GEO BOGZA, A POET OF REVOLT

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Abstract: *The 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.*

Keywords: *Geo Bogza, trivial language, Offensive Poem.*

Geo Bogza, the poet called by Mircea Martin "an arsonist of consciousness, a visionary of language and literary conventions" (Martin, *România Literară:* 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*: 4).

The debut with the volume of poems – Sex Diary (1929, Integral Collection) - is a menacing one, Geo Bogza preferring rough truths among which "the bourgeois morality, the bourgeois hypocrisy, but not the basic profound morality".(Ibidem: 4) Geo Bogza's rebellion involved sincerity lived up to exasperation, and a total fusion between the writing and the act of living.

Because of the trivial language he used in the poems in "Sex Diary", on November 28th, 1932, he was put on trial for indecent behaviour. The trial, in which the young poet was assoiled, was judged in an evacuated room lest the language of the poems should have a negative impact on readers.

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." (*Ibidem*: 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, *România Literară*, 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, *România Literară*, 45/1986:.5)

The originality and the novelty of his poetry were in accordance with the influences of the European context, the expressionist and surrealist elements revealed

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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, *România Literară*, no. 16/1984:12)

In the lyrics of that period, we can find the poet's obsessions, the sexual ones, the woman being just a piece of meat that gives pleasure (Sex Diary, Offensive Poem), obsessions with oil, which was the "divine essence" generating death and life (Oil Poem), as well as the cosmic obsession with death and war.

The grandiloquent nature of these components is supported by "the repetitive style of the verbs, the phonemes, the phrases and by the structures that provide a musical background producing a reliable oratorical effect." (Steinhardt 1982: 11)

Whereas the volume of poems "Sex Diary" was meant to be "a monograph of the pure erotic instinct, "Offensive Poem" was conceived as a chronic of the ravages of sexuality, of the primary uncontrollable instinct, which ignores the rules and conventions, and affronts the obedient society revealing its obscene nakedness. " (Paul Cernat: 2010: 36).

His youth poems, grouped into the following volumes "Sex Diary" (1929), "Offensive Poem"1933), "Ioana Maria" (1937), "Song of Rebellion, Love and Death" (1945), celebrated life, and a taste for violence, conflicts and moments lived at maximum intensity. In the poems of the second stage of life grouped into volume "Orion" (1978), moral elements, justice, compassion and sometimes irony prevailed.

The whole poem "Ioana Maria" (1937) is a conversation, a dialogue with the beloved woman, an alleged girlfriend, likened to a ship. The destiny of two lovers floats drifting like a boat in the ocean scope. Ioana Maria is an ode, a hymn of erotic excitement.

In "Song of Rebellion, Love and Death" (1945), the central character, the pale virgin was related to disasters, suicide, love, sadness, nothingness : "pale virgin relative of all the disasters of love". The virgin is now reflected both in the terrestrial microcosm, with nostalgic legs, with teenage love, and also in the universal macrocosm as an unknown star, as a comet which brings the end of the world. During nights of exasperation, thousands of thoughts terrified the poet, turning the beloved woman into the most disturbing figure in the universe: "pale virgin relative to dreams, to dismay / to violent disappointment / to nostalgia, to revolt, to suicide" (Song of Rebellion , Love and Death III).

In the cycle of poems dedicated to the oil fields ("Oil Poem", "Nicolae Ilie", "Sick Oil Landscape ", "Mysterious Murder in Bustenari Village"), Geo Bogza is concerned with the relationship between man and oil. The poems dedicated to oil arose from the terrible experience he had in 1928, when he held up the body of a young driller who had the misfortune to fall prey to fire. "The night of horror that I had lived trying to save the young man who was squirming in the grass, with two rings of fire around his ankles, brought me to writing poems, also in the avant-garde tone, but different from those hitherto ". (Bogza, *România Literară*, 25/1978: 7).

"Oil Poem" was written on a tragic and painful background. While deep down the earth, oil was boiling , at the surface, earth was boiling of murders, thefts, abomination: "I do not love oil when it becomes pure essence in a tube / But I love it as it springs out of the earth, dirty." (Oil Poem).

The volume "Orion" (1978),which is representative of the third stage of creation, is full of moral and political significance. Reaching adulthood, "the former

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avant-garde poet displayed a solemn ceremonial lyricism, with a dim glance at the sky, watching the constellations shine, after he had looked at the earth or its underground from which darted dirty, but fertile oil fields ".(Cernat: Bucharest: 36)

The poem "Walt Whitman" (1955) can be considered an autobiographical poem, a story, a confession of the young poet. In this poem, Bogza finds himself and describes himself in proclamatory words and sometimes declamatory. His impressive and grandiose style is given by simple words of high rank meaning. Influenced by Walt Whitman, Bogza's poetry deals with issues such as: the birth of life on earth, the appearance of humanity, the strong connection with nature and matter, freedom of peoples, transforming the entire universe, man versus his modern issues.

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".

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.

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 ever woken my consciousness. I write because now more than ever, I think I have something to say. I write to try to correct errors. " (*Ibidem*: 7)

In the second phase of creation, the ostentatious stage, Bogza's poetry identified itself with the landscape of burning probes, revealing the perfect harmonization of burning oil eruption with the infernal of life.

Joan Holban's observation about the similarity between Bogza's poetry and oil extraction activity is entirely relevant: the "terrible beauty of a probe in eruption, the object that penetrates the rock to reveal its hidden sap was the extent of the other beauty of the penetration poetry that drilled "the usual" to reveal the alive, the incandescent " (Holban *România Literară*:3/1989 (XXII):5)

Earth that is burning, trees rustling, the cracking flames, the industrial world are the essence of the poetic message. The drillers, the burning landscape, the boiling landscape provides a permanent state of crisis on the "structural center of the world"

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(*Ibidem*: 5) The aspects generated by fire relate the oil landscape to pre-Christian and biblical hells.

Taking exasperation and revolt as a starting point in his first two stages of lyrical creation, Geo Bogza creates his own terrestrial hell, through a harsh aggressive language. During the maturity stage, the poet moved to a new experience, that of examining human performance with the instruments of justice.

As a revolt against literary clichés, Bogza's poetry has evolved into a vigilante lyricism. In poems of the third stage of creation, he has a special appeal to the parable and allegoric allusions.

Geo Bogza's contribution to the renewal of the lyrical discourse, regarding both direct poetry and allegorical and parabolic poetry was an essential one. The originality of the lyrical universe and his vocation of a "founder" are correlative aspects of the Geo Bogza's poetic work.

Bogza's vehemence regarding a non-literature poetic discourse, based on sincerity and on the conviction that literature means "life" was substituted, in many reports, with a tendency to turn reality to literature, in a lyrical manner.

Under all "facets", Bogza's work is both related to the revolting reality and to imagination, to tormenting adventures of soul, to unleashed passions and mythological solemnity. Between two fires, "the world outside" and "the inside world" ("the table on which we write is a bramble"), the poet does not ignore the great (basic) truths of existence. He also does not allow to compromise idyllically the essential themes of literature.

In Geo Bogza's poetry, we meet three levels of sincerity: a violent and immediate sincerity in Sex Diary, Offensive Poem, Oil Poem, Song of Rebellion, Love and Death; a melancholic sincerity in Ioana Maria, and a meditative sincerity in the poems of the third stage. Before it gets any poetic value, the poet's revolt is a manifesto, being the expression of a polemical response to social and aesthetic contempt.

Geo Bogza "did not deny the tradition of Romanian literature, he denied only its idyllic side, he always praised Eminescu and all the other major Romanian literary figures. He did not approach any grammatical theory, not even for a second, he did not violate the language to obtain stylistic effects, he did not cultivate novelty itself, or other models. (Martin, România Literară.42/1986:18)

Bogza's work distinguishes itself through modeling effects that endow the words, by updating romantic revolutionary impulses, yet remaining within modernism in full synchronization with the literary movements of the middle of the twentieth century.

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