THE REVOLT. A STUDY IN TEXTUAL SEMIOTICS

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Abstract

The essay "The Revolt. A Study of Textual Semiotics" sets the theoretical framework of a social semiotics based on decoding the social-cultural persuasive signs. The samples (the texts) that we aim to analyze, which represent different types of discourse (literary – biblical, poetical) set forward a semiotics of passions, from love to ardor, obsession, revolt and hate.

The revolt is one of man's essential dimensions. It is our historical reality, in which we have to discover our values and acknowledge them. In the process of decoding the poetical messages of the studied texts, seen as reference discursive sequences, we have taken into account the mental reality of the text (the cultural variable) and the event reality of social practices manifested through the lyrical identities in which a reader may find or recognize himself. We have considered love based on principles (agape) as reference in the semio-stylistic analysis of the revolt, taking into account texts containing simulacra developed in a biblical space-time frame (David's psalms), and in a lay one (Arghezi's psalms), with interferences of sacred and profane. We thus bring into discussion passionate simulacra as existential models, either dedicated to faith, or ambiguously manifested between faith and doubt.

Our goal is the configuration of a Romanian identity discourse.

Keywords: textual semiotics; textual meaning; inferential pragmatism; discourse (the discourse of revolt); subversive strategies; biblical psalm; Arghezi's psalms.

1. The revolt. Meaning and significance: diagnosis and profile

Defiance and recklessness are the key elements of the revolt: if the former provokes it, by the evidence of the opposites, the latter highlights doubt, so that it fails to negotiate vales and/or to check, (in)validate virtues. As a sum of attitudes, claims and conquests, the revolt confirms ego as historical man and age, by the shaping of the human ego and of the ego of a collectivity. The absurd and nihilism represent the ideology of the revolt. The revolted acutely feels frustrations climaxing with the feeling of the absurd, between sin and virtue and chance or fancy. The absolute nihilism legitimizes logical (legitimate) crime: one of the finalities of the revolt is suicide.

The revolt[2] knows two completely different aspects: one would consist in renunciation, lack, silence, "ciudata asceză a revoltei" ("the bizarre ascesis of the revolt") (Camus), and the other refers to doubt, recklessness. A variant of the absurd and of nihilism, "methodical" doubt leads to death, mutilation, extreme states: crime or suicide (spiritual, physical).[3] The purpose of the revolt would be destruction or justifying universal crime, the principle of a reasonable guilt.

The psychology of the revolt entails the refusal to obey, the protest, the rebellion. Shutting oneself and the introspection shape the rebel's attitude and behavior. It is the

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[2] **DEX** Revolta: sentiment de **mânie** provocat de o nedreptate sau de o acțiune nedemnă; indignare; răzvrătire; rebeliune (Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language. Revolt: feeling of **anger** caused by an injustice or a derogatory action; indignation, uprising, rebellion)

[3] Albert Camus, *Fața si reversul. Nunta. Mitul lui Sisif. Omul revoltat. Vara*, translation by Irina Mavrodin, Mihaela Simion, Modest Morariu, RAO, Bucuresti, 2000, p. 225.

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conduit of the person who makes an evaluation of his possibilities and skills, by accepting those testimonials that validate his own vices, in order to construct a self-image.

The rebel is "a man that says no." The refusal is not equal to giving up; it is the imposition of a frontier, of certain limits that function with the notice of a personal sense of justice. The rebel confirms the authority in the field of justice: "there are things that are worth fighting for…", "this is the only way things must evolve..." Therefore, through limit or frontier, the rebel supports and defends what he considers to be human value, everything related to himself as a free man. The rebel does not favor oppression: he is a defender of his own justice, most of times, dreaming about it. In a way, the rebel is an idealist. The rebel's refusal does not mean giving up. In his state of total and immediate adhesion to a part of himself, the rebel rejects the other in a possible equation that implies communication, solidarity, because the other is labeled as intruder. A virtue the rebel can take pride in is the perseverance with which he defends his value judgments. In transforming the evidence, the rebel ranges from cry to silence towards an outbreak associated with a climax of despair, when he judges and wants everything in general, and nothing in particular.

We note that "nu orice valoare antrenează o revoltă, dar orice mişcare de revoltă invocă tacit o valoare" ("not any value entails a revolt, but any revolt quietly invokes a value")[4]. A revolt confirms that there is something inside the human being which he may identify with. The revolt offers him the revelation of the novelty he hides in himself and for which he demands the respect of others. In fact, the human being is in conflict with them. This is the reason it is worth persevering and trying to impose views that would place him above the understanding of common things. For that part of himself that represents him and with which he identifies is the "supreme" good he wants recognized, unequivocally, in himself. Except that he must work on his patience and his energy is close to the limit. He hopes he will make it, once he eliminates compromise: once he "signed" for revolt, he wants all or nothing. By gambling everything, he protects nothing.

If the rebel reached the limit of the limits he himself had set, losing his freedom of action, the rebel would accept defeat, with dignity, possibly even the last defeat: spiritual or physical death.

In its essence, the revolt is not a selfish movement; it can have selfish reasons, once the rebel claims respect for himself in relation to the community he identifies himself with. The revolt appears in the oppressed or upon seeing the spectacle of the other being oppressed; a victim the rebel identifies himself with. By reaching others, human solidarity is metaphysical. There are, hence, identifications of destinies and preconceived judgments.

In addition to a positive sense, namely that it entails the transition from *de facto* to *de jure*, from the desired to the desirable, referring to something that goes beyond the individual, once he wants all or nothing, the revolt requires more than a claim. Resentment, wrote Albert Camus, represents "autointoxicarea, secreţia nefastă, într-un

[4] Albert Camus, *cited work,* p. 224

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vas închis, a unei neputințe prelungite. (...) Invidia colorează intens resentimentul" ("self-intoxication, the harmful secretion, in a closed vessel, of an extended impotence. (…) Envy intensely colors resentment")[5]. The resenter is a wronged individual, one that has always been denied; therefore, he doesn't feel understood by the community. He is alone facing the others. The resenter may degenerate into a pusher, a parvenu because he wants to be different from what he is, even if he doesn't have a fixed profile. If the rebel fights for the integrity of part of his being, trying to impose value, the resenter revels in the pain he inflicts to others by his words full of grudge.

Apparently negative, the revolt is legitimate: it reveals what should be defended in man, even if the reasons for a revolt may change throughout time. The revolt is the action taken by someone who is informed, aware of his rights. In fact, it comes down to man's self-conscience over his adventure. In the world of the sacred, the revolt is replaced by myth. "Înainte ca omul să intre în sacru, wrote Camus, şi pentru a intra definitiv, sau din etapa în care iese, şi pentru a ieşi definitiv, el este interogaţie şi revoltă" ("Before man entered the sacred, wrote Camus, in order to both enter it for good, and leave it for good, he is interrogation and revolt")[6]. The *whys* will always mark the presence of revolt. The rebel perseveres in reclaiming a human order where all the answers are human, that is, reasonable. You can only live in revolt by pursuing it all the way.

We conclude with the fact that the revolt is one of man's essential dimensions. It is our historical reality, in which we have to discover our values and to acknowledge them. This is the goal of the revolt: the content of these values is the revolt itself, whose justification lies in human solidarity, in complicity. "Mă revolt, deci existăm!" ("I revolt, therefore we exist!") (Albert Camus).

2. Textual semiotics of the revolt

We view the literary discourse as a socio-cultural product, preserver of mentalities/historical period, throughout whose readings, by penetrating the thematic roles given to the author's voices/or to characters, the reader comes to terms with his own experience, vision, perspective, linking the information with his own inferences: ambitions, passions, preoccupations, joys or sorrows; in other words, an (arbitrary) system of axiological reference will be seen in the reader's reading grid.

We have used in our interpretation an "*inferential pragmatism*" (Rober B. Brandom), a type of textual semiotics. By using this semiotics, knowledge is seen as inference. According to Andrei Marga, the philosopher Robert Brandom "duce mai departe <<cotitura lingvistică a filosofiei>> mutând, la rândul său, valorile de cunoaştere din sfera trăirilor individuale în spaţiul comunităţii comunicării mijlocite de limbă (...) Opţiunea primordială este cea a interpretării semnificaţiei şi adevărului ca rezultate ale proceselor de raţionare (inferenţă). În abordarea raţionărilor se fac trei deplasări îmbogăţitoare de perspectivă: sub aspectul *filosofiei spiritului* (...), sub aspectul *semanticii* şi

[5] Albert Camus, *cited work*, p. 227.
[6] *Idem*, p. 230.

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sub aspectul *pragmaticii*(...)" ("takes further "the linguistic turn of philosophy", moving the knowledge values from the sphere of individual existence in the space of community and of communication intermediate by language (...) The primordial option is that of interpreting the meaning and the truth as results of the reasoning processes (inference). The reasoning approach means three steps enriching the perspective: in terms of *spiritual philosophy* (...), in terms of *semantics* and in terms of *pragmatics* (...)")[7].

While decoding the poetical messages of the texts seen as reference discursive sequences, we have taken into account the mental reality of the text (the cultural variable) and the event reality of social practices manifested by lyrical identities the reader may find and/or recognize himself. This semiotics of events, and actions was combined with "semiotica pasiunilor" („the semiotics of passions") [8] (see Greimas, Fontanille), based on experiences. We have considered love based on principles - agape[9] - as reference in the semio-stylistic analysis of the revolt, taking into account texts containing simulacra developed in a biblical space-time frame (David's psalms), and in a lay one (Arghezi's psalms), with interferences of sacred and profane. We thus bring into discussion passionate simulacra as existential modes, either dedicated to faith, or ambiguously manifested between faith and doubt. The passionate subject, in our case, the psalmist is involved in tensive relations in order to fulfill his dream: divine protection.

2.1. The semio-stylistic of David's psalm. Dictionaries of literary theory define psalm in synonymous paradigms as a species of religious poetry that may enter both the category of the hymn (religious hymn), and that of the ode. The *Old Testament* has 151 biblical psalms, 150 of them are canonical, and the last is not. *Psalm* (Greek *psalmos*) refers to any of the sacred songs of the Jewish people that make up one the canonical books of the Old Testament (Psalms of David[10], that bring "teologia în starea ei de grație muzicală" – "theology in its state of musical grace"[11]). David the shepherd was known for his talent of playing the harp. The musical instrument was called *psalterion*. "Este harpa a cărei cutie de rezonanţă îşi are puterea sus, către vârf, de unde coboară cele zece coarde. Ea simbolizează cele zece porunci ale Decalogului, dar şi cele cinci simţuri ale trupului îmbinate cu cele cinci ale duhului, prin care trebuie să-L lăudăm pe Domnul (Cassiodor) şi împletea muzica cu rostirea poetică. Dumnezeu îl unge pe David ca rege şi calif (succesor, cârmuitor) îi dă ştiinţă şi înţelepciune, capacitatea de a fi judecător... îi dăruieşte o psaltire şi pune munţii şi păsările să-l preamărească" ("It is the harp whose resonance box has its power up, towards the top, where the ten chords start downwards. It symbolizes the ten commandments of the Decalogue, but also the five senses of the body combined with the five senses of the spirit, through which we must praise the Lord (Cassiodor) and it combined music and poetical expression. God anoints David as king

[7] Andrei Marga, *Introducere în filosofia contemporană,* Polirom, Iasi. 2002.
[8] A.J.Greimas, J. Fontanille, *Semiotica pasiunilor,* 1977, Scripta.
[9] Revolt may also be connected, as subject, to *philia, storge* or *eros*. Our research is dedicated only to *agape*.
[10] The psalms of David play an important role in religious ceremonies, both Jewish and Christian: the sacred ode.
[11] The Jews were the most poetical gifted people. In the Old Testament, a third of the texts are poetical. The titles or subtitles of some literary versions, some of them very valuable, such as *Psaltirea în versuri* or *Psaltirea versificată* are improper, because the psalms were written from the very start in verses.

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and caliph (successor, ruler), He gives him knowledge and wisdom, the ability to be a judge... He gives him as gift a psalter and makes the mountains and the birds exalt David" [12]): "(...) întru slava mea cânta-voi şi-Ţi voi aduce laudă./ Deşteptaţi-vă,voi, psaltire şi alăută!" ("*I will sing* and *give praise. Awake* up*, my glory*; *awake,* lute and *harp")* (Psalm 107).

For the Christians, the psalms are the songs that make up the Psalter or the Book of Psalms. The psalm means prayer. Until the Renaissance, the psalms were translated in several languages (including in verses). The first Romanian translation in verses was made by the Metropolitan Dosoftei (1673), based on the psalter of the Polish poet Jan Kochanowski (1577). Dosoftei laid the foundation of versification in our literature with his *Psaltirea pre versuri tocmită (Psalter made in verses)*[13].

The Psalms of David remain in collective memory as the most disturbing dialogue with God, a testimony of a man that recognizes divine order by assuming and preaching the virtues listed in the supreme laws: "Fericit bărbatul carele n-a umblat în sfatul necredincioşilor/ şi cu păcătoşii'n cale nu a stat/ şi pe scaunul ucigaşilor n-a şezut/ ci în legea Domnului îi este voia,/ în legea Lui va cugeta ziua şi noaptea" ("Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful./ But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night..", King James Version) (Psalm 1) – faith, love for truth, justice being only the fundamental values of love, human virtues on which divinity tirelessly watches. By using the profile of the faithful man "ale cărui fapte, toate, vor spori" ("whose deeds would increase"), an image acknowledging the presence of man in the universe, expressed poetically in the simile "pomului (..) ce roada îşi va da la vreme" (of "the tree (...) that will give its fruit in season"), the psalmist pleads for this virtue as an imperative: to believe in something/ others and to be believed by others, to believe in one's own thoughts. To have faith means to build and fortify a body. To embody. Sin, the opposite of faith, destroys man: "necredincioşii)-s ca praful ce-l spulberă vântul de pe faţa pământului…" ("The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth

[12] *** DEPB - *Dicţionar enciclopedic de personaje biblice*, coord. Martin Bocian, Ed. Enciclopedică Bucureşti, 1996, p. 86.

[13] Other psalters in our area: *Psaltirea Hurmuzachi (the Hurmuzachi Psalter),* bearing the name of Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi, a historian from Bucovina. The date of its translation is unknown. Certain clues (the presence of rhotacism, the use of certain old grammatical forms), point to the second half of the 16th century. The translation of the Gospel made under the same Hussite influence was saved in copies as well. The text of this translation had suffered various revisions by several scribes, until it was used by Coresi's printing house, in Wallachia and then in Brasov. *Psaltirea scheiană (the Psalter from Schei)* includes all the psalms and some religious songs. The copy was made after an older Slavonic text, following the topic of the language in the original text. The position of the verb also suggests a stylistic consistency. The translator felt the text. When one reads "Domnul lumina mea şi spăsitorul meu, de cine mă temu?", one may understand that the humble father sought the most natural form for the obedient hymn to the power above. For those who aren't familiar with our old Romanian, there are still some enigmatic passages due to the use of words borrowed from Slavonic and the heavy syntax. *Psaltirea voroneţeană (the Psalter from Voronet)* received its name from the monastery in Voronet, where it was found by the famous folklorist and priest S. Fl. Marian. He gave it to D.C. Sturdza and from him it passed to the Romanian Academy. The deteriorated manuscript has part of the psalms, beginning with the Psalm 88. *Psaltirea voroneţeană* is accompanied by the Slavic text. The book was written for those who wanted to learn Slavic. This Psalter was copied between 1550 and 1570.

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away", King James Version) (Psalm 1). Faith vs. sin become lexemes generating virtues vs. vices, antagonistic behaviors individualizing man.

Divinity reacts to man as a symbol of haughtiness comprising vices such as: impurity, lack of faith, adultery, dishonesty, guile, treason, enmity, mark of crime. How does the Lord punish the limp, the evildoer, the worthless, the sinner, and the treacherous? By anger. What is the lesson we get? "Mâniați-vă, dar nu păcătuiți!" ("Be ye angry, and sin not", Brenton Septuagint Translation, 1884. Versification mapped to KJV for coordination with other Old Testament Bible texts) (*Psalm 4*) – anger, sign of revolt, is characteristic to man: sin is the prolongation and amplification of anger which leads to sickening of body and spirit (see faith: Hebrews, 11:1).

By a cry or, sometimes, by prayer often addressed to God the psalmist rebels against either the wicked, against the enemies, or against his own mistakes, deviations from the supreme consensus of human values, such as to be good, to love truth, to be dignified, to be pure, to be fair, to have faith and hope in redemption, the hope of forgiveness. The psalmist admits to being tempted by sin, but he doesn't fall in the traps set by his enemies: "căzut-au păgânii în groapa pe care-au făcut-o/(...) cunoscut e Domnul când face judecată" ("The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made (…) The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth", King James Version) (*Psalm 9).*

He confesses his faith in redemption, forgiveness, salvation by doing good deeds; through the voice of the rebel, the psalmist denies the vices of those around him, he takes responsibility for his past and asks for an acknowledgment from the divinity: "Judecă-mă, Doamne, că eu întru nerăutate am umblat/ (...) Şi-ntru adevărul Tău am bineplăcut./ În adunarea deşertăciunii n-am şezut/ şi cu cei ce calcă legea n-am intrat./ urât-am adunarea făcătorilor de rău/ şi cu cei necredincioşi nu voi şedea"... – he takes responsibility for the past, extending at the same time a promise for a future faith: "Spăla-voi întru nevinovăție mâinile mele/ şi voi înconjura jertfelnicul Tău, Doamne,/ ca să aud glasul laudei Tale/ şi să povestesc toate minunile Tale" (*Psalm 25-Orthodox Bible)* – one may notice the request for the certainty of being acknowledged by divinity.

In his search for truths about himself, we may notice in David the doubt triggering the revolt through which he can barely forgive himself, because he cannot justify his own errors. In such times, he assumes the collective blame: "Judecă-mă, Doamne, şi fă-i pricinii mele judecată împotriva neamului lipsit de sfinţenie,/ izbăveşte-mă de omul nedrept şi viclean" (Psalm 42, Orthodox Bible).

The *whys* in the interrogations agree on the status quo: the rebellion, the revolt against the inability to find in himself, at a certain moment, something related to body and spirit that deserves unanimous recognition, even by a divinity whose loyal servant he is: "De ce Te-ai lepădat de mine?/ de ce umblu eu mâhnit când mă necăjeşte vrăjmaşul meu?" ("why hast thou forgotten me? wherefore do I go sad of countenance, while the enemy oppresses *me*?" Brenton Septuagint Translation, 1884. Versification mapped to KJV for coordination with other Old Testament Bible texts) (Psalm 42). Could this be a breach in his faith? Possibly, once the image created is that of a disappointed solitary: "**De**

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ce eşti mâhnit, suflete al meu, şi de ce'n adâncul meu mă tulburi?" ("Wherefore art thou very sad, O my soul? and wherefore dost thou trouble me?" Brenton Septuagint Translation, 1884. Versification mapped to KJV for coordination with other Old Testament Bible texts) (*Psalm 42*). It seems that David's interrogation is a metaphysical one, in accordance with Arghezi's inference: "**Tare sunt singur, Doamne, şi pieziş"** (*Psalm*[14]), orchestrating the aria of David and/or Arghezi's solitude, in fact, a solitude of a spirituality breached in its love for God.

2.2. The semiotics of Arghezi's psalm. Man has forever needed support, protection, acknowledgement, and love: "Dragostea nu piere niciodată" ("Love never fails") (Corinthians, 13:8). And he will continue to have this flaw, unwilling to change anything equivalent with "love". As soon as he is abandoned, forgotten, anger rises in his fragile soul, disturbing his consciousness and thought, and making him act passionately rather than rationally.

We will hence talk about the revolt coming from the psalmist's interrogation related to divine love based on principles – agape - he accedes to. It is the case of Arghezi's 18 psalms[15], which know a contradictory and unsettling destiny, the poet suggesting a geo-poetics of his inner odyssey, together with the poetical text "Psalmistul".

2.2.1. The semantics of Arghezi's psalm. Arghezi's psalms, **poetical texts for meditation** configuring the duality of the poetical self: "Sunt în mine nişte doi" are **monologues** "ale celui-care-glăsuieşte-în-pustiu (...) Poetul e un emul al acelor mitic-arhaici *homines* religioşi care s-au luat la harţă cu Domnul lor, l-au înfruntat, au violentat cerul, s-au luptat cu îngerul" ("of he who talks in the desert (...) The poet tries to emulate those mythical archaic religious *homines* that started a fight with their God, who stood up to him, who attacked heavens, who fought with the angel") [16]. With/through an acute sensory sensitivity, the poet has an ambivalent attitude: he is called by the Heavens, but his inability to fly breaks down in *lamento* and despair. These two poles are alternatively activated by a middle line which acts as a permanent combustion.

Arghezi's psalms have a symmetrical construction, emphasizing the vertical of the space of two antithetical worlds: telluric vs. celestial, eternal vs. ephemeral. The meditation about the man between two Pascalian infinities structures the lyrics of the psalms in *indictment* and obedient *shyness* with a tone of adoration. Thus, Arghezi's psalms harmonize with the experiences of the lyrical self, either in shyness, using the religious incantation specific to the Gospel hymn, or in recklessness, the rebellion carried to the revolt of Job or Thomas, using a serious tone loyal to the temper of a poet tortured by opposites. The essential problem of Arghezi's poetry lies in the unceasing search of the divine justice open to validation by the human justice: the poet "caută şi se frământă." The range of feelings is wide, and the revolt, the reproach, the acute feeling of loneliness, of abandonment, is gradually inoculated in the substance of the psalm, a balance between

[14] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[15] ... or „pseudo-psalms", according to some critics.
[16] Nicolae Balotă, *Opera lui Tudor Arghezi*, Eminescu, 1979, p. 149.

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faith and doubt. The internal combustion of the psalms is fueled by revolt, an essential and defining state of humanity.

The steps of the emotional universe and the poetical beauty of the psalms of David were transferred to Arghezi's lyrical universe, a poetical state expressed in an original manner through the simulacrum generously set over four isotopies: **solitude** (2.2.2. loneliness, struggle and rebellion, revolt, worthlessness, indictment, courage and boldness, despair and lamentation, grief and helplessness, respectively reproach), **gratitude and acknowledgement** (2.2.3), **silence** – the ascesis of revolt (2.2.4), and **human degradation** (2.2.5 or the social revolt).

2.2.2. The psalms of solitude. Loneliness. *Psalm* (*Am fost să văd pe Domnul bătut de viu pe cruce*)[17]/ *Psalm (Tare sunt singur, Doamne; şi pieziş)*[18] - multiplication of Christ like loneliness in the human condition: "Am fost să văd pe Domnul bătut de viu pe cruce /Singur în câmp (cu corbii şi-a cerului răşină – symbol and synecdoche: signs of death)" vs "Tare sunt singur, Doamne; şi pieziş!/ Copac pribeag uitat în câmpie" – "pribeag" (*wanderer*), an epithet personifying the lost; the field - synecdoche of the endless unlimited space, where the sacred mixes with the profane. Alone: in the face of love (for the others) and of death! David's simile (man a fruitful tree) is reiterated in the antimony sin vs. faith: "copac (...) cu fruct amar şi cu frunziş/ Ţepos şi aspru-n îndârjire vie" (om păcătos, netrebnic) vs "pom(...) de rod cu gustul bun" (the religious man). Moreover: there is a metaphorical addition of the fruit of divine instruction: "De-a fi-nflorit numai cu focuri sfinte/ Şi de-a rodi metale doar, pătruns/ De grelele porunci şi-nvăţăminte,/ poate că, Doamne, mi-este de ajuns." The suggestion of the angelic mediator works as a symbol of divine communication. In fact, the religious man would ease his revolt would he to receive the teachings of the Master: "Trimite, Doamne, semnul depărtării,/ Din când în când, câte un pui de înger/ (...) Să-mi dea din nou povaţa ta mai bună" – the iterative adverbial "din nou" (*again*) signals the return to faith, even if this return means a sacrificial effort, emphasized here by the generic/ "pancronic"[19] present "sânger"; it is the sacrifice common to the two agents: Jesus and the religious man: the last call, filled with metaphysical sadness, will be that of reproach coming from waiting in vain, a time of futility: "Ne-am aşteptat un înger să-aducă-ne isop,/ Am aşteptat din ceruri un semn, o-mbărbătare/ De vreme ce-nţeleptul a fost trimis cu scop,/ Să moară printre oameni vândut prin sărutare." The relation between man and sign is ontic rather that gnoseological. What this semiotic equation lacks is the inability of signification, because the sign is recognized as such only as a formal mark of a symbolical accomplishment: the Sign lies within. God created us in His own image and likeness.

Struggle, rebellion. *Psalm (Pribeag în şes, în munte şi pe ape...)*[20] presents the metaphor of the traveler-incarcerated in his own space, "un mare ocol" – the paradigm of

[17] *Silabe*, 1965.
[18] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[19] Sporiş, „Valenţe semantico-stilistice...", p. 978; pancronic: action/ event/ state has a universal character – valid in space and time..
[20] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.

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the circle recalling Blaga's "birdcage" in *Luntrea lui Caron*. Running in circle, even if confusing, is the only one to be assumed: "Pribeag (...)/ Nu ştiu să fug din marele ocol." The psalmist is denied knowledge, because the truth lies within, not on the outside. Stepping outside his limits is denied, so man will forever live the drama of captivity. His running is a rebellion, and the rebellion is a struggle in vain, hitting "patru laturi (ale lumii) deodată." Isn't life meaningless? Man is made a concession to knowledge: the acknowledgement of experience or the pursuit of "running", so that "Nu mai străbat destinul meu la pas,/ Ci furtunos de-acum şi iute." This is the itinerary of a universe-lockdown of Pascalian type: "cât nainte locul mi-e mai gol,/ Pe-atât hotarul lui mi-i mai aproape." "Psalmistul este omul negru, al patimilor, care din pătimirile sale a dobândit unica sa putere." ("The psalmist is the black man, that of the passions, who gained his sole power from his passions") [21].

Revolt. Convinced of his gift, "patimă cerească", competing with the Creator, in *Psalm (Aş putea vecia cu tovărăşie)*[22] the poet takes responsibilities which run against divine laws and justice. The revolt is justified by the fact that "Părintele"[23] (*Father*) claims the sacrifice incognito, without showing His face or being included. The psalmist refuses the sacrifice: he will keep for himself the body "moale şi bălan" of the woman, in a sensual embrace. The psalm is presented in a double register, that of "vecie" (*eternity*) and of the ephemeral, returned, toward the end, to itself, to an obscure imagery allowing for the revolt leading to the imminence of a spiritual suicide caused by the pain of the abandon and oblivion: "Vreau să pier în beznă şi în putregai,/ Nencercat de slavă, crâncen şi scârbit./ Şi să nu se ştie că mă dezmierdai/ Şi că-n mine însuţi tu vei fi trăit" – this may be the sign of the universal crime: sin, man's fall "în beznă şi în putregai" signals the death of faith and of God.

In *Psalm (Când m-ai făcut, mi-ai spus: de-acum trăieşte)*[24] the divinity is the same familiar "you", paradoxically refused to the poet. The metatext proposes the interpretation of a division, a separation of agents: by the Gospel tradition, God is identified with life and love, and man with "trăirea (ce) se cheamă viaţă, şi omoară." The psalmist's revelation is atrocious, because life is a step towards death: "Dar tu mi-ai spus odinioară/ Că ne ucide moartea, nu viaţa şi iubirea/ Atât a învăţat la tine omenirea." Thus, revolt becomes an accusation, an offense, a blasphemy: "Tu n-ai făcut pământul din milă şi iubire,/ Îţi trebuie loc slobod, întins, de cimitire." – reconsiders the biblical myth of man's being created out of love.

Futility. In *Psalm* (*Călare-n şea, de-a fuga pe vânt, ca Făt-Frumos*)[25], the psalmist identifies himself with Făt-Frumos or prince charming, the protagonist of the Romanian fairy tale with philosophical implications, who engages in the conquest of a limitless world: "…am străbătut şi codrii şi ţara-n sus şi-n jos". The infinit, the peak becomes the

[21] Nicolae Balotă, *cited work,* p 185.
[22] *Cuvinte potrivite,* 1927.
[23] In the other psalms the name is "Lord".
[24] *Noaptea,* 1967.
[25] *Frunze,* 1961.

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Valley of Sighs, where the hero returns to the human condition: "pribeag" (*wanderer*), humble and tormented by the metaphysical rhetoric ("zădărnicia şi cazna mea umilă"), "flămând" (*hungry*) for/perseverant in knowledge – "Te-am urmărit prin stihuri, cuvinte şi silabe (...)/ Încerc de-o viaţă lungă, să stăm un ceas la sfat" -, consistent up to being fierce, a climax of the revolt where the decision is capital: "Înverşunat de piedici, să le sfărâm îmi vine;/ Dar trebuie,-mi dau seama, să-ncep de-abia cu tine." His helplessness is emphasized in symbols of the occlusion: "belciuge" (*staples*), "lacăte" (*locks*), "drugi" (*rails*), "prag" (*threshold*), that deny him the revelation: both the bookish dimension ("stihuri, cuvinte şi silabe"), and the extortion of a tormented body: "... pe genunchi şi coate târâş, pe patru labe" or "şoapta tristei rugi" are sanctioned through "belciuge, lacăte, drugi" – punitive symbols that obstruct knowledge. This is the bitter taste of futility as a form is revolt.

Accents of the indictment: dilemma and confusion, despair, sentence. The psalmist uses an accusing rhetoric in the face of divine justice, accusing absenteeism in the world. And the great absentee is God, perceived as an uncertain existence, with anthropomorphic representations "între putinţă ("Era să fii....") şi-ntre amintire" ("... eşti ca un gând"): He is either the biblical God, abstract, jealous, vengeful, full of wrath, or the mytical "moş bun" (*the good old man*) from folklore, familiar, genial, householder. Some other times, He is a mixture of these faces. The sacred, the divine power are beyond human comprehension: "Pentru că n-a putut să te-nţeleagă/ Deşertăciunea lor de vis şi lut,/ Sfinţii-au lăsat cuvânt că te-au văzut,/ Şi că purtai toiag şi barbă-ntreagă" – the staff, symbol of priestly power; the beard, symbol of the time of wisdom. The incompatibility with the divine being is suggested by the emperor's clothes: "Te-ai arătat adeseori făpturii/ Şi-n-totdeauna-n haine de-mpărat." (*Psalm - Pentru că n-a putut să te-nţeleagă)*[26]. The psalmist's voice is surprising in the cohabitation of antagonistic tensions: the disproval, the disphoria is canceled or merges with the euphoria of faith, the poetical time for invoking, confessing and acknowledging divine help: "Doamne, izvorul meu şi cântecele mele! Nădejdea mea şi truda mea!". "Izvorul este doar râvnit, niciodată întâlnit"[27] ("The spring is just coveted, never met"). The sentence has a metaphysical gravity. Transcendence is the state of the divine: "Tu eşti şi-ai fost mai mult decât în fire/ Era să fii, să stai, să vieţuieşti." But man carries within himself his limits; he cannot be more than being, more than he was meant to be. The being created in God's image and likeness cannot exceed the Creator, preserved in collective memory as a spiritual presence: "Eşti ca un gând (...)/ Între putinţă şi-ntre amintire."

Courage, boldness. *Psalm* (*Sunt vinovat că am râvnit*)[28] doesn't breathe David's repentance. The psalmist's God sits and listens, He doesn't ask questions, and only intervenes in the end with a decisive "interdiction": "Dar eu râvnind la bunurile toate,/ Ţi-am auzit cuvântul zicând că nu se poate." The psalmist provokes the divinity, and

[26] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[27] Nicolae Balotă, *cited work*, p. 182.
[28] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.

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confesses the greatest sin: "Sunt vinovat că am râvnit/ Mereu numai la bun oprit./ Eu am dorit de bunurile toate:/ M-am strecurat cu noaptea în cetate/ Şi am prădat-o-n somn şi-n vis,/ Cu braţu-ntins, cu pumnu-nchis." Trying to be *tâlhar de ceruri* (*a robber of heavens*), aiming to confront and offend God, the psalmist hits the transcendent censorship. The gestures of the pray are evident in *Psalm* (*Te drămuiesc în zgomot şi-n tăcere*)[29]. This boldness is gradually reconstructed in the gestures of the act of the hunter: the stalking, the chase, the fight, and the fall of the game. The psalmist "drămuieşte sacrul în lumină şi întuneric, în virtute şi viciu" ("measures the sacred in light and in darkness, in virtue and in vice")[30] in order to prove that the sacred is not a privileged place. The pray is the falcon, an eternity-bird. The rebel hesitates in his dilemma: "Să te ucid? Sau să-ngenunchi." It is the stance of the souls balancing between insult and praise, between piety and blasphemy. Man needs the certainty of the divinity's existence: "Vreau să te pipăi şi să urlu: Este!" God exists because He is the psalmist's dream: "eşti visul meu, din toate cel frumos". Being denied revelation, divinity is like "drum de apă": "Ca-n oglindirea unui drum de apă/ Pari când a fi, pari când că nu mai eşti./ Te-ntrezării în stele, printre peşti/ Ca taurul sălbatic când s-adapă." The psalm doesn't end in lament, but in a challenge: "Singuri, acum, în marea ta poveste,/ Rămân cu tine să mă mai măsor,/ Fără să vreau să ies biruitor./ Vreau să te pipăi şi să urlu: Este!"

Despair and lament; reproach. *Psalm* (*Nu-ţi cer un lucru prea cu neputinţă*)[31] is a *lamento* of the abandoned one. Having as reference the hiding of the sacred, the psalmist's pain comes from the silence of the One hidden in the…verb. Shy, scared by the invisible barrier of the refusal, the stimulant-psalmist uses a "masked" simulacrum. By praising God's omnipotence, he presents his own state as "rece (...)-ncruntată suferinţă", due to the divine absence. In fact, his wish is for a revelation: "Dacă-ncepui de-aproape să-ţi dau ghes/ Vreau să vorbeşti cu robul tău mai des." The times of the sacred dialogues are invoked out of the fundamental need for communication. Once "îngerul de povaţă" was denied to him, the psalmist confesses the ontic identity crisis.

Grief and helplessness. The metaphorical representations in *Psalm (Ca să te-ating, târâş pe rădăcină)*[32] reveal the psalmist's imperative wish to experience God in a tactile form, in a world of the fruit, searching the sacred in the world of vegetation: "Ca să te-ating, târâş pe rădăcină,/ De zeci de ori am dat câte-o tulpină." The psalmist recalls in his confession the spiritual journey of human kind: "Am fost un pai şi am răzbit în munte,/ Molift înalt şi mândru..." The humble condition ("un pai" – "a straw") is followed by another essential one, that of the pole of the world: "moliftul" – a contrastive image of fruitless dryness of the fig tree. The tree is also the metaphor of the *vigilia*, with the significance of the watching man. But the waiting, the watching, the hope are in vain; all he has left is to renounce himself: "M-aş umili acum şi m-aş ruga:/ Întoarce-mă, de sus, din calea mea/ Mută-mi din ceaţă mâna ce-au strivit-o munţii/ Şi, adunată, du-mi-o-n

[29] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[30] Nicolae Balotă, *cited work*, p 176.
[31] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[32] *Alte cuvinte potrivite*, 1943.

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dreptul frunții." *Psalm XVIII (Doamne, tu singur văd că mi-ai rămas)*[33] is written with sadness, with a last hope. In this psalm of humility, the psalmist prefers anonymity by choosing a modest vegetal symbol, humbly expressing his helplessness: "Nu am suflet, nici inimă, nici glas,/ Îs buruiană. Sunt un mărăcine."

2.2.3. The psalms of gratitude and acknowledgement. In *Psalmul de tinereţe* [34], we can guess the contentment for the artist's gift, the option for vegetal symbols vs. light, for the verticality of redemption, the gratitude for "darurile toate", but also the lament due to the broken line and the language that cannot cover divine generosity. Divinity appears to be isolated, intangible, in a rocky Gothic cathedral: "Cu ochii, Doamne-n turla-ţi milostivă,/ Dau tot ocolul stâncoasei catedrale,/ O crizantemă-ţi tremură-n ogivă,/ Luceafărul cu mia-i de petale." The psalmist reads the tremble of the chrysanthemum as an answer of the divine, especially since he isn't, not even for a second, troubled in his prayer by the fear for the silence of the divine, but by that of his own helplessness "de-a spune" (*to speak*). This psalm is created in the shadow of the conditional, of the aspiration, and the option depends on the psalmist's power to communicate: "Ţi-aş mulţumi de darurile toate." In the attention given to glorification, he realizes the inability to grasp into words the divine supremacy, and he records the dramatic state of his inability: "Plugar în brazda ghiersului săracă,/ Slova s-a rupt şi graiul nu mai poate/ Cu bunătatea ta să se întreacă" (this is the only stance of the poet-plowman). The psalmist is no longer "eu" (*I*), but "cel îngenunchiat" (*the kneeling one*): "Doamne, încă nu a izbutit/ Să-mi încolţească boaba de cerneală."

Psalm (Făr'a te şti decât...)[35] is "unicul psalm de recunoaştere (...) a darurilor primite. Elogiul vizează, însă, nu transcendenţa în sine, ci izvorul bunurilor acestei lumi, un fel de natură uberală" ("the only psalm of acknowledgment (...) of the gifts received. The praise isn't for the transcendence itself, but for the source of goods of this world, a kind of uber nature") [36]. The benefactor flips over the cornucopia on the one who has been frustrated by any sign: "Tu nici nu-ntrebi ce voi şi mi-L şi dai/ Ce mi-a lipsit întotdeauna ai,/ Şi-ai şi uitat de câte ori şi cât mi-ai dat./ Hambarul ţi-este plin împărăteşte./ Pe cât îl scazi,mai mult se împlineşte,/ Şi de la tine sacul ce se scoate/ Se însuteşte în bucate." This is the recognition of a mystery of fecundity, with an emphasis on galore. Once the beneficial power cannot be known, the drama of the incongruence between existence and knowledge is born. The beneficence thus turns into a trauma of the spirit, a context in which the psalmist simulates the allegory of the traveler: "Stau ca-ntre sălcii, noaptea, călătorul".

2.2.4. The psalms of silence – the ascesis of revolt. *Psalm (Ruga mea e fără cuvinte)*[37] places the psalmist somewhere between loss and giving up the word, without truly knowing who this attempt belongs to. The psalmist sees his words being taken from

[33] *Frunzele tale,* 1968.
[34] *Noaptea,* 1967.
[35] *Una sută una poeme,* 1947.
[36] Balotă, Nicolae , *cited work,* p. 191.
[37] *Cuvinte potrivite,* 1927.

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him and his voice being silenced. He knows the pain of he who speaks and cannot hear himself talking, of he who sings and cannot hear himself singing: "Şi cântul, Doamne, mi-e fără glas.". "Cuvântul are la limită inefabilul, neputinţa, lipsa cuvintelor" ("The word has in its limit the ineffable, the inability, the lack of words"). Arghezi is among the few poets having reached the limits of the word. Leaving the word, he abandons himself to a speechless prayer: "Te caut mut, te-nchipui, te gândesc", doubting the value of his own prayer: "Nici rugăciunea, poate, nu mi-e rugăciune." He who watches is actually engaged in an ongoing struggle with the darkness, and it is an uneven fight since any tear of the darkness is only partial: "Săgeata nopţii zilnic vârfu-şi rupe/ Şi zilnic se-ntregeşte cu metal." The psalmist doesn't give up and remains watching in the night where he suspects that the primordial source hides. "Antinomiile prin care Unitatea divină există formează misterul ultim. Trăirea antinomiilor şi depăşirea lor în năzuinţa continuă către Unitate organizează imaginarul arghezian" ("The antinomies through which the divine Unity exists form the ultimate mystery. Living and overcoming the antinomies in the continuous strive towards Unity organizes Arghezi's imagery")[38]. *Psalmul mut* (*Sătul de ce se vede, flămând de nu se vede*)[39] is the only imagined answer of divinity. The psalmist's Lord is that of Silence, and the word means rebellion to him: "Te poţi făli cu slova şi graiul. Nu mă tem./ Am pus pe tot ce pare, pecete şi blestem."

2.2.5. The psalm of human degradation or about the social revolt. *Psalm* (*Vecinul meu a strâns cu nendurare*)[40] is the psalm of *human misery*, of nothingness: the vanities of greed. The parable of the rich has historical equivalences in the apparently privileged situation of the merciless emperor. For one, as for the other one, "Soarele-apune zilnic şi răsare/ Într-ale sale patru buzunare./ Văzduhu-i face parte din avut/ Cu-al zalelor de stele aşternut." The psalm reveals man's limitless greed in time and space. "Portretul-şarjă al bogatului trufaş, conţine elemente de pamflet, rare în Psalmi. Imaginea degradării biologice trimite la blesteme precum şi unele „peisaje" din 1907, dar aici tonalitatea e alta, mai mult burlescă şi mai puţin sarcastică" ("The portrait-charge of the arrogant rich man has elements of pamphlet, rare in the Psalms. The image of biological degradation relates to the curses and to some "peisaje" from 1907, but here the tonality is different, rather burlesque and less sarcastic")[41]. This is the hunger for possession of the vicious, having its origins in a caricature-like existence. Visions similar to Dante's underline the miser's putrefaction: "gingia moale, înţărcată, suge,/ Ochiul porneşte blând să se usuce,/ În pântec spini, urzici şi aguride/ Dau ştiri de beteşugul ce-l ucide."

In antithesis with the profane imagery, the psalmist configures the divine omnipotent space, simulating the safety of the rigid gesture: "Faci dintr-un împărat/ Nici praf cât într-un presărat./ Cocoloşeşti o-mpărăţie mare/ Ca o foiţă de ţigare." This is a simulacrum of the eternal, of breaking the limits, of freedom. Beyond the allegory of Jacob's ladder: "Peretele-i veacul pătrat/ Şi treapta e veacul în lat,/ Şi scara e toată vecia",

[38] Balotă, Nicolae , *cited work,* p 231.
[39] *Ritmuri,* 1966.
[40] *Cuvinte potrivite,* 1927.
[41] Elena Zaharia Filipaş, *cited work,* p 14.

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the psalmist retains the moment in which man lives: "Şi când le (scările n.n.) dărâmi, trimiţi clipa/ Să-şi bată aripa/ Dedesubt." The enjambment underlines metaphorically the frailty of the individual-human time. The metaphor of the moment's frailty expresses the psalmist's helplessness in a deaf and speechless revolt: "Musca mută a timpului rupt" – a metonymic epithet for the "frânt" (*broken*), shattered destiny of man.

Psalmul de taină[42] is different from the psalmist's revolt related to divine love; it is a love poem where the revolt is caused by the loss of the lover (it configures Eros as a reference for the revolt, a situation studied in a different article). The passionate simulacrum develops by the transition from adoration to reproach and curse: "(...) fiindcă n-ai putut răpune/ destinul ce-ţi pândi făptura/ Şi n-ai ştiut a-i coate-n cale/ şi a-l prăvăli de moarte, ura; Ridică-ţi din pământ făptura,/ la ora nopţii când te chem,/ Ca să auzi, o! neuitată,/ neiertătorul meu blestem."

Conclusions. In the literary discourse (as a socio-cultural product), the reader agrees with his own existence, vision, perspective, relating the information with his own inferences; in other words, the reading grid of the reader will reveal an (arbitrary) system of axiological reference will be seen in the reader's reading grid reached following a semio-stylistic approach of events correlated with a "semiotics of passions" (see Greimas, Fontanille), based on experiences: the reader uses a "pragmatic-inferential" interpretation (see Brandom), a type of textual semiotics. While decoding the poetical messages of the texts seen as reference discursive sequences, we have taken into account the mental reality of the text (the cultural variable) and the event reality of social practices manifested by lyrical identities the reader may find and/or recognize. We have considered love based on principles - agape[43] - as reference in the semio-stylistic analysis of the revolt, taking into account texts containing simulacra developed in a biblical space-time frame (David's psalms), and in a lay one (Arghezi's psalms), with interferences of sacred and profane. We thus bring into discussion passionate simulacra as existential models, either dedicated to faith, or ambiguously manifested between faith and doubt. The passionate subject, in our case, the psalmist is involved in tensive relations in order to fulfill his dream: divine protection.

Using methods of textualism, we decoded the socio-cultural structure and the symbols of the revolt through simulacra the shape the rebel's psychology, embodied by David the psalmist and by Arghezi's simulating self. We noticed a paradox in the case of Arghezi's psalmist, which includes an abduction experience based on divine love, built on human values, doubled by profoundly human attitudes: besides virtues, he experiences vices as well, so that the psalmist becomes an indicial double for himself as a solitary individual, and for the human collectivity he represents.

The protagonists of the reference texts, God and the psalmist, exchange roles at the level of simulacra. If divinity is engaged, in the biblical text, in simulacra of discontent and anger towards man as a symbol of the haughtiness bringing together vices (lack of

[42] *Cuvinte potrivite*, 1927.
[43] Revolt may also be connected, as subject, to *philia*, *storge* or *eros*. Our research is dedicated only to *agape*.

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faith, adultery, dishonesty, guile, treason, enmity, mark of crime), and the psalmist, humble, asks forgiveness in the name of the godless, in Arghezi's texts the two swap roles, so that God is the abstract representation, and the simulating psalmist becomes himself a "primary agent" with pertinent socio-cultural characteristics, fitting a typology, a "character", an identity centered on continuity and sedimentation of the revolt. Able to bring social change, he plays different roles as a rebel – solitary, lamentation, etc – manifestations rendered objective and subjective by the simulacrum of divinity, through the multiplication of the divine as the supreme instance embedded in man's consciousness through word and image, collective representation and not reality. Hence, Arghezi's psalmist simulates signs and symbols meant to (re)compose faith: "Trimite, Doamne, semnul depărtării,/ Din când în când, câte un pui de înger/ (...) Să-mi dea din nou povaţa ta mai bună"// "Ne-am aşteptat un înger să-aducă-ne isop,/ Am aşteptat din ceruri un semn, o-mbărbătare/ De vreme ce-nţeleptul a fost trimis cu scop,/ Să moară printre oameni vândut prin sărutare."

The angelic symbol is the poetical simulation of divine perfection in order to avoid at any cost the death of the divine referential, a symbolic death, in the sense that God, as a primary agent in the biblical psalm, no longer gives any signs He recognizes man. In vain is Arghezi's psalm filled with both real and divine referential, of simulation and deterrence, because the real no longer is what is was. It follows that the entire meaning of the revolt related to divinity makes sense. And many other meanings follow; some shown in our interpretation: from rebellion to silence – the ascesis of the revolt.

Translation by Veronica Zaharagiu

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