# ARGHEZI'S PSALMS AT THE INTERFERENCE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST

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*Abstract: The vision of this article's author on the psalm is that Tudor Arghezi's psalms are read, in this case, differently than other scholars would normally read. The Romanian poet could manifest himself in both a contemplative and pragmatic manner on the very basis of an organic synthesis between the cultural-stylistic influences of the East and those of the West. Freely sitting on his own writing, the creator of the right words experiments with something absolutely new: ostensionating/ ostensiologizing of his own lyrical discourse (a shown structure). (I.P. – B.).*

*Keywords: the Psalms, the language, modern poetry, essential imaginary, the double meaning*

I read other psalms written by Arghezi **[1]**. I read those psalms that, if Francis Fukuyama **[2]** had read, would have associated our poet's name with that of…Nietzsche **[3]**.Why would that be the case? That is so, because our writer also permitted the complete liberation of man from previous moral constraints. The supreme shape of human creativity was not art for Nietzsche, but the creation of new values, reevaluating them, starting with those of Christianity. Tudor Arghezi wrote in his book *The Psalm Writer*: *Who told me man is high and great/ Because he knows for certain among other beings that he would die.* In a psalm he declared he knew his more special calling: *I bear the sign within/ That I hold the great cure for death.*

Nikolai Berdiaev also stated that: *Christianity has remained an unfinished revelation of the true meaning and calling of man* **[4]**. In its ultimate, secret essence, his creation is holly. The poet is among those who can aspire at a higher spiritual life. In another psalm, Tudor Arghezi declared he had discovered the hard and poisoness taste for thought, that he understood the meaning of the words of the language which oscillates between concept and image. Mikel Dufrenne had also launched the idea that, by using the word, the poet discovers *a flesh, material characteristic, a rich taste that poetry gives us for tasting,* in speech **[5]**. Tudor Arghezi expresses this trans-linguistic/ trans-rhetoric aspect in a much inspired way in this poem: *Where are your fingers/ To look for the thorns in my wreath? / Your hip laid down in grass, / which plants hold/ And listen to the sigh in your bosom/ Of love conquered, while you die?*

Modern poetry always doubles the theme of death with that of love. Arghezi's poetry is courageous; it has a ***secret centre***, which one can easily spot by following its sounds and visual perspective; which perspective is that? One should soon find that out, having browsed through T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* **[6]**, which moves the world to the unreal, irradiating it with mysteries, which, as long as the world were a real one, would never radiate from it. Just like Eliot, Arghezi uses an original style, with great, deep roots from which artistic emotion bursts



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out; this operates in: images, human events, historical tragedies, miracles or cruel acts, useless atrocities: *I went to see the Lord beaten on the cross/ Alone in the open field with crows and the sky's myrrh/ Looking at the sun as, full of blood, he died,/ With which he felt the same, originating from one root* (psalm). Arghezi's expressionism belongs to that of a suffering ego, of an incomplete ego, which accuses mankind of the most hideous crime of its existence. One has to deal with a ruined Christianity and Arghezi's ego is torn apart to its essence. It is that of a homo duplex who must *satisfy its satanic side in order to experience the holly side* – would Hugo Friedrich say – **[7]**. The dilemma of such a poetic modernity is that it feels tormented by the escape from reality, without believing in a content-determined transcendence and made up as meaning and not being able to create it: *Since the Holly Scripture was written/ You never stepped foot in here/ And years go by and centuries disappear/ Underneath you, underneath the sky* (psalm).

There is an essential imaginary, which truly comes from deep within. Tudor Arghezi demonstrated in the Romanian poetry, that, through a different kind of psalm, one could simultaneously exist in two plains, that of reality and the imaginary, in a world both real and fabulous. By taking the shine of his deities, of God Himself, of Jesus Christ, Arghezi contributed to crystallizing new myths because, - Lucian Boia says **[8]**, the imaginary cannot be destroyed, can only be dislocated and recomposed in other shapes. I quote from other poems: *On horse back, riding the wind, like Prince-Charming,/ I browsed the country, up and down,/ But once getting to the peaks and crossed gulches,/ Conquering the height was not in reach*. Contradicting the myth of Prince-Charming and that of Icarus, the poet invents another myth – that of the unraveling of the God, following in Heidegger's footsteps: the German situated the essence of the truth within the internal fitting perimeter, thus unraveling to us as freedom. *This is the fact that – the let-to-be-being* – Martin Heidegger insists **[9]** – *is let lose from its hiding place.* Because – Martin Heidegger continues – *Freedom as a fact and an escape from the hiding of the being, has matched* (s.m., I.P.B.) *from the beginning, on an emotional side every association to its being as a whole.* Here is Arghezi: *I've been trying my whole life to chat to you for an hour/ And you were hiding from me as soon as I showed myself.* This inclination to feeling belongs to the East; the West is characterized by the factual nature of his actions. The feelings the European goes through in relation to destiny are genuine. The Indic man, who lives in the world, has a more deep relation to destiny. Tudor Arghezi's poetry is the result of a formidable tension between his European soul on the one side and Indic on the other; of an attempt to neutralize the two ontologically opposed ways: of pursuing the horizon and retreating from it: *Knowing you from only my feeling, / From confessions and secrets,/ I found myself thinking about you/ And felt better at heart./ My burdens seemed lighter,/ Like after a blessing,/ Thirsty and hungry for you,/ I rose to my grave singing.* Yes. The song is the ideal solution of such a duality. Because – Blaga thinks – the Romanian folk music *moves with an amazing safety down the lines of those intermediary tones…And what discretion in the melancholic modulations of this music of ours, in resemblance to the desperate excesses of Asia Minor's music, which in some respects, reassembles our own music.*

As the fundaments of Arghezi's poetry rise from the Romanian folk literary tradition, one may say that Tudor Arghezi as a psalm writer is an organic synthesis between the cultural stylistic influences of the East and West. As a matter of fact, the Chinese art resembles the art of the French impressionism, through its love of hue. *The spatial horizon of Chinese art* – Lucian Blaga considers**[10]** – *is that which is successively built from places, which almost always ask for the viewers to watch; the spatial horizon of impressionism is that of the infinite perspective.* I have included this fragment from Lucian Blaga studies in my work because the Chinese feeling of destiny is more neutral.

Arghezi managed such a performance as to both contemplate and be factual, inviting us to treat his work as literature, as a fictional trans-rhetoric structure, whose elements and order



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are determined by different trans-textual requirements. Tudor Arghezi also experienced the onto theological tradition, which had newly been infiltrated in science, literature and politics, but freed himself from it in due time: *Caught between imagination and the wave of ghostly apparitions/ I am afraid to find answers, and I lay hidden/ From the round, sparkling eye/ But the soul prays on the bare rock:/* ***Help me, Father; escape my doubt*** (the Psalm writer). The poet wants something else. Richard Rorti says he is *a moral identity and private autonomy* **[11]**. Therefore, The Romanian wants to understand God, from its hermeneutic labyrinth of signs. Rorti would say that Arghezi's ego invents itself, thinking of inhumane thoughts, in the sense that, a poet like him, had to have thoughts that no human being had had before him, to write special books, different from any written before, by using a different vocabulary from that of his own kind: To read the poetry *Do you believe the fairytale* **[12]**, another of Arghezi's masterpieces and try to interpret it as I have tried to do with his poems. Tudor Arghezi is a paradox writer, with a lyric discourse in which the transpersonal ego **[13]** cancels the arbitrary of any cultural shape through an absolute immanence (meaning one that includes its transcendence) and the hyperemic ego calls for the binding of the metaphysic and biologic, the expression of an ego which carries within signs from beyond itself, but cannot go over the boundaries of his own body (this is the essence of the expressionist poetics).
The situation of Arghezi psalms corresponds to the double meaning of the truth of the being, conditioned on the one side by the limits of its own human condition, and the other side by its own onthic and/or axiological transcendence **[14]**.

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