute can be remarked. Doinaş feels a permanant hunger of divinity, perfection, miracle, just as the forbidden apple, he wants to make a feast and to pall with divinity; he dreams himself with God night after night and when he suddenly wakes up, he enjoys communion with Christ.

Being thirsty for absolute, Arghezi searches for God like a proof, a certainty of perfection. He is full of doubts, of restlessness, he searches for Him, he hopes, he doubts, he feels defeated: „An entire life hopelessly running like Prince Charming,/ Riding, I have crossed woods and the country up and down./ But reaching for peaks surrounded by coombs,/ I came to conquer heights, but I realized it was not possible"[24].

Conclusions

Regarding the rapport of God with man, according to the two psalmists, the following essential attitudes can be synthesized: concern, praise, irony, rebellion, plaint, hope of faith. These internal moods of the psalmists remain without answer both for them and for the reader of any age. What can be done in such situations? Do we wait for them to be solved by time and then we reconnect with God? Do we ask for help from people? Or do we try to fight against temptation and discouragement on our own? We can consider these options, but what is the result? If we wait for time to solve them, our heart can harden without even realizing it. If we expect too much from people, we can be deceived by their lack of understanding and especially by their incapacity of helping us. If we try to fight on our own, we often find ourselves overwhelmed by such a strong competitor.

Therefore, we consider that the saving solution would be the continuation of the relation with God, the only support, as Arghezi sees things, no matter the nature of soul crisis. These interior moods are lived by every human being having the desire to reach for the absolute, these are archetypal situations of humans in front of divinity.

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[22] *Ibidem.*

[23] *Ibidem*, 14.

[24] Tudor Arghezi, *Lyrics*, p. 174.

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