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CRISIS IN LITERATURE

**LITERARISCH
VERANSCHAULICHTE KRISEN**

CRISE EN LITTÉRATURE



Argument:

Is There a Crisis in Literature?

Virgil Stanciu¹

In talking about such a topic, pessimism is almost inevitable.

One piece of very depressing news in this respect is that the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, probably the most influential monument to culture created in Britain, has ceased to be published on paper and CD after 244 years! The last edition was printed in 2010, in 8000 sets, out of which only half were sold.

One should distinguish between a crisis in literature (fiction) and a crisis of the study of literature in schools and universities. English departments, particularly in the US, have become places where mass culture – movies, television, advertising, cartoons, comics, pornography and performance art – is not only studied side by side with literary classics, but is oftentimes given priority status.

Also, one should consider the frightening possibility that books as we know them now, i. e. books printed on paper, might become extinct. But Amos Oz said in an interview granted to Antoaneta Ralian: “There is and there always will be a hard core of impassioned readers. If there were a long-term electricity cut in Romania or Israel, these people would read at the light of candles or of the last rays of the sun.”² Let us hope he is right, and then there is a future for fiction.

Dictionaries define crisis as a condition of instability, as in social, economic, political or international affairs, leading to a decisive change. In literature, it has a narrower meaning: the point in a play or story in which hostile elements are most closely opposed to each other, so that a dénouement is imminent. It is

¹ Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

²http://www.romlit.ro/amos_oz_cred_c_exist_o_similitudine_nre_un_romancier_i_un_agent_secret

essentially a structural element of plot. There is also a theological acceptance – spiritual crisis, a crisis of faith, a personal crisis, common to all men, arising from the contradictions inherent in human nature and in the social order.

Crisis in literature is by no means a new phenomenon. One can argue that every new stage in the history of any national literature has been the product of a crisis. Traditional literary forms and modalities becoming exhausted, literature came to a deadlock, a kind of stasis, from which it was saved by intrepid creators, who had the genius to devise new formulae. Literary history looks upon crisis in the field of poetry and fiction as being a part of the general crisis of Western Europe, England included. There had been a crisis in English poetry in the 15th century, when medieval civilization foundered in the dynastic wars and no new poet appeared capable of developing Chaucer's splendid realism and humour, or Langland's vivid criticism of society. That crisis was put an end to by the Renaissance, which renewed contact with Italian humanism. The Elizabethan dramatists and, to a lesser extent, poets, engineered a successful fusion between the "Apollonian" poetry of the court and the "Dionysian" poetry of the people. The same fusion is to be found on a smaller scale in the best work of the metaphysical poets. In the 17th century, however, a spiritual disintegration was already beginning, one aspect of which was the division of poetry into "polite" or bardic verse in "poetic vision" and popular verse in colloquial diction, considered suitable only for light or comic themes. Another aspect was that separation of poetic thought from poetic feeling which T. S. Eliot named a "dissociation of sensibility", and he noted its beginning in the age of Dryden. The great tradition of English poetic culture that began with Sidney and Spenser ended with Tennyson and Browning; the crisis marks the end of the great period of human history which began with the Renaissance and whose key words were humanism, individualism, liberalism, capitalism. What followed was yet another "Barren Age". High modernism was engendered by the crisis of Victorian thought and letters.

Postmodernist fiction, in my opinion, is a literature of crisis. It could be described as a solution meant to postpone the death of literature, to prolong its agony. Fiction (the epic genre) as such seems to be a product of crisis. Vargas Llosa points out in *The Truth of Lies* that when religious culture goes through a crisis, life seems to free itself of the precepts, dogmas and regulations that

articulated it, changing into chaos; this is the moment when fiction steps in – its artificial order becomes a haven, provides safety, and fiction becomes a temporary replacement of life. But fiction is richer than life, as it gives free reign to imagination, to desires and dreams, so when we return to reality we feel brutally disappointed. But the fantasies, exaggerations and falsities of fiction do help us express deep, unsettling truths, which otherwise we would not have the guts to state directly.

That literature (fiction in particular) was entering a stasis period was the central idea of John Barth's essay "The Literature of Exhaustion", which can be taken for a sign of the inset of postmodernism, the literature of crisis :

... art and its forms and techniques live in history and certainly do change. I sympathize with a remark attributed to Saul Bellow, that to be technically up to date is the least important attribute of a writer, though I would have to add that this least important attribute may be nevertheless essential. In any case, to be technically out of date is likely to be a genuine defect: Beethoven's Sixth Symphony or the Chartres Cathedral if executed today would be merely embarrassing. A good many current novelists write turn-of-the-century type novels, only in more or less mid-twentieth-century language and about contemporary people and topics; this makes them considerably less interesting (to me) than excellent writers who are also technically contemporary: Joyce and Kafka, for instance, in their time, and in ours, Samuel Beckett and Jorge Luis Borges. (In Malcolm Bradbury, *The Novel Today*, London, Fontana, 1982, p. 72).

And John Barth continues:

... an artist may paradoxically turn the felt ultimacies of our time into materials and means for his work – *paradoxically* because by doing so he transcends what had appeared to be his refutation – in the same way that the mystic who transcends finitude is said to be able to live, spiritually and physically, in the finite world. Suppose you are a writer by vocation – a 'print-oriented bastard', as the McLuhanites call us – and you feel, for example, that the novel, if not narrative literature generally, if not the printed word altogether, has by this hour of the world just about shot its bolt, as Leslie Fiedler [see *The Sense of an Ending*] and others maintain. (I'm inclined to agree, with reservations and

hedged. Literary forms certainly have histories and historical contingencies, and it might well be that the novel's time as a major art form is up, as the 'times' of classical tragedy, grand opera, or the sonnet sequence came to be. No necessary cause for alarm in this at all, except perhaps to certain novelists, and one was to handle such a feeling might be to write a novel about it. Whether historically the novel expires or persists seems immaterial to me; if enough writers feel apocalyptic about it, their feeling becomes a considerable cultural fact, like the feeling that Western civilization, or the world, is going to end rather soon. If you took a bunch of people out into the desert and the world didn't end, you'd come home shamefaced, I imagine; but the persistence of an art form doesn't invalidate work created in the comparable apocalyptic ambience. That's one of the fringe benefits of being an artist instead of a prophet. There are others.) If you were the author of this paper you would have written something like *The Sot-Weed Factor* or *Giles Goat-Boy*, novels which imitate the form of the Novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author. (Ibidem, p. 78)

In an essay published in *Commentary*, Lionel Trilling claimed that the very narrative impulse is exhausted, that we do not tell stories to each other any more, do not believe in stories, do not choose them as the vehicles for our deepest feelings, simply do not bother with narrative at all. Trilling was repelled at the narrative art of the present time.

On the other hand, in his book *The Novel Now*, Anthony Burgess, sets out to survey prose fiction since the great figures of the modernistic period and finds some two hundred writers of fiction of sufficient quality, of considerable seriousness and significance.

Burgess's inclusiveness points out that an amazing number of writers of considerable skill and utterly varied convictions about the nature of their art are flourishing at the present time, that along with some remarkably innovative fiction there are also some true and moving books being written with the technical resources of Balzac and Trollope, and that anything we say about any segment of the enormous body of contemporary fiction is bound to look partial and unjustifiably exclusive.

Malcolm Bradbury is also confident that the novel will survive, through sheer capability to adapt to contemporary topics and tastes:

It is certainly possible to discern, in the English novel more than in the bulk of novels written in France or the United States, an attempt to salvage a modern humanism, to maintain the idea of character against the swamping text; but a sense of inevitable pressures has promoted a strong experimental disposition. Iris Murdoch's essay *Against Dryness* emphasizes that we are not isolated free choosers, that we live in a universe itself contingent and therefore brute and nameless, from which we urge order only through comprehension and love; to these matters the novelist must attend. In general, and despite the realistic bias of much contemporary literary reviewing in England, which has limited the fictional debate, the experimental potential of the novel has been strongly emphasized by contemporary English novelists. The important thing is that these fictional developments be seen in the context of novel form significantly evolving and changing, if with somehow different weights and preoccupations in different countries. 'I presume the movement of fiction should always be in the direction of what we sense as real', wrote Ronald Sukenick, who entitled one of his books *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories*. 'Its forms are expendable. The novelist accommodates the ongoing flow of experience, smashing anything that impedes his sense of it, even if it happens to be the novel.' (*The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction* 1977: 19-20)

Peter Childs (in *Contemporary Novelists: British Fiction since 1970*, London, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2005) thinks the orientation towards the past may be an answer to the novel's difficulty in finding new subject-matter:

A. S. Byatt's work (alongside several of Peter Ackroyd's novels and more recently Sarah Waters's) is particularly associated with the re-inscription of Victorian Britain . She has argued that the project of 'writing the self' in fiction has been overtaken by novelists returning to historical fiction for radical difference through the combination of the unknowable and imaginable." [...] "The past has thus offered fertile territory for exploring a society little known to readers, without a need to make direct sense of the accelerated, pluralistic culture of the present. The vogue for historical novels has not passed with the turning of the millennium, though there is perhaps a new trend emerging of novels that revisit the more recent past, exemplified in Jonathan Coe's *What a Carve Up!*(1994) and *The Rotters' Club* (2001). (279)

Contemporary British fiction is now enormously varied, but much of it in recent decades has shared a common concern in issues of historical and ethnical identity. These have emerged as conspicuous themes after the preoccupations with gender and form in the 1970s and along side conjectural writing on the effects of Thatcherism and capitalism in the 1980s. Fiction in the 21st century is increasingly pluralistic as a new generation of novelists redraws the fictional map, fusing the themes and styles of the last thirty years with those emerging on a cultural scene in which diversity and plurality thrive, so that, in terms of the contemporary British novel, there are growing signs of a willingness and an ability to chronicle the contemporary. (p. 281)

In spite of such encouraging views, in our time the crisis in literature is more severe than ever, and it is due to the fact that the very material basis of literature – the printed book – is under a devastating attack. The Internet, more than TV, has brought about a diminution of interest in printed reading materials – newspapers, history books, fiction and poetry – which are being replaced by electronic reading materials. My contention is that whereas the Internet is a great leap forward inasmuch as the possibility of acquiring information is concerned, in what regards literature, particularly poetry, but also fiction, it is a disaster. People will gradually become less interested in the reading of poetry and fiction on a laptop, i-Pad or PC, one of the reasons being that it takes a long time to read a novel and the electronic tools demand concentration. As the late Ray Bradbury put it, “You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. It is enough to make people stop reading them.”

Several recent books are meant to warn professional and amateur readers of the unstable condition in which literature finds itself today. Thus, in *The Death of Literature* (Yale University Press, 1990), Alvin Kernan demonstrates that literature has gone through a crisis of confidence in the last three decades; he looks at some agents that have contributed to literature’s demise and ponders whether the vitality can be restored in the changing circumstances of today. Kernan relates the death of literature to potent forces in our post-industrial world, most obviously the technological revolution that is rapidly changing a print culture into an electronic culture, replacing the authority of the written word with the authority of television, film and the computer screen. The turn taken by literary criticism is another destructive

agent. It deconstructs literature and declares it void of meaning in itself and focuses on cultural and ideological aspects (see what Harold Bloom calls “the school of resentment”). According to Kernan, there are agents of literary disintegration in schools, where children watch TV or use the Internet but cannot think for themselves and can barely read; in Faculties, where there are constant fights over the canon. According to Kernan, traditional literature is ceasing to be legitimate or useful in these changed social surroundings. He argues that what is needed is a conception of literature that fits in some positive way with the ethos of post-industrialism.

In *The Closing of the American Mind*, considered by Saul Bellow “a sweeping analysis of the intellectual currents of our century, essential to an understanding of America’s malaise”, Alan Bloom observes that the students have lost their taste for reading, since they have not learned how to read in the first place, and thus have no expectations of delight or improvement from it. Moreover, they have only pop psychology to tell them what people are like and the range of their motives. Hence he argues that the reason for their failure to read good books is due to the belief that the here and now is all there is.

The self, says Bloom, which has suffered from a three hundred year long identity crisis, is the modern substitute for the soul. The power of creativity is revealed through art and through the ordering of chaos. From the author’s point of view, a true personality is he who can take his person – a chaos of impressions and desires, a thing whose very unity is doubtful – and manages to give it order and unity. Culture represents the peak expression of man’s creativity, his capacity to break out of nature’s narrow bonds. It is the place where man finds his dignity and also stands for the house of the self. In Nietzsche’s view, man has lost the capacity to create and appreciate value, and in the present exhaustion of old values, he must turn within himself to reconstitute the condition of his creativity in order to generate values.

The crisis of liberal education, as viewed by the author, is a reflection of the crisis at the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles with which we interpret the world, not to mention an intellectual crisis which nevertheless constitutes the crisis of our civilization.

Andrew Solomon's article "The Closing of the American Book" (published in *The New York Review of Books*) sheds light on the increasing worsening situation the American public is experiencing with literature. Surveys show reading is down for all ages of Americans and 75% of people believe it is unimportant to learn about modern American writers such as Hemingway and Steinbeck. These figures show that the nation is losing sight of its fundamental values and does not appreciate creativity. If Americans continue upon this downward trend, the chances of literature making its way back into the every-day lives of Americans will diminish tragically.

In a society where technical and vocational skills are at a constant rising demand, Solomon argues, it is easy to see how literature has been weeded out of the equation. People deem the study of literature to be a non-contributing factor to success. Americans no longer see the need for a balanced education; they lose sight of the fact that only literature can pose questions about human life and morality. The drive to better ourselves can only come from within.

However, when surveying centuries of fiction-writing, one is bound to notice that there have been several moments of "crisis" in the evolution of the form, and that each of them was overcome. Judging by the amplitude and diversity of recent British and American fiction, by the upsurge of creativity displayed by it, one feels entitled to hope that there will be a revival of fiction, in its classical or electronic format, in the years to come. Thus, our initial pessimism turns into moderate optimism.

In a Perpetual Crisis or Shopaholic's Meanderings in Consumer Paradise: Instantiations of Financial Crisis in Sophie Kinsella's *Shopaholic Abroad*

Anemona Alb¹

Abstract: *This paper looks at the myriad facets of the generic term 'crisis' as apparent in 'chick lit', i.e. literature for young ladies; more specifically, one of Sophie Kinsella's chick lit novels is under scrutiny here: "Shopaholic Abroad" (2001). 'Crisis' is no monolithic concept in the aforementioned genre; indeed it yields a multitude of nuances that I attempt to decode hereby.*

Keywords: *crisis; shopaholic; consumerism; cornucopia; ethics; postmodernism.*

Introduction

It is the assumption of this paper that instantiations of 'crisis' in its multiple facets can be detected in 'chick lit' novels at large and in the novel under scrutiny here. The prevalent sub-category of the generic term 'crisis' that I identify in Sophie Kinsella's "*Shopaholic Abroad*" published in 2001 – is the financial crisis that our heroine experiences in her shopaholic stance.

1. The financial crisis and its myriad facets

Forever embroiled in pernicious financial decisions and debt, Becky Bloomwood a.k.a.

Shopaholic takes yet another disastrous decision as regards spending that is triggered by a seemingly misinterpreted piece of advice that her boyfriend gives her: 'People who want to make a million borrow a million first.'

The misinterpretation thereof can be arguably decoded as ideological: Becky's mindset is one of excess, of indulging in shameless consumerism, indeed of reveling in cornucopia, the cornucopia that the shopping malls display. She transfers rational, positivist, economic thought onto a discourse of frivolousness:

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Well, OK. I have got a bit of an overdraft. But the only reason is, I've been taking the long view recently, and investing quite heavily in my career. Luke, my boyfriend is an entrepreneur. He's got his own financial PR company and everything. And he said something a few weeks ago which really made sense to me: 'People who want to make a million borrow a million first.' Honestly, I must have a naturally entrepreneurial mind, because as soon as he said it, I felt this weird chord of recognition. I even found myself murmuring it aloud. He's so right. How can you expect to make any money if you don't spend it first? So I've invested in quite a few outfits to wear on the television – plus a few good haircuts, and quite a few manicures and facials. And a couple of massages. Because everyone knows you can't perform well if you're all stressed, can you? (Kinsella 2001:24)

Hedonism overrides any considerations of financial sense with Becky and her entanglement in debt apparently does not make her flinch from her pleasure-seeking trajectory.

The quotation above also yields a clear-cut dichotomy between the Protestant, modernist ethics of work on the one hand and the superficial esthetic values of postmodern hedonism and image suffusion. It is, more simply put, an ideological vacillation between what Baudrillard (1988: 84; quoted in Bewes, 1997: 123) labels 'what is produced' and 'what can be thought or concealed': (In America, writes Baudrillard), 'only what is produced or manifested has meaning;(for us in Europe) only what can be thought or concealed has meaning'. (Bewes: 1997: 123). It is – beyond the reflection on the incongruities between the Old and the New World – about an interplay between the values of work, of the produced object per se and alternatively of the aura of the object, its connotative added value; in Becky's assessment, the interplay between investing the money versus spending it, i.e. by the latter replicating surface, image rather than worth.

At a semantic - pragmatic level, Becky here takes her boyfriend's advice quite literally: spend, borrow, consume first, then reap. This also is part and parcel of the postmodern condition, as Jameson (1991), commenting on Becker's model² states: "Here too, then, he (i.e. Becker) fails of absolute

² Gary Becker, in his "An Economic Approach to Human Behavior", 1976, Chicago, puts forward that "(...) the economic approach provides a valuable unified framework for understanding all human behavior." P.14.

postmodernity, where the transcoding³ process has as a consequence the suspension of everything that used to be “literal”. (Jameson 1991: 270)

Hers is a transcoding act, as Becky prescriptively, if casually, embraces two discourses, the one her boyfriend refers her to (the discourse of utilitarianism) and her preferred discourse of shopaholism.

On yet another of her consumerist exploits, visiting Sephora (one of the postmodern ‘shrines’ of object adulation) on Broadway, Becky again engages on an epistemological trip of muddled values:

There’s music pounding, and girls milling everywhere under the spotlights, and trendyguys in black polo necks and headsets handing out goody bags. I turn dazedly around: I’ve never seen so much makeup in my life. Rows and rows of lipsticks. Rows and rows of nail polishes. In all the colors of the rainbow. And oh look, there are little chairs where you can sit and try it all on, with free cotton buds and everything. This place is ... I mean, it’s heaven. (...) I nod at him, then half walk, half lurch to a row of little bottles of nail polish, labeled things like Cosmic Intelligence and Lucid Dream. As I gaze at the display, I feel overcome with emotion. These bottles are speaking to me. They’re telling me that if I just paint my nails with the right color, everything will instantly make sense and my life will fall into place. (Kinsella: 2001: 184)

It is not only that Becky virtually reverses axiologies (“my life will fall into place”) – as if what matters primarily in life in point of values is esthetics and ‘the body beautiful’, but she also engages in a game of – overt personification – by having objects ‘speak’ to her (“These bottles are speaking to me”) thus celebrating the prevalence of materialism alongside a more subtle, covert stance of reification, i.e. she is being reified, turned into an object herself in the labyrinthine aisles in the shop as her meanderings and choices of merchandise are indiscriminate, thereby turning her into a sociological object of clever marketing ploy.

The abundant enumeration of products on sale is reminiscent of the lists of objects of yore; in, say, the Victorian Age, but not only, authors did write such interminable lists, act that was part

³ Transcoding is, according to Frederic Jameson (see “Postmodernism Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”, 1991, Verso) a postmodern device whereby two separate explanatory systems are combined in decoding a sociological situation.

and parcel of the age of celebrating the utilitarian nature of 'things', itself a result of The Industrial Revolution.

As Briggs (1998/2003) states,

I have begun, however, with the kinds of lists of things which the Victorians liked to draw up. Nor were they the last people to do so. A twentieth-century novelist, Brian Moore, produced one of the most evocative of them in his dream sequence novel *The Great Victorian Collection*, which was published in 1975 when the Victorian revival was complete. In it he described 'the most astonishing collection of Victorian artefacts' appearing mysteriously in twentieth-century California – from *objets d'art* to bric-a-brac and curios, among them furniture, household appliances, scientific instruments, toys, silverware, books, furs, looms, small arms and a railway locomotive. (Briggs 2003: 2)

Ergo abundance, read excess – and the documenting thereof - is not exclusively the prerogative of postmodern times.

But more insidiously, the pecuniary crisis that Becky thus creates the conditions for is also redolent of a more profound, if diffuse type of crisis, that I term a 'crisis of validation'. In my view, Becky undergoes a process of questioning self-worth; it's as if only by engaging in all things beautifying (the cosmetics, the manicure, the clothes) in order to look her best, does she find validation – beyond the merely esthetic – in society. She can be said to embody the putative, archetypal victim of 'fashion fascism', of peer pressure in a surface-informed society that deems corporeal perfection the ultimate value, disregarding or relegating all others. The esthetic supersedes the ethical.

Indeed it is a crisis of ethics – the ethics of consumption - that underlies Shopaholic's frolicking along the 'venues' of personal gratification by hedonism. Becky's behavior is beset with narcissism, but the question is, can we ascribe an ethical dimension to her meanderings in consumer paradise? In other words, to what extent is her conduct a token of the new ethics of the times, i.e. to what degree does her superficiality stand for the play of surfaces of the postmodern *Zeitgeist*? In times of ethical relativism, is her quest for consumer self-gratification the odd-man-out, or is her behavior simply prescriptive, perfectly integrated in the general frame of reference? Indeed as Zygmunt

Bauman argues, there is a state of 'indecision' as regards ethical positioning in postmodernism:

In essence, however, his intervention is no different from Zygmunt Bauman's willingness to remain in a state of indecision with regard to a similar 'dilemma' – the question of to the disintegration embodied by their respective objects, which in Bauman's case is nothing more or less than the condition of ethical life in 'postmodernity' (Bewes 1997: 122)

At the other end of the epistemological continuum however, quite contrary to Bauman's notion of 'indecision', McMurtry (1998) argues that "no purchasing decision exists that does not itself imply some moral choice, and that there is no purchasing that is not ultimately moral in nature."

She sure does make up for the ethical dilemma of legitimacy by engaging in alternative ways of spending, of dispensing with money, i.e. occasionally making donations to charity. Now donating to charity is a selfless act. Or is it? According to some economists, charity is the new luxury good of the uber-rich. (see Collins 2012 on 'charity as conspicuous consumption'). Indeed in Becky's case, donating to charity is not only an act of repentance in the aftermath of her shameless overspending, it is also a visible way of keeping up appearances of financial prosperity, of fuelling her persona of corporate success.

Alternatively however, she does at times engage in what Crocker and Linden (1997) call 'voluntary simplicity', an ideological minimalism meant to compensate for areas of consumer excess in one's life.

Conclusion

Becky Bloomwood's intricate trajectories through the sites of consumerism that the shopping malls represent, indeed her ideology-laden meanderings all stand as substantiation to the myriad kinds of crises that she – prescriptively, as a postmodern subject – undergoes.

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Crisis in Literature. The Communist Temporal Frame

Ioana-Maria Cistelean¹

Abstract: *The present paper has been designed as an x-ray to the communist distorted perspective on the literary phenomenon during its period and to the socialist realism concept, attempting to clarify its coordinates and to accurately define its players. The study would also underline the failure and the grotesque as specific marks of those crisis times for both literature and culture.*

Key-words: *crisis, socialist realism, proletarian literature, new man, writer.*

The Evil in Disguise

It is said that each road leading to Hell is actually paved with good and noble intentions; thus communism – in its ideological phase – would formally acclaim and advertise a body of intriguing objectives, quite appealing and charming for any authentic revolutionary spirit, easily fascinated by ideas and ideals. In its early stage, the communist party did not seem to announce something spectacular, either in its semantics or in its imagery; its aim was ordinary, a common denominator for the rest of the working class parties as well: the birth of the working class as an acknowledged social class, the ending of bourgeois domination and the conquest of political power in state. Nevertheless, the communist doctrine's singularity is given by its promoters' schizoid conviction, implying the fact that they are the only ones who represent the interests of the movement in its overwhelming complexity. That's why they have been living for so long under the genuine impression they really are *the chosen-ones*, those expected to save civilization. Paradoxically enough, the ones to blame for allowing the innovating ideas to rapidly ascend were exactly the communists' enemies: the bourgeoisie. That particular bourgeoisie did not merely create the weapons that brought its ending, but also configured the human agent who would be able to successfully use

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these deadly weapons, and in this respect we are referring to the proletariat or in other words: the modern workers of society; a society recently and largely displaced from countryside to city. That particular bourgeoisie lowered symbols such as *the priest*, *the doctor* and *the poet* and buried them into a plain material status, transforming all of these characters into an army of paid workers and thus excessively pragmatizing them².

The communist direction coincides with a complete separation from all sorts of property relationships and it is equal to an irrevocable divorce with the tradition of individuality and its exceptional aura; everything is suddenly stamped by the *ordinary*, *common* and *uniformity*. The deformity of the communist direction is given by the very absurdity of its own conviction pointing that the communist party is actually legitimating a monopoly over the revolutionary movement in a radical opposition to the other doctrines and parties considered to be nothing else but some anti-revolutionary entities, allies to the bourgeoisie. It was not an accident that both Marx and Engels preferred the term of *communism* instead of *socialism*: this way, the conceptual exclusiveness would strictly delimitate and harshly enhance its authenticity and radicalism whenever *the new man* or *the proletarian* was in question. *The Communist Party Manifesto* is a critical and hostile display of all rival socialist conceptions, a denunciation and furthermore a tough branding of them, seen in three hypostases: *the reactionary socialism* (upheld from a Christian perspective/ stuck and disputed); *the conservatory socialism* (rhetorical); and *the critical socialism in its utopia* (fanciful)³.

Nevertheless the communist evil has devoured territories and has spoken an inodorous and colorless language, a strident one, it has practiced lots of services for the comrades, it has symbolized and above all stigmatized a barbarian and cruel reality.

Stéphane Courtois is rhetorically asking himself “What does ideology mean?”:

² According to Alain Besançon, *Originile intelectuale ale leninismului (The Intellectual Origins of Leninism)*, Humanitas Publishing House, București, 1993.

³ The information have been selected from Marx. Engels, *Manifestul Partidului Comunist (The Communist Party Manifesto)*, Nemira Publishing House, București, 2006, Second edition, coordinated by Cristian Preda, p. 15-22; 28-37; 73-74; 127-129. The 3 types of socialism division belong to Marx and Engels.

Plain and simple: a vision of the world. The communists have had a certain perspective on the world and they simply wished to impose their own vision to everybody. As I've mentioned before, the people who did not think in their parameters would be eliminated. Which is this particular vision on the world? It's simple or rather simplistic and it is based on the idea that society had been a result of the class struggle process. Consequently there would be social classes defined as mean and rich and they would have to be exterminated. (...) ... see, beginning with November 1917, Lenin invented a new kind of power that had never existed before. It is neither the monarchic system, nor the democratic system. And it is not even a dictatorial system, since a regular dictator would not be concerned with ideology, would not be interested in the others' thoughts and would not even care of economy (...)”⁴

The Soviet ideology did not stagnate in a concept paradigm, it actually played with the idea of a certain type of faith, it wished to certify a science, but it miserably failed by rejecting positivism, denying its philosophy, although it had declared itself a scientific philosophy. The ideological language would authorize terror, would later on confirm it and it would furthermore offer all the necessary channels ensuring its atrocious applicability in reality. *The Soviet evil* was born from lying and it would permanently feed itself with lying; even its ideology was totally marked by fakery, as it denied the historical reality and consequently substituted a new one, rapidly constructed, plentifully improved and amplified in such a way that it became a sort of *an over-reality*⁵.

The New Man and the Socialist Realism

While in Marx's opinion, *the proletarian* – the generic exponent of the comrade's category – meant and implied a physical and objective force, the social class the proletarian belonged to also represented a compact human mass of deprivations, austerities permanently legalized and supervised at an institutional level. *The new man*, the official reductionist substitute of individuality, was supposed to live his/ her life in a conflict-free society, lacking any

⁴ *Centrul Internațional de Studii asupra Comunismului, Courtois la Sighet (The International Center of Studies on Communism, Courtois Visiting Sighet)*, the Civic Academie Association Publishing House, București, 2003, p. 217, 219 . Our translation.

⁵ See Alain Besançon, the quoted edition., p.5, 21, 22, 36, 78.

kind of competition. The communist power would act in the name of revolution, history, progress and mostly in the name of a grandiose future; it would completely and exclusively devote its actions to *the new man*. The only problem was the fact that this particular *new man* started as a piece of fiction, a fake product of the party's documents and thus he/she would convulsively relate both to themselves and to the society. That's why *the new man* is the inner result of the *communist lie* and this is exactly why he/she would only dare to whisper to himself/ herself right in the middle of lying⁶. Thus, *the new man* is nothing but an improper singularity, rather defining an extension of a *devouring us*⁷, built from a multitude of *victimized I's*. Communism, in its endeavor of modelling and torturing the human psyche, focused on the writer's category as well: it ennobles *the writer* with the rank of 'human soul engineer' (which is another upgraded metaphor for *the new man*) and it would constantly clarify and parentally guide the authors in all the matters belonging to the innovating vision on arts and culture, it would continuously explain them the strategy and the purpose of writing; it would do all that with the consistent help of A. A. Jdanov's theses and it would hide its ugliness and its grotesque under the umbrella of a parasitical paradigm – *the socialist realism*, a 'creative' method abruptly imposed and turned into the only official acceptable and rather mandatory path of writing, inspired by and designed after the standard model of the Soviet wisdom, invoking the planning necessity (similar to the industrial production) and the political finality. Thus, literature is supposed to exclusively deal with politics, be it in its objective, form or substance and above all, it is expected to get involved in the area as genuinely as possible. Consequently, the literature's circumference is radically changing, totally giving up to the communist regime; *the proletarian literature*⁸ would articulate a broken language, the perfect tool for the in-charge comrade, it would throw its texts into a disturbing linguistic area, losing thus

⁶ This interdependency is proposed and expanded by Sanda Cordoș, in her volume *Literatura între revoluție și reacțiune (Literature Vacillating between Revolution and Reaction)*, Apostrof Library Publishing House, Cluj, 1999, p. 147

⁷ The "victimized I" and "the devouring us" syntagms belong to Sanda Cordoș, quoted edition, p. 148

⁸ The term of "proletarian literature" is rather improper used; instead, it is preferred the concept of "socialist realism", in Sanda Cordos's opinion. See Idem. Page 148.

its last creative glimpse because of its choice to especially address itself to the comrades, those who were expected to be periodically recycled, informed and educated or, in other words, indoctrinated to the extreme.

From now on, literature would claim as its inner object the process of the world's reflection, seen in its reactionary dynamics and totality; literature would settle as its primary function the transfer of a heroic perspective from fiction into reality.

As far as our country's literature is concerned, the issue involving the Party's spirit cannot be merely a vague theoretical discussion, but a vivacious expression of the relationship between the revolutionary theory and the revolutionary applicability, which constitutes a central topic of interest for the writers who are completely involved in and devoted to the battle for socialism and for peace, a battle continuously sustained by our people under the direct guidance of our Party. (...) Our country's new man's face reflects the most innovating tendencies of the popular masses who are courageously building a new and better life. We may say that today we are enjoying the sight of a literature that vividly depicts all the heroic working and fighting acts belonging to our people, as well as the Party's glorious activity and the new man's exceptional qualities. We are pleased to deal with such a large number of writers who present in their literary texts our new life's essence, our revolutionary pathos regarding the construction of socialism, our infinite love for our Country, our bitter hatred and our working people's fight against all the war instigators.⁹

The socialist realism would glorify the intellectual imposture, would cultivate it and thoroughly control it by initiating a fiery censorship of the literary text and consequently crippling the text, since it standardizes it according to the state power's precious directions; thus, literature becomes the very target and the very object of a measuring system politically perverted in extenso. A. A. Jdanov's theses would offer the most important directions and furthermore would legitimize a broken literature, generously giving it some specific national values and connotations; this broken literature would be signed by fragments belonging to a *paralyzed and personality-amputated us* and it would be read by

⁹ According to *Vatra* literary journal, 9-10 issue, 2004: *Probleme actuale ale literaturii din R.P.R. în lumina lucrărilor lui A. A. Jdanov (Nowadays' Problems of R.P.R. Literature in A. A. Jdanov's Theses Perspective)*, p. 20.

other fragments belonging to the same *collective shadow*. The brilliant Soviet treasure tells us that literature, seen and accepted as a proximal materialization of the socialist realism, must mirror the comrades' work, their thoughts and their feelings, it must offer them some worthy models and all these must be done through the most accurate, loyal, invigorating, impressive and persuasive depiction of the everyday life and of *the new man's* activities. Similar to any successful system, the process of inventing the communist non-literature would also detail not only general characteristics, but also some literary genre particularities, each of them methodically input in its paradigm. Consequently, *the novel* is supposed to develop a certain typology of the industrial worker and to construct the comrade-character taking into account all the exterior, technical transformations, as well as the inner mutations, given the fact that along with the technique's evolution there comes *the new man's* accumulation; another mandatory thematic of the novel concerns the agricultural progress, by underlining the image of the cooperator-farmer (another hypostasis of *the new man!*). Due to its never-ending generosity and tolerance, the communist power would encourage even the intellectual issue within the text, explicitly referring to the involved intellectual typology, the one interested in the construction of socialism, meaning a submissive intellectual, its elitist variable being categorically out of discussion. Both *the poem* and *the play* must drop their abstraction and abstruseness and instead take the position of a pattern for the people's consciousness, filling them up with energy, vitality, sensitivity and thus stimulating their heroic acting; in other words, the writers should merely entertain and enforce the public turned into a uniform mass of maneuvers. *Poetry* should simply become a sort of an interpretation of reality, but of course a controlled and fake interpretation of the reality.

The writer – a communist artifact – is overwhelmed with responsibilities and duties: since the responsibilities bear a positive connotation, emphasizing the quantity despite of quality as far as the literary talent is concerned, the duties succumb in a ferocious negativity being permanently threatened by punishment; the writer's duties were actually one duty, a big one – to fight against and to expose those who have chosen not to apply the party's directions, to reject the political prisoners for their only guilt of preserving their individuality. The propaganda channel of the socialist realism is represented by the series number of

magazines and journals which had the explicit task of militating for the new literature; as for the books, which were also the communist power's propaganda network, they were supposed to impress the comrades mass by simply artistically transferring the proletarian theses into literature. Once the political leaders' obsession concerning the process of cultural purification having been installed in their minds, the theory got its applicability: although they considered themselves men of the future, the communist chosen-ones were also focused on the past and its new face. Thus, for a healthier functioning and for a comradely co-existence, there were given clearly-cut instructions as far as the library selection was concerned. Consequently, there appeared a so-called "forbidden library"¹⁰ including all sorts of books, such as: fascist, chauvinistic, anti-Marxist, anti-communist, detective (with the exception of the genre classics), pornographic, adventurous, occult, non-scientific books. Obviously, the list of forbidden books was combined with a list of non-grata personalities: the royal members, the authors belonging to the already mentioned lists. *The socialist realism* would radically dissociate itself from the bourgeoisie's objective literature, the latter being accused of a hypocritical attitude towards 'the entire truth' and its revelation. *The new literature* was the only one able to expose 'the objective truth' in a complete manner; it would thus become unique, absolute, mighty-powerful, unrepeatable and multilateral – an entire set of epithets so dear to the communist machinery. *The literary criticism* would not escape the hyper-normed, hyper-evaluated and hyper-verified paradigm; in its purpose, it 'enjoyed' a privileged status since its role directly concerned the new literature's blossoming – it was supposed to guide the authors into an accurate and inspiring presentation of the communist themes within their texts and ensure that everybody preserved and respected the power's precepts. But literary criticism would obstinately act as an undisciplined child, much to the political chosen-ones' despair and fury. 'The literary criticism's criticism', during the communist period, would engage a dialogue between the political leader seen as a teacher unable to impose his theory, on one hand, and, on the other hand, the writer, seen in his

¹⁰ "The forbidden library" in extenso is to be found in Marian Petcu, *Puterea și cultura. O istorie a cenzurii (The Power and the Culture. A Censorship History)*, Polirom Publishing House, București, 1999

individualized subversive photo, rejecting his professor's theories and ultimately denying their applicability to literary texts.

Our literature needs a militant criticism able to objectively analyze the recent literary works, able to strongly encourage every innovating and refreshed aspects, able to discover and firmly criticize all the ideatic and expressive lacks identifiable in each book. The literary critics must contribute to the intensification and to the expansion of Marxist and Leninist aesthetic principles as far as the daring reflection of nowadays' true problems are concerned (...); Still there are literary critics who honor our culture although we cannot refer to a proper scientific criticism, simply because people have not yet learned how to successfully use the only scientific critical system which is definitely the dialectical materialism."¹¹

Although in principle the power's leaders conceived the act of criticism as a fundamental component of their ideology, they actually practiced an obtuse dogmatism which did not allow and did not tolerate the critical method whenever this technique targeted them, on a more or less opened level; 'criticize yourself, but do not dare to criticize me!' is certainly the real declaration behind the communist chosen-one's frustration.

The new man's psychology is the very psychology of the one who has terminated his/ her individuality status. Socialism turns into perfection the individual death and along with it the death of spiritual values."¹²

Both the bases and the luggage of Stalinism and respectively of our Romanian communism would counter the fear, the arrogance, the voluptuous shame and the primary interests. The suggested human pattern is that of 'homo sovieticus'; it would mark a depersonalized, slippery human being, with no personal roots, ready to betray his/ her family and friends in exchange for his/ her own welfare; he/ she is, above all, a lonely person, sickened with

¹¹ According to the literary journal *Vatra* , quoted edition: *Documente ale Congresului scriitorilor din R.P.R. (Documents of R.P.R. Writers' Congress)*, p.43; *Congresul Uniunii Sindicatelor de artiști, scriitori și ziariști (Problema criticii) (Congress of the Artists, Writers and Journalists Unions (The Criticism Issue))*, p. 12; we have also used interesting information from the same literary journal, see p. 10-46! Our translation.

¹² See Sanda Cordoș, *ibidem*, p. 148, the quotation belongs to M. Nițescu. Our translation.

fear, extremely egocentric, blindly walking the streets of the power's paradise. The power – collective shadow dialectic would institutionalize itself according to a set of rules that leaves nothing out of the system and would preserve itself within a permanent conflict paradigm: everything turns into a battle, all the actors accelerate their control and self-control devices so that they can spontaneously identify all the possible exits allowing them a minimal survival degree outside the area of oppression and danger.

Nobody escaped the communist machinery of deception and reprisals: the writer who has more or less embraced the political code and its intrusion within the text, he would turn into a mere scrivener, a comrade equivalent of this particular profession, while the writer who chooses to preserve his/ her identity would eventually turn into a political prisoner; the very priest who, more or less willingly, denies his faith by kneeling before the communist power, would also become one of the many enlisted among the comrades' rows, while the priest who protests against the communist injustice would eventually end up in the same category of the politically doomed.

The new man may be synthetically defined as a trained worker. The primary exponent of *the new man* is represented by Alexei Stahanov, the miner who succeeded in extracting 120 coal tons, thus exceeding by 14 times the average production norms. He is often mistaken with the very beginning of a certain misinformation communist mythology, with a certain mythology of regular deceiving and of the actually lacking super-hero. It was not in vane for the writer to be symbolically named a “soul engineer”, given the fact that he embodies the engineer myth, a despicable combination which includes the image of the worker who is celebrating his existence through labor, the equivalent of active resting, and culture dissemination. While Marx was concerned with the human history mechanism filtered through class struggle phenomenon, Engels was concerned with man's origin seen from the working process perspective¹³. That's how *the comrade's archetype* is born, an archetype specific for the communist era; along with its concrete extensions, it would stamp

¹³ The communist myths are revealed by Lucian Boia in *Mitologia Științifică a Comunismului (The Scientific Mythology of Communism)*, Humanitas Publishing House, București, 1999

on one hand the legalized and magnified evil and on the other hand the systematic terror perpetuated as the proper tool for charming and conquering the individual and his ultimate transformation into a piece of the uniform crowd. *The socialist/communist realism*, displayed both as a universe and as a concrete acting, would negatively and extensively mark locations, characters and actions, thus transposing a destructive reality into an imaginary doomed to failure, since the heroic “extraordinary” has been measured by the inevitable absence of both *the authentic* and *the believable* categories.

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The Global Cultural Crisis: Shakespeare, Campus Life and the American Teen Movies

Ecaterina Hanțiu¹

Abstract: *By the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century Shakespeare's everlasting impact on Hollywood had taken an unexpected direction: the teen movie. Shakespeare-inspired high-school students - athletes, cheerleaders and others came to life due to young stars like Amanda Bynes, Julia Stiles, Leonardo Di Caprio, Heath Ledger in movies like *O*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *She's the Man* or *Baz Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet*. The article discusses the specific features of these movies, such as the realistic contemporary teenage background and in most cases a discourse familiar to young people, which are elements supposed to help them better understand Shakespeare, themselves and each other.*

Key words: *Shakespeare, Hollywood, teen movies, personal crisis*

William Shakespeare (b.1564 - d. 1616) is nowadays probably the most popular playwright in the world, even if he was less famous during his lifetime.

Nevertheless, as an Elizabethan theatre-man he was both appreciated and envied, thus making the proof of his existence and his activity in the field of drama. In his *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury*, published in 1598, Francis Meres praises Shakespeare, mentioning a balanced number of tragedies and comedies that he compares to those produced by the best dramatists of the past:

As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so Shakespeare among y^e English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love labors lost*, his *Love labors wonne*, his *Midsummer night dreame* & his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2.* *Richard the 3.* *Henry the 4.* *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*.²

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² <http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/meres.htm>.

As no play by the title *Love's Labour's Won* was ever found, some theories hold that this was an alternative name for *The Taming of the Shrew* which had been written several years earlier and is missing from Meres' list.

Among Shakespeare's envious contemporaries the best known remains Robert Greene, who in his *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) gives a would-be insulting description of the Bard, which actually underlines some of his qualities, such as industry and practical ability among others:

There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. ³

With pros and cons, Shakespeare and his work have managed to travel along centuries, abridged, bowdlerized, performed by the best actors or parodied, taught in schools and universities, neglected or even forgotten at times, but always reborn like a Phoenix from his own ashes.

Whenever Shakespeare's name is mentioned today, it is pronounced with admiration, even by people who haven't managed or bothered to read at least one of his plays. His name is popular, it implies quality and immortality, and it has become part of us. Our modern culture abounds in references to his works – you can meet his name or the term "Shakespearean", the adjective derived from it, almost everywhere: in advertising, films, music, television programs, cartoons, newspapers or magazines. There is also an endless variety of Shakespeare objects inspired by the writer and his work, many of them kitsch artifacts, such as T-shirts, mugs, bottle openers and others of the kind that people can buy as souvenirs or presents. "Shakespearean" has now become a many-purpose adjective, meaning great, beautiful, tragic, or profound: it's applied to people, events, or emotions, irrespective of any connection with or relevance to Shakespeare. (apud Garber, 2008: 176)

³ <http://www.theatrehistory.com/british/shakespeare024.html>.

However, even if many people and especially young people employ the adjective “Shakespearean” as a synonym of “cool”, or use famous Shakespearean lines that have become catch-phrases in familiar situations, it is obvious that most of them have never read an entire play written by the Bard and would never find enough time to do it. In his travels through nineteenth-century America, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote:

There is hardly a pioneer’s hut which does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare. I remember reading the feudal drama of Henry V for the first time in a log cabin (Tocqueville de, 1945: 119).

As we move through the twenty-first century, the would-be readers tend to lose in the name of progress and preparedness the habits of mind that actually helped them to achieve progress.

In spite of all these, Shakespeare’s image, his characters or the quotes from his works still have an impact on the modern public, especially after the invasion of the visual, and especially the movies. Throughout the film history, the movie versions of Shakespeare’s plays were generally considered highbrow and not exactly lucrative. The adaptations were numerous, starting with silent movies at the beginning of the 20th century and continuing with the Shakespeare of Hollywood’s golden age in the 1930’s up to the rediscovery of the Bard about the end of the 1980’s. It was also the time of the BBC movie series (1978 - 1985) which basically followed the requirements of Shakespeare’s plays.

As for the American versions, according to the film historian Vicki Botnick:

There are two directions in which Shakespeare's gone in the past twenty years, probably. One of them is not very Americanized and that is the sort of classic, more literal, prestige project done by, typically with, a big star, often with a European director; usually they're speaking with a British accent. That would be maybe Mel Gibson's *Hamlet*, or more recently, Al Pacino's *Merchant of Venice*, and those are not Americanized. But there's another direction that cinema has gone more recently, that you could certainly call Hollywoodized, and that's the teen adaptations, and that's films like *O, 10 Things I Hate About You*, *Scotland PA*, *She's The Man* [...] So

these are very loose interpretations made to attract a teenage crowd.⁴

Indeed, around 1989, American cinema developed a trend that has culminated in the release of several major teenage adaptations. One can detect several practical reasons for such an enterprise: Shakespeare's name offers instant prestige; the plots deal with archetypal conflicts and general human emotions; dressing old themes in new fashionable clothes brings them closer to reality and makes them more attractive. Taking into account the fact that Shakespeare wrote for a heterogeneous public, catering for all tastes, the shift from past to present proved to happen easier than expected. Always aware of his audience, Shakespeare wrote plays for the stage, not for the page, thus a larger and more complex visualization of events contributes to a much better understanding of both atmosphere and character interrelationships. He has always been present on stage and on the screen in literally revisited plays or shows having revolutionary plots inspired by his works (such as *West Side Story*, which was one of the first successful adaptations of the kind).

Shakespeare's plays, tragedies and comedies alike, actually focus on young people, on teenagers. His Romeo hasn't grown a beard yet, and that might be a clue to his age (he is about 15 or 16), while Juliet's Nurse claims that the girl on *Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen*. (Act 1, scene III, Shakespeare, 1993: 767) The other young people in his plays might be a little bit older, but most probably under twenty years of age. Reintroducing teenagers to Shakespearean plots through film seems to do justice to the youthful atmosphere of the original plays of the kind, in which the restlessness and sometimes the foolishness of the protagonists can be attributed to their young age. Movies like *O, 10 Things I Hate About You*, *She's the Man* or Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* display a range of activities specific to a realistic contemporary teenage background: young people go to parties or proms, play soccer, are members of cheerleading teams, attend classes and so on, just as in Shakespeare's time they went to parties, fought duels, went to church to pray or to the playhouse to attend a performance.

⁴ <http://www.shakespeareinamericanlife.org/transcripts/botnick1.cfm>

However, not all these adaptations were successful. *Scotland, PA*, (2001) inspired by Shakespeare's *Macbeth* had a lesser impact on the young public, as it was satirical but not very entertaining. Director Billy Morrissette moved one of Shakespeare's darkest tragedies to a burger joint in a small place called Scotland, Pennsylvania, in the early 1970s. Mac McBeth (James LeGros) toils at a hamburger stand alongside his wife Pat (Maura Tierney), who is more ambitious than her husband. They murder their boss Norm Duncan (James Rebhorn) and rob the restaurant's safe, using the robbery to throw the police off their trail, but the vegetarian detective McDuff (Christopher Walken) eventually discovers the foul play and takes over the restaurant. Debunking the ambitions of kings and queens and sliding down from crown to frying pan changed a great tragedy into an ordinary murder case. Without the contribution of good actors, the film would be nothing but another average detective movie.

On the other hand, *O* (2001), directed by Tim Blake Nelson and written by Brad Kaaya who had Shakespeare's *Othello* as a source, places the action in a contemporary high school; Othello is Odin James ('OJ') (Mekhi Phifer), the school's only African American student and the star of the basketball team and Desdemona is Desi (Julia Stiles), the dean's daughter and Odin's girlfriend. Iago is Hugo (Josh Hartnett), the coach's son, who manages to lead them to a tragic fate. *O* is a rather violent, emotional tale of love, friendship, and betrayal, just like Shakespeare's *Othello*, but it is more appealing to the young public because there is no age difference between the main characters (they are all high school students) and the movie also contains spectacular images taken during basketball matches, besides displaying different styles of music, from rap to opera. Still, it was less successful than other teen movies, for several understandable reasons. First of all, the release date of the movie (April 1999) was postponed due to the Columbine High School Massacre, but the gloomy memory of a tragedy in high school was persistent even 2 years after the event. On the other hand, both the racial problems and the murderous jealousy of Othello that give significant consistency to Shakespeare's play appeared as less significant to young Americans at the beginning of the 21st century.

Romeo + Juliet (1996), directed by Baz Luhrmann is an abridged modernization of Shakespeare's play. Luhrmann's adaptation is far from the 1968 Zeffirelli version of this impressive

love story, starring Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting. As Vicki Botnick aptly observes:

Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, for example, took a lot of liberties with the story and with the visual style, so that it's got a very modern, hip-hop, violent, sexy kind of flair to it, and many critics said that it was kind of sacrilege to play around with Shakespeare. [...]It kept a lot of the actual text from the play and didn't assume that a young audience couldn't understand it or wouldn't relate to it, or that it would get in the way somehow of the modernization and of feeling really contemporary.⁵

The Shakespearean plot is respected to a great extent, except that the action takes place in the fictional modern-day location Verona Beach, Florida, where the two business empires of the Montagues and the Capulets respectively are at war, swords replaced by guns in their fierce fight. Young Romeo Montague (Leonardo di Caprio) meets Juliet (Claire Danes) at a Capulet party where he goes after having taken Ecstasy pills together with his friends, including a Mercutio (Harold Perrineau) dressed up as a drag queen. The beauty of the Shakespearean text is somehow lost and deprived of meaning in this abundance of modern details, but the visual imagery tries to neutralize the disturbing effect of the contrast between language and background. And what could be more romantic and touching than a young Leonardo di Caprio reciting the passionate Shakespearean line: *Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!* (Act I, Scene V, Shakespeare, 1993: 769)

The best results in adapting Shakespeare to campus life were obtained through comedy, not tragedy. Generally speaking, campus life is full of the joy of life and young audiences were much more delighted to learn about the everyday pranks and practical jokes of young people like themselves than about tragedies happening for apparently inconclusive reasons. One of the most interesting adaptations is director Andy Fickman's 2006 film *She's the Man*, which modernizes the story as a contemporary American teenage comedy. It is set in an American prep school named Illyria where Duke Orsino (Channing Tatum) is sharing his room in the campus with the newly arrived Sebastian Hastings (Amanda Bynes). Duke's new room-mate is actually Viola, Sebastian's twin

⁵ <http://www.shakespeareinamericanlife.org/transcripts/botnick3.cfm>.

sister, whose girls' soccer team has just been dissolved and who wants to play by all means to beat the Cornwall team and humiliate her ex-boyfriend. While Viola is playing soccer with the boys, she is also covering for her brother (James Kirk) who goes to a contest in London with his new band. Besides using the Shakespearean device of making the fake Sebastian Duke's friend and confidante, the movie director also included here the "courtship rehearsal" employed in *As You Like It*, when Rosalind/Ganymede pretends to counsel Orlando to cure him of being in love. Viola's team is victorious, and the game ends with Duke's quoting the words of Malvolio in Shakespeare's play: *Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.* (Act 2, Scene V, Shakespeare, 1993: 65), while the movie ends with a debutante ball where Olivia (Laura Ramsey) is accompanied by Sebastian and Viola - finally accepting to wear a dress – has Duke as her formal date.

Although inspired from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, *She's the Man* is a much lighter version of the story, in which entertainment comes first and not the serious considerations on life and its problems. Some important characters in Shakespeare's play (Sir Toby, Andrew Aguecheek, Maria, Feste, etc) are just shadowy presences in the movie, acting as class or dorm mates, while Malvolio simply became Malcolm Feste's pet: a hairy tarantula. Much of Shakespeare's philosophical thought and wit is lost in this way, the intention of the producer being directed providing funny situations and images instead of funny but meanwhile deep dialogues.

In his *Taming of the Shrew* Shakespeare dealt again with the intricate tensions developing between men and women caught in the war of the sexes. Men and women have long sought different things, discrimination has been a dominant feature of many centuries leading to an inevitable conflict. However, both men and women have always made efforts to cooperate in order to achieve greater harmony especially within their domestic circle. In time both men and women became experts at influencing one another to achieve their cooperative ends, but also became trapped in strategies of manipulation and deception in pursuit of sex and partnership.

In Shakespeare's time women were supposed to be mild and obedient, to serve their fathers and elder brothers and later on, after they got married, their husbands. The behavior of Bianca and

Katharina, the two sisters in Shakespeare's play, is completely different and shockingly contrasting. Bianca, the younger sister, is mild and sweet, while Katharina not only has a sharp tongue and a manifest dislike for men but she is also prone to wild fits of anger. Before Baptista Minola, their father, should accept a suitor for Bianca, he must find a husband for his elder daughter which proves to be a very difficult task. Petruchio appears right in time to marry Katharina, perfectly aware of the situation, fearless and relaxed because he knows he can find a way to defeat her.

The tense relationship between Katharina and Petruchio starts with a round of verbal belligerence, they cross words instead of swords and apparently they are both delighted with the duel. It is quite surprising that at the end of the play the sisters apparently change places, because it is now Bianca who treats her husband in a shrewish manner, while Kate delivers a speech on how a good wife must behave, making the proof of her having been tamed and changed into an obedient woman. In fact, Bianca has always been the artful one, plotting and scheming with her disguised suitors, wrapping men around her little finger, while Kate has been in the habit of speaking her mind, hence her being labeled as an impossible woman, a cursed shrew.

There were many movie adaptations of the play, including the first sound version on film, which is a 1929 adaptation, starring "America's Sweetheart" Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. This version of the film is mainly known for its ending, which shows Katharina delivering her speech on submissiveness, while winking toward Bianca, unseen by Petruchio, thus acknowledging that she has not been tamed after all.

In the same spirit, Zeffirelli's adaptation, starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, ends in a similar note, with Katharina majestically leaving the room after having delivered her famous speech, followed by a submissive Petruchio.

The Taming of the Shrew is the only play Shakespeare wrote to include an induction, which frames the story of Kate, the shrew as entertainment offered to Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker, who is tricked into believing that he is a lord. Shakespeare resorted to the device of the play-within-a-play in several of his works, but this is the only instance in which the *play within* is bulkier and more meaningful than the frame, which the audience was to take as a farce, with nothing serious in it. This is why the induction was

omitted from the recent movie adaptations that focus on the relationship between Katharina and the others.

In *Ten Things I Hate about You*, a 1999 movie directed by Gil Junger, the general plot of the original Shakespearean play is loosely followed. The Stratford sisters, Kat (Julia Stiles) and Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) are the daughters of a gynecologist (Larry Miller) who is afraid that his naïve younger daughter might fall into temptation and get pregnant, thus he does not allow her to go anywhere without her elder sister. He is not afraid such a thing might happen to Kat, as she is strong-willed, quite nasty to men and seems capable of taking care of herself. Unlike Shakespeare's Katharina, she is more of a teenage feminist than just a shrewish girl. She is smart and gifted, good at drawing, sports, playing the guitar and writing poems and she intends to continue her studies at the prestigious Sarah Lawrence College. In spite all these, she is unpopular among her fellow classmates at Padua High School as she is honest and too straightforward at times.

Petruchio's counterpart in the movie is Patrick Verona (Heath Ledger), who starts wooing Kat for money, but ends up by desperately falling in love with her. He is a new-comer to the school and his reputation as a 'bad boy' is based on gossip mainly. Just as Kat, he proves to be a nice, sensitive young person with a heart of gold, who doesn't want to show how vulnerable he is.

While Shakespeare's Katharina is not allowed to voice her own opinion or thoughts on her behavior, her appropriated version, Kat, is given more freedom. She is a non-conformist, who clearly lets everyone know that she doesn't intend to live up to other people's expectations instead of her own. In one of the English Class scenes Kat makes references to Simone de Beauvoir and Charlotte Bronte, both feminist writers, which might let us believe that Kat holds feminist views too. In the film Kat is also given a chance to talk to her sister in a more straightforward manner and explain the reasons for her 'weird' behavior. She even confesses to Bianca that a couple of years before she had a relationship with Joey, her sister's vain and selfish boy friend. Choice (or the impossibility of choosing) appears as a prominent symbol of a certain age, the emancipation of women being reflected in both their attitude and the possibility of choosing for themselves. Nevertheless, even in contemporary society the force exercised by 'peer pressure' can still have an impact on people's choices. When Kat talks to Bianca about her brief affair with Joey, she mentions

that she did it because everyone was doing it. We can gather that Kat was a victim of 'peer pressure' and her reaction was to cut herself off from all the conformists and become her own person. Unlike Shakespeare's Katharina, who is only one voice in the male hierarchical system, Kat is not alone, she is not the only person in society that has feminist views, and the 'Club Skunk' where her favourite band (*Letters to Cleo*) is performing is full of girls sharing similar ideas.

If in the process of translation from play to movie certain analogies were relatively unproblematic, such as the father's concern for his daughters' reputation, other aspects of Shakespeare's play did not find equivalents so easily in the world of teen comedy. The figure of the shrew and her eventual taming are especially difficult to transpose into the modern society where the treatment of women is different. The 'taming' of Kat in *10 Things I Hate about You* involves not a forcefully imposed submission to male authority, but finding a way of rounding off of the sharp edges of a conflict. On the one hand Kat is given the choice of going out with Patrick or not and she accepts because she likes his uncommon style. On the other hand Patrick is given money to woo Kat but he never forces her to take up his offer because that is not acceptable in the society that they live in. In Zeffirelli's version Petruchio (Richard Burton) was chasing a reluctant Katharina (Elizabeth Taylor) through rooms and corridors, just as a hunter is chasing game, climbing stairs and roofs and ending up in a haystack, holding his exhausted wife-to-be in his arms, providing a suggestive image, especially for those who know that the meaning of the idiom *a roll in the hay* is actually to have sexual intercourse. However their roll in the hay looks more like rape than consented union, it is brutal and violent. Kat and Patrick end up rolling in the hay as well, after having chased *each other* in a paintball game, but the atmosphere is relaxed, playful and full of the joy of life. When they kiss, both do it quite willingly, with smiles and tender looks. Their initial verbal duel is as sharp as Katharina's and Petruchio's, but the language is in accordance with the high school slang.

PATRICK (*continuing*): You hate me don't you?

KAT: I don't really think you warrant that strong an emotion.

PATRICK: Then say you'll spend Dollar Night at the track with me.

KAT: And why would I do that?

PATRICK: Come on - the ponies, the flat beer, you with money in your eyes, me with my hand on your ass...

KAT: You - covered in my vomit.

PATRICK: Seven-thirty?

She slams her locker shut and walks away.⁶

Kat manages to impress Patrick with her independent attitude, he admires her dancing at the club, playing the guitar and taking active part in different other activities, but he also has the opportunity of helping and taking care of her when she gets drunk and falls off the table she is dancing on. Kat seems to dislike his protective attitude, but deep inside she is flattered.

Patrick marches Kat around the yard, holding her up

KAT: This is so patronizing.

PATRICK: Leave it to you to use big words when you're shitfaced.

KAT: Why're you doing this?

PATRICK: I told you.

KAT: You don't care if I die.

PATRICK: Sure, I do.

KAT: Why?

PATRICK: Because then I'd have to start taking out girls who like me.

KAT: Like you could find one.

PATRICK: See that? Who needs affection when I've got blind hatred?⁷

Instead of being tamed and delivering a speech on obedience, Kat manages somehow to tame everybody around her: Bianca, Patrick and her father, who eventually allows her to continue her studies at the desired university.

Even if the persons tamed are not the expected ones, *10 Things I Hate About You* is top-heavy with the references to Shakespeare.

Kat's friend Mandella is fond of Shakespeare and the only boy to find the way to her heart is Michael, who is also a fan so they can exchange quotes and even go to the prom dressed in 16th century attire.

Shakespeare's sonnets are being taught in Kat's English class, serving as sources for various school projects, tasks and home

⁶ <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/10Things.html>.

⁷ <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/10Things.html>.

assignments, recited in various manners, accepted or rejected by the students.

DEREK (reading; in his Rasta stoner drawl) In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes/ For they in thee a thousand errors note/ But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise/ Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote.

(In the back of the room Clem raises his hand.)

CLEM Ms. Blaise, can I get the bathroom pass? Damn if Shakespeare don't act as a laxative on my person.⁸

The title of the movie comes from the sonnet written by Kat in Shakespearean rhyme and delivered in class after having split with Patrick. It is both a “sonnet-within-a play” that replaces the Bard’s “play-within-a-play”, and a brief but impressive one-woman show replacing the final discourse on submissiveness bearing a resemblance to Shakespeare’s sonnets 57 or 130 mainly, but maintaining the fragrance of modern times. Kat’s derivative version of the Shakespearean sonnets

I hate the way you talk to me,
And the way you cut your hair.
I hate the way you drive my car,
I hate it when you stare.
I hate your big dumb combat boots
And the way you read my mind.
I hate you so much it makes me sick,
It even makes me rhyme.
I hate the way you're always right,
I hate it when you lie.
I hate it when you make me laugh,
Even worse when you make me cry
I hate it when you're not around,
And the fact that you didn't call
But mostly I hate the way I don't hate you,
Not even close,
Not even a little bit,
Not even at all.⁹

⁸ <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/10Things.html>

⁹ <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/10Things.html>.

Imperfect as it might be, Julia Stiles' poem displays the sincere feelings of a girl for her imperfect partner, just as in his *Sonnet 130* Shakespeare paid a pragmatic tribute to his uncomely mistress. Both a parody of the conventional love sonnet, made popular in England by Sidney's use of the Petrarchan form in his epic poem *Astrophel and Stella* and a song of praise to the common beauty and humanity of his lover, Shakespeare wrote this sonnet in which he deliberately uses typical love poetry metaphors against themselves. A poet like Shakespeare could not follow the herd and make exaggerated comparisons; here he is describing reality: *My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun* (Shakespeare, 1993: 893) stating that appearances are not what matter where true love is concerned. Kat's love poem is just as frank and honest, and even if it starts with denying her boyfriend's qualities it ends up by the acceptance of whatever belongs to him.

Overall *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Ten Things I Hate about You* contain many elements that reflect the society through which they were composed. The historical, cultural, and social context of the *Taming of the Shrew* influenced much of the action in the play and the film appropriation gives an insight into 20th century teen culture. Shakespeare's genius lay not so much only in his intricate wordplay but in his simple and fundamental stories. According to many scholars, such as Paula Nechak for instance, almost every aspect of everyday life can be found somewhere in a William Shakespeare play.¹⁰

Indeed, as Shakespeare deals with the most basic tenets of human nature - greed, anger, love, passion, ambition, self-destruction, compassion, etc. - his plays remain timeless and can be adapted and re-adapted everywhere and anytime. In an age of Global Cultural Crisis William Shakespeare's plays survive and convey their message even in distorted versions or loose adaptations.

¹⁰ <http://www.fathom.com/course/28701907/session1.html>

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”Defeat iss good for art; victory it is not good”. The Theme of War in William Faulkner’s Fiction

Teodor Mateoc¹

Abstract: *It is the assumption of my paper that William Faulkner’s concern with war can be looked at from a double perspective: war as an arena of psychological projections, which would point to his inner drive of constructing an imaginary, i.e., heroic biography; and war as memory, mostly of defeat, which would show a past-bound Faulkner brought up on stories of the Civil War, so much part of the local history of his native Mississippi. A Fable, his most ambitious novel, offers yet another possible perspective: war, the WWI in this case, as a mode of expression of modern civilization. Patterned on biblical imagery, the novel speaks simultaneously of the need for moral re-armament as an alternative to a power-driven military and political establishment, and of the waste and pity of war-both themes rendered in a highly poetic and symbolic prose-if sometimes blurred and fuzzy- a narrative which reaches towards mythical and philosophical dimensions.*

Key-Words: *war; defeat; victory; responsibility; expiation; memory; projection*

For most critics, and certainly most readers, Faulkner’s fame rests upon his novels of the Old South, although other titles were also awarded prestigious literary prizes, such as the National Book Award for his *Collected Stories* (1950), or the Pulitzer Prize for *A Fable* (1954) and *The Reivers* (1962). However, war and its consequences was always an important concern with Faulkner, the man and the writer: from his personal infatuation with the Canadian Royal Airforce, through the Civil War which informs his Yoknapatwpha cycle, to WW I that inspired his late ambitious, if contentious, novel, *A Fable*.

In *Faulkner's Career: An Internal Literary History* (1979), Gary Lee Stonum distinguishes between ‘two subjectivities implicated in a writing career’. ‘author’ is the name he gives to the

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subject produced by the writing; 'writer' denotes the subject who produces the writing. 'Both are,' Stonum adds, 'abstractions from the historical person William Faulkner' (18).

Five decades of criticism have invested Faulkner, 'the author', with authority on many topics: race relations, the history of the Old South, the future of democracy and of the human race, the meaning of Christianity, or the role of the artist in society. William Faulkner, 'the writer' had few or partially formed ideas and judgments on many of these issues, and, more often than not, was reluctant to express or debate most of them. Ever since Malcolm Cowley's *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), to his death in 1962, William Faulkner had to accept, reluctantly, that he had become an 'institutionalized cultural force' (Kreyling: 129) and had to accept the role of artist who cannot escape being historically situated.

War as a constant theme in Faulkner's fiction can be considered from a double standpoint: war as an imaginary space of inner fantasies and psychological projections, or war as memory of defeat, the latter informed by the tragic experience of the Civil War which has marked generations of southerners. The war put an end to the deep-seated belief of the southerners in the illusion that they aware a separate 'race' and, consequently, had the right to self-rule and to maintain a feudal institution in the wake of modernity:

Our ancestors were not afraid like this- our grandfathers who fought at first and second Manassas...let alone those who survived that and had the additional and even greater courage and endurance to resist and survive Reconstruction and so preserved to us something of our present heritage. Why are we, descendents of that blood and inheritors of that courage afraid?...What has happened to us in only a hundred years? (Faulkner, 1976: 128).

That such an attempt failed, explains the feeling of doom and of the tragic that marks Faulkner's best fiction. The result of this failure is the refusal of recent history, a turning to a remote past that, re-shaped by memory and by an acute sense of loss and injustice, acquires mythical proportions. Sometimes defeated southerners resort to alcohol or to telling stories of what has been, like Quentin Compson' father does in *The Sound and the Fury*; others, like Rev. Gail Hightower of *Light in August*, not only find it impossible to face the present, but turn away from religion, too, into a sort of spiritual numbness; others yet court disaster, live

dangerously and eventually find their death, like young Sartoris who dies in a plane-crash. Faulkner's South, then, failed in the attempt to remain a traditionalist society rooted in the structures of feelings and emotions of aristocratic Europe and, in the words of Louis Simpson, from the accompanying frustration and defeat,' the modern southern writer inherited a compelling drama of man and community'(50). Such an aspiration to community resided not only in the manners and conventions, ceremony and rituals, but in the goodness and evil, in noble and debased forms of human subjectivity, in what Faulkner once called 'the heart's driving complexity'. For communitarian identity, as Benedict Anderson shows 'is not an innate phenomenon but a product culturally and historically fabricated to local specifications by narratives that are more or less cooperative (the narrative of literature cooperative with the narrative of history, for example) and more or less conscious'(Anderson: 141). What makes Benedict Anderson's study of *Imagined Communities* useful for the understanding of southernness in American literature, is that he gives an important place to 'nonartefactual' values and realities: 'love', 'self-sacrifice', and the possibility of a 'metaphysical conception of man'

Faulkner's attraction to war and its paraphernalia and theatricality goes hand in hand with his extraordinary talent for storytelling. Brought up with stories of the past, mostly stories of defeat in the Civil War, told by his grandfather, uncles, aunts and other Mississippians, the writer developed a taste for making up stories himself and about himself. The well-known example is his pre-fabricated persona of a military hero and ace of flying. His alleged participation in WW I is, simultaneously, an attempt at evasion and revelation. He went to such pains as to claim English citizenship on the basis of forged papers and the complicity of friends. Though he never did fly, on the return home, he would sport for a long time the military uniform, walk with a limp and a cane, pretend he was shot down over France and even changed his name from Falkner, to Faulkner. He may have done this as a way of masking his failures and feelings of outsideness and frustration. At the time, as Carolyn Porter shows, he had not yet published anything apart from some bad poetry, he had missed the war, he had not married Estelle. The uniform, at least commanded respect and admiration (9). The stories he had heard from soldiers during his training in Canada about war tactics, airplanes, pilots and military discipline fueled his imagination to the extent that he

appropriated these imaginary episodes and they became part of his constructed biography. If he could not take part in the war, he recreated it fictionally, so that instead of lived experience, history is ritualized, as it were, in Faulkner's fiction.

Whether one considers his short pieces in *Collected Stories* or in *The Unvanquished* (1938), or such novels as *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), or *A Fable*, one cannot help noticing how little of battlefield combat actually appears in his fiction, although few are the characters who have not been affected by war in one way or another. As Polk has pointed out, "Faulkner seems more concerned with the gaps between the battles"(vi), the lull between wars, when war veterans must figure out how to deal with peace and with the effects of war in their lives at home. Even in *A Fable*, his novel most directly engaged with military confrontation on a wide scale, he is not so much concerned with war as such, but with war as a condition and part of modern civilization, one of its basic, recurrent modes of expression. Though set during WW I, *A Fable* is really a meditation on the state of the world following WW II . It is, in a way, a Cold War novel (Polk: vii), a narrative which dramatizes the interconnectedness of the military, political, economic and cultural hierarchies and establishment that run the nations of the world. Such structures of power are transnational and often connive with each other to insure their own survival, no matter the cost of human blood .

There are several prefigurations of Faulkner's treatment of war long before *A Fable* came out. The fourth section of his *Collected Stories*, entitled "Waste Land" in homage to his modernist master T. S. Eliot, displays not only an admirable compositional and stylistic virtuosity and diversity, in stories like *Crevasse* or *Turnabout*, but also an intense suggestiveness that transforms the battlefield into a symbolic landscape. Similarly, the political and philosophical reflexions, in the story of the Indian subadar, i.e., officer- the one who meditates on "victory" and "defeat" as the best source of inspiration for literature- and the German prisoner of war (*Ad Astra*) anticipate the discursiveness of *A Fable*, while the malaise of the pilots in *Death Drag* expresses the sensibility of the whole lost generation, also suggested by Donald Mahon's war wound in *Soldiers' Pay* (1926) and Bayard Sartoris's trauma in *Flags in the Dust* .

In Faulkner's first novel, both Joe Gilligan ("Yaphank"), a private who never got to fight in the war, and Mahon, the returning

war hero who will eventually die from his wounds, serve as what may have been Faulkner's unspoken longing and frustration-fuelled psychological projection. *Soldiers' Pay* also seems to announce, in a truly modernist fashion, the use of a mythological framework. Donald Mahon is the mutilated son of an Episcopalian minister, as well as a wounded "faun", while Mrs. Margaret Powers appears not only as a war widow, but also as a mythical figure, or Queen of the underworld. If here the reference to myth is not central, however, in *A Fable* the storyline and the major events are prefigured by grand old narratives, reminding one of the 'mythic method' that T. S. Eliot saw as exemplary for Joyce's *Ulysses*.

It can be argued that Faulkner's method illustrates an important feature that V. Woolf mentioned in 1929 as typical for the modernist prose: the symbiosis between *the poetic* and *the epic*. The poetic character of the novel comes as the natural outcome of a long process of internalizing the prosody. The result is a compositional principle that Marcel Pop Cornis once called the "rhetorical-figurative style" which takes over the function of representation and structuring of reality. Such a style contributes to the semantic organization of discourse, to the transformation of the metonymical process (which, according to R. Jakobson, is a characteristic of prose) into a metaphorical process. In this respect, Faulkner continues a rhetorical tradition that has always been a characteristic of Southern writing. Judged in the context of its spatial limitation and its frozen time (the narrative voice is past-bound; events are presented and not dramatized in the fictional present), his style allows the narrator a distancing space from the narrated events, so that the style tends to take an independent existence. The carefully wrought rhetorical configurations, the verbal pathos, the obsessive repetitive patterns are not so much illustrations of Faulkner's tendency to avoid meaning, as Conrad Aiken asserts, as symptoms of his 'agony of communication'. A. Kazin believes that 'Faulkner wanted to express what cannot be expressed, to achieve that verbal intensity which, while affecting the coherence of his novels, confers them a high degree of poetry' (Kazin: 358).

Turning back to the novel and to the use of myth, it becomes obvious that, here, the classical myth is replaced by the biblical story of Christ's Passions. But this does not mean that it is a Christian novel. Nor is it a war novel proper if one would compare

it to such classics of the genre as Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) or Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948). For what sets things in motion is not military action but the refusal to engage in combat. However, the corporal's mutiny does not turn the novel into a pacifist utopia either, just like the grotesque picture of a self-sufficient military and bureaucratic machine does not turn the narrative into a satire in the manner of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961). Centering on the moral antagonism between the corporal and the old general, *A Fable* is, ultimately, a philosophical novel or a novel of ideas concerned with such issues as the mechanisms of power and order, war and peace, hierarchical authority and the right to disobey, human freedom and moral choice.

The temporal frame of the narrative is the last stage of the WW I in France, a week before Easter, and the consequential event is the possibility of a mutiny among one of the French regiments. It is but a mystery first, a rumour spread along the frontline by an unnamed Corporal from the Middle East who has obtained French nationality and who has twelve assistants, one of whom, Polcheck, will eventually betray him.

The first episode opens rather impressively, with the arrival of the arrested soldiers and their disgraced general at the Headquarters, whereupon they are put in a prison camp to be executed. The population is divided between the desire for peace and that of punishing the traitors. The news spread soon, however, the Germans are contacted and they, too, seem to embrace the idea so that the war machine is blocked all along the frontline. The events cover the two days of the week, Monday and Tuesday, and henceforth the events precipitate and the biblical pattern is followed almost faithfully: the betrayal and the arrest of the Corporal on Wednesday, his execution on Friday when he is shot together with a thief and a madman and presented with a crown of barbed wire. On the seventh day, history resumes its course and the war starts again.

The analogy with the Christian myth and the Passions of Christ is sustained all along: the three women accompanying the Corporal, who is thirty three and born in a stable, are Marthe and Marya, while his fiancée, an ex-prostitute, is Mary Magdalene; the wedding in Cana is reenacted in a French village full of American soldiers who decide to contribute for the price of the wine; the body disappears after the execution. The crisis of the allegory is the

temptation scene, reminiscent of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* and featuring here the Christ-like figure of the Corporal and the Supreme Commander, who turns out to be his biological father, as the Grand Inquisitor. Instead of martyrdom, the Corporal is offered life, freedom and limitless power on the condition that he renounces his non-violent rebellion. On his predictable refusal, he is executed and Faulkner identifies him with the Unknown Soldier, a symbol of the will of man in his determination to endure and prevail.

However, Faulkner does take a critical distance from the biblical story. While in Christian theology God the Father is one with his Son and supportive of his redemptive mission on earth, here Faulkner ironically reverses Christ's temptation in the desert by casting the old general in the role of the devil. In tempting the corporal with a vision of limitless power and glory, the old general's view of man is not that of the Christian figure, but of the modern human individual, with its "lusts and appetites" and "his deathless passion for being led, mystified, and deceived" (366).

Furthermore, the old general brings an additional philosophical argument against the corporal's pacifism in that he defines war as an ineradicable human vice, the perverseness of which he defines satirically as *hermaphroditism*: "the phenomenon of war is its hermaphroditism: the principles of victory and of defeat inhabit the same body" (360). Even the Germans, whom Faulkner characterizes as obsessively warlike, will experience a relativistic vision of victory and defeat in relation to the distribution of resources: "a nation insolvent from overpopulation will declare war on whatever richest and most sentimental opponent it can persuade to defeat it quickest, in order to feed its people out of the conqueror's quartermaster stores" (361). Alongside the General's economic view of military conflicts is his opinion that future wars will be technologically so advanced that they "out-distance" man: "his simple frail physique will be no longer able to keep up, bear them, attend them, be present" (370).

It is noteworthy that the old general finally proclaims, however, his eschatological optimism and belief in human survival in spite of the general human urge to warfare and despite his growing dependence on technology. Even then, he believes, man will 'endure and prevail':

I know that he has that in him which will enable him to outlast even his wars; that [there is in him something] more durable than all his vices, even *that last and most fearsome one ... his enslavement to the demonic progeny of his own mechanical curiosity ...* and that other one which is no vice at all but instead is the quality mark of and warrant of man's immortality: his deathless folly (371-2)

In this respect, Faulkner invites a reading of the scene between the old general and his son, as an affirmation of his humanistic philosophy, of his belief in the sometimes tragic triumph of the Good.

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Carmen Francesca Bancius Reisen zwischen bekannten und imaginären Geographien

Veronica Buciuman¹

Abstract: *This study pursues the goal of signalizing the meaning of culinary experiences in the process of identity construction. The spiritual stomach is the metaphorical expression of that perception organ, which helps the writer to integrate the personal past from the communistic Rumania into the new Berlin environment. Berlin in the Novel Berlin ist mein Paris of Carmen Francesca Banciu constitutes both a real geographical space as well as an imaginary geography. Experiencing time and space by means of culinary acts is the way Carmen Francesca Banciu describe the difficulties of integration and identity definition in a foreign land.*

Keywords: *Carmen Francesca Banciu, Berlin ist mein Paris, spiritual stomach, imaginary geographies, personal and historical time perception*

Einleitung

Carmen Francesca Banciu vertritt eine Gruppe Schriftsteller, deren Dasein auch von der europäischen Geschichte bestimmt wurde. Nach der Wende wandert sie ins Ausland und lässt sich in Berlin nieder. Die schriftstellerische Karriere beginnt sie im Rumänien der 80er Jahre, wenn sie 1985 den Internationalen Kurzgeschichtenpreis der Stadt Arnsberg verliehen bekommt. Dies zieht das Publikationsverbot in dem Heimatland hinter sich und trägt zu ihrer Entscheidung bei, Rumänien 1991 mit den drei Kindern zu verlassen.

Die kosmopolite Schriftstellerin betrachtet sich nicht als politische Dissidentin, sondern sucht nach wie vor durch ihre literarischen Schriften die Lebenspoesie, sowohl als existentielle Erfahrung als auch als rein Ästhetische. Sie entscheidet sich auf Deutsch zu schreiben, weil das Rumänische ihr Schranken aufzwingt, die sich teilweise unabhängig von ihrem Willen auftun.

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C. F. Banciu befindet sich immer auf der Suche nach dem passenden Ausdruck für eine Empfindung, Idee oder einen Gedanken, ihre Prosa aber auch ihre Behauptungen aus verschiedenen Interviews für die rumänische oder internationale Presse unterstützen diese Annahme.

Die Romane von Carmen Francesca Banciu bearbeiten authentische Erlebnisse ohne autobiographisch zu werden. Nach der Auseinandersetzung mit der Mutterfigur in *Das Lied der traurigen Mutter* setzt sie diese Einstellung auch in *Vaterflucht* weiter. Dabei stellt ihr letzter Roman *Berlin ist mein Paris* den Meilenstein einer Wende in dem eigenen Leben dar. Um das Thema des Zusammenhangs zwischen individueller und europäischer Geschichte kreisen auch die Geschichten, die den Roman ausmachen. Narratologisch betrachtet ist dieses Werk auch eine Veranschaulichung der Verhältnisse zwischen der erlebten und der erzählten bzw. Erzählzeit. Geographisch ist es Berlin, historisch sind aber die präsentierten Erlebnismomente, die Brücken zwischen den Bruchstücken der individuellen Identität schlagen können. Berlin akkumuliert die Welt in sich, während die Arbeitszeit in den Berliner Cafes Erinnerungen und Zukunftsvorstellungen hervorruft. Die Kraft der Erinnerung und die Vorstellungskraft wirken sich auf die äußere Geographie aus und schaffen in diesem Dialog zwischen Innerlichkeit und Äußerlichkeit des Lebens *imaginäre Geographien*.²

1. Reisen zwischen bekannten und imaginären Geographien

Carmen Francesca Bancius Roman *Berlin ist mein Paris* bietet dem Leser eine imaginäre Stadtrundfahrt in dem Berlin der 90er Jahre. Das Motiv der Reise wird hier spielerisch in dem Gewand kulinarischer Erfahrungen verkleidet, indem die Ich-Erzählerin

² Bachmann-Medick, Doris: *Texte zwischen den Kulturen: ein Ausflug in «postkoloniale Landkarten»*. In: Böhme, H., Scherpe, K. (Hg.): *Literatur und Kulturwissenschaften. Positionen, Theorien, Modelle*. Reinbeck b. Hamburg: Rowohlt 1996. S. 60-77. Während Aleida Assmanns *Erinnerungsräume* die zeitliche, räumliche und individuelle Dimension eines Ortes hervorhebt, beschränkt sich Bachmann-Medick mit dem Begriff *imaginäre Geographie* auf die räumliche Dimension der Orte ein, die aber im Sinne von Homi Bhabha eine Art *third space*, eine vierte Dimension darstellt, worin die Projektionen der menschlichen Phantasie zusammenkommen. Grundsätzlich sind diese zwei Begriffe komplementär, da sie eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung des Gedächtnisses verbindet.

Berlin als kosmopolite Metropole mit kumulativer Kraft erlebt, wo sie die ganze Welt *in nuce* kennen lernen kann. Diese Erlebnisse sammelt die Erzählerin während ihrer Besuche von Cafes und Restaurants verschiedener nationaler Prägungen. Diese Wanderung ist jedoch nur die Widerspiegelung ihrer inneren Suche nach einer neuen Identität, die an dem westeuropäischen Lebensmilieu anzupassen ist.

Der poetische Gestus dieses Werks verfolgt das Ziel, den Integrations- und Anpassungsprozess der durch Berlin wandernden Erzählerin darzustellen. Ausgangspunkt und Ziel dieser Reise sind Rumänien – mit Veranlagung in der kommunistischen Vergangenheit – bzw. Paris – das eine unbestimmte Zukunft vertritt. Das Zwischendurch als festes Leben in Berlin wird in Form von unverbindlich zusammen gerahmten Kurzerzählungen, die jedoch eine innere Chronologie der Anpassung am westlichen Leben durchblicken lässt. Dabei widerspiegelt sich diese innere Chronologie auch nach außen. Die Geographie wird wortwörtlich geschoben, da Berlin die ganze Welt umfasst.

Dieser Chronotopos, um Michail Bachtins Begriff zu verwenden, wird in der Einleitung der Erzählerin deutlich, wo die intertextuelle Bearbeitung von Dantes *Divinia Comedia* den Leser davor warnt, alle Vorurteile über Berlin loszuwerden. Berlin als Magnet der ganzen Welt ist auch das Kennzeichen einer kumulativen Reise. Carmen Francesca Banciu behauptet in einem Interview für die Zeitschrift *Observatorul cultural*, aus Mai 2008:

Am rămas la Berlin în momentul în care am realizat că Berlinul este un oraș în devenire, un oraș unic – în Europa, în orice caz, și chiar în lume – pentru că reunește două istorii, două lumi. Am avut privilegiul să fiu martoră la reunificarea Germaniei. În acest sens, nu Germania este importantă, ci faptul că ea reflectă în formă redusă ce se întâmplă în Europa și în lume la momentul acesta, adică această creare a unei lumi noi, care se naște din două lumi care apun, pentru că nici comunismul, nici capitalismul nu mai sînt ceea ce au fost ele inițial.³

³ Ich blieb in Berlin zu einer Zeit, als ich einsah, dass Berlin eine werdende Stadt war, eine einmalige Stadt in Europa, auf jeden Fall und sogar in der ganzen Welt – weil sie zwei Geschichten, zwei Welten verband. Ich hatte die Gelegenheit, die deutsche Wende zu erleben. In diesem Sinne ist Deutschland nicht wichtig, sondern die Tatsache, dass sie im Kern das darstellt, was in ganz Europa und in der ganzen Welt geschieht, zwar das Erschaffen einer neuen Welt, die aus zwei

Italien, Frankreich und die USA als westliche, Rumänien und die Sowjetunion als östliche Länder werden in Berlin zusammengebracht, indem die Erzählerin ihre kulinarischen Erfahrungen in solchen Gaststätten sammelt, die Spezifika dieser Länder darstellen.

Die Metropole gewinnt neue Gesichter nicht nur durch die ständige Bewegung des erzählenden Blickes, sondern auch aus geschichtlichen Gründen, da die Reminiszenzen der Zone und der Abdruck der kommunistischen Architektur noch sichtbar sind. Zum andern verbindet die Protagonistin Rumänien als innere Geographie mit Westeuropa und verwirklicht auf diese Weise eine frühzeitige Integration des Herkunftslandes in eine Landschaft, wo sich die Erzählerin zuhause fühlt.

Auf der Auswanderungsreise gibt es oft Anlass zur Erinnerung an die Kindheit. So zum Beispiel die Zwetschgenknödel der Oma und die Linzertorte der Mutter werden durch die Aufenthalte in Wien und Linz.

Irgendwann steht Linz auf einer Tafel. Und Mutter mit ihrer Linzertorte. Und Großmutter mit ihren Zwetschgenknödeln. Sie alle tauchen auf aus der Erinnerung. Verlassen den Ort, in den sie für immer eingegraben habe. Seit es sie nicht mehr gibt. Ich kann Mutter noch in Gedanken zuwinken und ihr sagen: Siehst du. Es doch noch soweit gekommen. Ich bin in Wien. (*Berlin ist mein Paris*, 15)

Dieses Fragment veranschaulicht vielleicht am besten, wie die eigene Vergangenheit in eine neue Welt mitgetragen und integriert wird. Durch diesen Anpassungsprozess prägt die Erzählerin die tatsächliche Geographie Wiens oder der Stadt Linz mit eigenen Sinngebungen und lässt eine *imaginäre Geographie* ans Licht kommen.

In dem englischsprachigen Raum verwendet Edward Said zur Benennung dieser Vorgänge den Begriff *cultural mapping*.⁴ Die

untergehenden Welten hervorgeht, denn weder der Kommunismus noch der Kapitalismus sind das, was sie früher waren. [Übersetzung aus dem Rumänischen VB]

⁴ Zitiert von Bachmann-Medick in *Texte zwischen den Kulturen: ein Ausflug in «postkoloniale Landkarten»*. In: Böhme, H., Scherpe, K. (Hg.): *Literatur und Kulturwissenschaften. Positionen, Theorien, Modelle*. Reinbeck b. Hamburg: Rowohlt 1996. S. 66. Der Begriff wird von E. W. Said in *Culture and Imperialism*.

neugierige Erzählerin erlebt Kultur wie ein Genießer, der sich vor einem mit unzählig einladenden Gerichten beladenen Tisch befindet. Obwohl diese kulturelle Erfahrung nicht um das Essen kreist, sondern um die Art und Weise die eigene Individualität in der kosmopoliten Berliner Welt zu entdecken, verbindet die Schriftstellerin die gegenwärtige Selbsterkenntnis mit Erinnerungen an jene Gerichte, die Mutter und Großmutter auszeichneten. Diese weiblichen Figuren haben für die Heldin eine feste Identität, die durch ihr Erleben von neuen Geographien in Erinnerung aufgerufen wird. Diese Proust ähnliche Übung bringt in C. F. Bancius Roman sowohl die Entzückungen einer anscheinend oberflächlichen Art des Kulturkonsums als auch die Tiefe solcher Fragstellungen mit sich, die die Philosophie des Zeit-Raum Verhältnisses beschäftigten.

So beginnt die ganze Entdeckung Berlins im Adler Cafe am Checkpoint Charlie, in Wirklichkeit ein Ort, der an einer geographischen und historischen Grenze liegt. Die Heldin des Romans findet als Berufserzählerin diesen Ort als Sinnbild des Absurden, da dieses Cafe beides verbindet und trennt, sowohl die europäische Geschichte als auch die individuelle Lebenszeit. Alle Cafes, die die Erzählerin als Arbeitsorte betritt befinden sich in der unmittelbaren Nähe von Checkpoint Charlie, was für sie Anlass zum narrativen Experiment mit der Zeit und dem Raum darstellt.

Zum Aufbau einer imaginären Geographie trägt auch die Anlage der besuchten Cafes bei, indem zum Beispiel *Milano. Buon Giorno* mit seinem richtigen Espresso und den Pasta gleich gegenüber vom Cafe Paris liegt. Diese Nachbarschaft wird von der Protagonistin als solche wahrgenommen und durch die Ritualisierung des Bestellungsaktes für das alltägliche kulturelle Erlebnis aufgewertet.

Die Atmosphäre in jeder Gaststätte spielt eine wichtige Rolle in dem Ritual der Erkenntnis mittels des Genusses. Roberto aus dem *Milano. Buon Giorno*, der seine Gäste in ein Ratespiel einfädelt und dabei ihren Hintergrund zu erraten versucht –

Nichts konnte Roberto entgehen. Hast du einen Ehering getragen?
Das kann doch gar nicht so lange her sein, man sieht die Spur an

New York, 1993, verwendet und wird ins Deutsche als *Kultur und Imperialismus: Einbildungskraft und Politik im Zeitalter der Macht*. Frankfurt am Main, 1994, übersetzt.

deinem Finger. Die sind noch nicht zugewachsen. Du bist geschieden. Kinder aber hast du keine. (*Berlin ist mein Paris*, 59)

– überrascht mit seinem Erzähl talent. Das Cafe als Arbeitsplatz des Schriftstellers ist auch kein neuer Topos in der Literaturgeschichte, C. F. Banciu bringt jedoch die eigene Perspektive ein und erklärt es zum angemessenen Ort, wo Zeit und Raum zusammenwirken, um die Subjektivität persönlicher Erinnerungen zu veranschaulichen. Die Innen-Außen Widerspiegelung der Wahrnehmungen erkennt man in jeder besuchten Gaststätte, da die erlebte Zeit auf eine Vergangene zurückblicken lässt. Die Einkapselung der Erlebnisse in Erinnerungen wird in dem Cafe als umgekehrte Operation dargestellt, so als würde die Heldin ihr inneres Gepäck auspacken und für jede Erinnerung die beste Schublade in dem neuen Lebensraum suchen. Das Cafehaus wird auf diese Weise zu dem, was Homi Bhabha *third space* benennt, und zwar zu einem Zwischenraum, in dem das kulturelle Nebeneinander und sogar das Hybride möglich und akzeptiert sind.

Und man sitzt auf der Terrasse und weiß nicht mehr, was man zu tun hat. Denn plötzlich ist die Ferienstimmung da und man bekommt Sehnsucht nach der Ferne. Nicht, dass es in Berlin nicht schön ist. Aber es gibt Orte hier in der Stadt, die einem deutlich machen, wie weit die Welt ist. Und wie süß und melancholisch die Fremde. Und so findet man sich plötzlich auf der Terrasse des *Sale e Tabacchi* wieder. (*Berlin ist mein Paris*, 67)

Der süße Geschmack der Fremde deutet auf den Magen als Wahrnehmungsorgan des Lebensgenusses hin, wobei die aufgenommenen Impressionen einem Verdauungsprozess unterzogen werden, infolge dessen manches gespeichert und aufbewahrt wird und manches nicht.

In der Parallele zu Rumänien, das als Land ohne Geschmackskultur beschrieben wird, schreibt der geistige Magen Deutschland das Konzept des Genusses zu. Auf diesen Vorgang der Sinnstiftung weisen einige Behauptungen der Autorin, C. F. Banciu, hin, die in einem Interview mit Iulia Dondorici über ihr Verhältnis zu den eigenen Worten spricht.

Uneori poți fi stăpînul limbii. Cu riscul de a rămîne prizonier în structura și în lexicul ei, care, într-o anumită măsură, sunt

condiționate temporal. Dar trebuie să sfărâmi limba, pentru a recîștiga poezia. Cu cît știi mai bine o limbă, cu atît pericolul este mai mare. E o relație de putere. Între tine și limbă. O vreme, în timp ce scriam în română, eram ca în transă. Adusesem cu mine o împietrire. Cuvintele îmi stăteau în gît, în spatele gurii, și se sufocau unul pe celălalt.⁵

Die Sammlung von Alltagserfahrungen wird in engem Zusammenhang mit der Ausdruckssprache gebracht. Während die Schriftstellerin Banciu eine Art Versteinerung in der rumänischen Sprache verspürt, findet ihre Heldin in Berlin ein Lebensmilieu, das es mit den alten Gewohnheiten bricht und die Möglichkeit, das Genießen zu lernen, herbeiführt. Diese neue Entdeckung trägt den Namen *Genuss*, denn in Berlin frühstückt man mit Blumen im Raum, was natürlich besagt, dass dazu nicht nur das Essen an und für sich zählt, sondern auch die ganze Szenerie. Die Blumen sind kein bürgerlich aufgestelltes Exponat, das das Zimmer aufhellen muss, sie sind im Grunde der Anstoß zur ersten Tagestätigkeit der Hausbewohnerin, die ihren Tag mit dem Blumengießen beginnt. Der Lebensgenuss wird zuerst von den fleischigen Pflanzen symbolisiert.

Das Kapitel *Genuss ist ein Wort aus Deutschland* arbeitet mit Kontrasten und Antithesen zwischen Mangel und Reichtum an Nahrung im Vergleich zum Mangel und Fülle von Freiheit. Der poetische Chiasmus zwischen Essen und Freiheit findet in einer angemessenen Umgebung statt, auf einer Silvesterparty, wo der Mangel an gekochtem Essen die Gäste veranlasst, die Gastgeberin um Butterbrot zu bitten. Voraussetzung ist die Tatsache, dass in jedem europäischen Haus unabhängig von Nationalität Butter und Brot zu finden sind. Der Geruch und Geschmack des reichlichen aber ganz einfachen Gerichts lösen traurige Erinnerungen aus individueller und europäischer Vergangenheit aus. Die ganze Partygesellschaft lässt sich vom Bankett mit Geschichten und Butterbrot animieren und erlebt das Neujahrsmoment als individualisierte Erfahrung von Gegenwärtigem, Vergangenem und Zukünftigem zugleich. Diese kleine Szene fixiert jenen Sinn, der von der Heldin als Berufsschriftstellerin der Stadt Berlin zugeschrieben wird. Berlin bedeutet für die Emigrantin das

⁵ *Observatorul cultural*, Nr. 424, 22. Mai 2008. Aus dem Deutschen von Iulia Dondorici. http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Mama-si-limba-aceasta-este-amea*articleID_24655-articles_details.html (24.05.2012).

Zentrum Europas, von dem aus solche Entwurzelten wie sie diese ganze neue Welt des Westens überblicken kann, sodass jegliche Anpassungs- oder Annäherungssängste abgebaut werden können. Diese Stadt ist nicht nur eine Weltgeographie *in nuce* sondern auch Sinnbild einer Geschichte, die sowohl an Separation als auch an Vereinigung erinnert. Zwar baut die Geographie der Stadt auf den verbindenden und versammelnden Funktionen des Gedächtnisses, um dem Einzelnen oft Gelegenheiten zur Entdeckung der Welt zu bieten. Aus diesem Grund ist die Perspektive der Wanderung durch die Stadt – als Weltreise inszeniert – von besonderer Bedeutung für den Erzählstrang aller Essays aus diesem Prosawerk. Gemeint ist hier die Butterbrotepisode, die wie ein religiöses Ritual inszeniert wird:

Der Abend kreiste um den Teetisch und um Irene. Um Irenes Freude. Auf ihrem Teller duftete eine schöne Scheibe dunklen Brots, mit frischer Butter bestrichen. Irene kaute langsam. Strahlte. Vermischte jeden Biss zu einem Brotknäuel. Und jedes Brotknäuel tüchtig mit Speichel. Damit der wertvolle Geschmack andauerte. Damit die wertvolle Nahrung. Diese Delikatesse geehrt würde. Und all die anderen ihren Genuss genießen konnten.

Doch Genuss war es nicht. Eher war es wie eine religiöse Handlung. Genuss. Ich lerne dieses Wort zu verstehen. Hier in Deutschland. Ich kenne es nicht auf Rumänisch. Es wurde mir nicht beigebracht. Es fehlt in meinem Wortschatz. Irene kommt aus Portugal. Das macht einen Unterschied. Ich befreie mich jeden Tag und mache Platz für das Wort Genuss. Und andere, ähnliche Worte. Ich verinnerliche sie. Sie werden ein Teil von mir. Genuss. Wie passt das zu meiner Vergangenheit? Passt das zu meiner Zukunft? (*Berlin ist mein Paris*, 82)

Dies ist eine geglückte Veranschaulichung der Art und Weise, wie Carmen Francesca Banciu jede kulinarische Erfahrung so beschreibt, dass sie die imaginierte und erinnerte Geografie und Geschichte ihres Lebens in Rumänien in die neue Landschaft des Westens integrieren kann. Diese Episode erklärt ebenfalls, wie sich der Mangel an wesentlichen Nahrungsmitteln in der Kindheit, die Denk- und Verhaltensmuster des Erwachsenen prägt.

Das Butterbrot spielt hier die Rolle von Prousts *madlaine*, aber der Geschmack ruft umgekehrt nur unangenehme Erinnerungen hervor. Die Verinnerlichung von Konzepten wird hier gleich mit dem Verdauungsprozess gesetzt. Der Magen wird

aber von Carmen Francesca Banciu nicht als zerstörendes Wahrnehmungsorgan verstanden, das das Aufgenommene verschwinden lässt, sondern als Instrument, wodurch der Mensch zwischen vergangener Zeit und gegenwärtiger Geographie vermitteln kann. Zugleich ist der Kauakt als kleine individuelle Kriegsführung dargestellt, denn obwohl jeder der Gäste einen eigenen Kampf zu führen hatte, wollten alle in einem verallgemeinerten Essakt Frieden schließen, selbst wenn nur mit sich selber; wenn die Butterbrotportion aufgegessen ist, haben sie auch alle Hindernisse überstanden.

Die Anwesenheit der Hauptperson auf dieser Party bleibt anonym und verdeckt, bis einer der Gäste auch um zwei große Scheiben Butterbrot mit Salami bittet. Der Salami weist auf eine Nahrungsgruppe hin, deren in dem kommunistischen Rumänien alle entbehren mussten. Da diese Frau in Deutschland so viel davon haben kann, wie sie möchte, bedeutet dies eine Wiederherstellung eines Teils ihrer Individualität. Das so lange begehrte Essen ist nun nur Anlass zur Entdeckung der Welt, sodass die Heldin den Kindheitsverlust neu gewinnt und den süßen Geschmack des Lebens genießen darf.

2. Schlussfolgerungen

Obwohl der Magen in der Erinnerungsforschung von Aleida Assmann, die ihn 1999 in dem Buch *Erinnerungsräume* als zerstörendes Wahrnehmungsorgan dargestellt wurde, bekommt er in C. F. Bancius Erzählungen eine andere, man könnte sogar behaupten neue Bedeutung. Durch den geistigen Magen wird auf persönlicher Ebene die Verbindung zwischen der rumänischen Kindheit und Jugend und der Berliner Gegenwart der Heldin gemacht. Kulturell und politisch betrachtet sind die Berliner Cafes und ihre Entdeckung eine ähnliche Erfahrung, die die ganze Welt in eine Stadt zusammenbringen.

Der Roman stellt wie erwartet die Konzepte von Zeit, Raum und Identität in einen engen Zusammenhang, ohne jedoch von einer Heimat zu sprechen, denn die bunte Geographie der deutschen Hauptstadt lässt eine Art Weltlichkeit – als Freiheit ohne Bindung verstanden - der Hauptheldin durchblicken. Paris als letztes Reiseziel steht noch als Desideratum davor und man weiß es nicht, ob sie die französische Hauptstadt trotzdem nicht besser finden wird.

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Jamaican Creole as a Marker of Hybridity and Postcolonial Identity in Derek Walcott

Titus Pop¹

Abstract: *A particular feature distinguishing Caribbean writers from other postcolonial artists is their language usage. Most of these writers widely use Jamaican Creole to express their cultural resistance to the hegemonic power. In the following, I will refer to the way Jamaican Creole, as a language variety, functions both as a bridge between cultures and as a marker of postcolonial identity in Derek Walcott's most significant poetry and drama.*

Key words: *Creole, patois, hybridity, postcolonial identity, Caribbean, colonizer/colonized*

One of the sub-categories of postcolonial literature which has been recently included on the academic agenda is the Caribbean literature. The most prominent figures falling into this category are Derek Walcott, Wilson Harris, Kamau Brathwaite, Linton Kwesi Johnson and V.S. Naipaul. A particular feature distinguishing these writers from other postcolonial artists is their language usage. Most of these writers widely use Jamaican *Creole* to express their cultural resistance to the hegemonic power. In this research paper, I will refer to the way Jamaican *Creole*, as a language variety, functions both as a bridge between cultures and as a marker of postcolonial identity in Derek Walcott's most significant poetry and drama.

I assume some clarification of the term *Creole* needs to be made at the very outset of this study. The term "*Creole*" has a double meaning. Firstly, it describes people of European descent who regard the Caribbean islands as home (Longman 348). According to one of the experts in the field, E. Brathwaite, the term *Creole*, means "born in, native to, committed to the area of living" (Brathwaite xv). Secondly, the linguistic term *Creole* denotes a

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language that is “a combination of a European language with one or more other languages.” (Longman 348) Besides Brathwaite, other extensive studies on the origin of the *Creole* languages are offered by Nigel Townson in his book called *Multilingual Britain* and by Peter Patrick in his study *Jamaican Creole Morphology and Syntax* (Fig 1). According to Nigel Townson,

there are different terms used to define BBE (British Black English)-Jamaican Creole, Caribbean Creole, Patois, Afro-English Creole and Patwa. Afro-English Creole and BBE are technical terms (used by scholars). The other terms denote the different dialect of Creole spoken by many Blacks of West Indian descent in Britain. *Patois* (my emphasis) –spoken in Jamaica and other Caribbean islands. (Townson 144)

The theoretical term *creolization* derived from *Creole*. *Creolization* has emerged from the experience of colonization in the Caribbean. As Edouard Glissant, an important researcher on Caribbean studies, states, *creolization* denoted “the unceasing process of transformation through which people create a collective sense of identity from multiple cultural sources”. (Glissant 142) It must be noted also that many earlier commentators on this issue suggested that an important feature of *Creole* is its capacity to express a range of emotions. Here is what Walter Jekyll noted in his preface to McKay's **Songs of Jamaica** (1912):

What Italian is to Latin, that in regard to English is the negro variant thereof. It shortens, softens, rejects the harder sounds alike of consonants and vowels; I might almost say, refines. In its soft tones we have an expression of the languorous sweetness of the South: it is a feminine version of masculine English; pre-eminently a language of love, as all will feel who setting prejudice aside, will allow the charmingly naive love-songs of this volume to make their due impression upon them. But this can only happen when the verses are read aloud and those unacquainted with the Jamaican language may thus welcome a few hints as to pronunciation. (Jekyll qtd. in Donnel et al. 11)

Such emotions as well as a cultural resistance to colonialism and its aftermath are expressed in *patois*, a variety of *Creole* in Townson 's view, by one of the greatest figures of the Caribbean literature, Derek Walcott (Townson 145). By his multiethnic

background widely reflected in his *oeuvre*, Derek Walcott, the 1992 Nobel Prize winner for Literature, is one of the leading exponents of multiculturalism. His successful blend of Caribbean, English and African traditions turn both his plays and poetry written in *patois* into a unique reflection of the vitality of the Caribbean islands' cultural traditions.

Unlike many other West Indian writers, Walcott has a triple linguistic heritage: French *Creole*, English *Creole*, and English. French *Creole* is the predominant language of St. Lucia but English is the language of government, the result of a legendary drama of thirteen flag changes in which the main actors were the French and the British. And then the *Creole* of Trinidad, Walcott's second home, is English-based. He was born in Saint Lucia, a tiny island in the Caribbean, to an African mother, who worked as a schoolteacher and an English father, a civil servant. He had two white grandfathers and two black grandmothers. Though his first language was *patois*, he received an English education, an apprenticeship in language that his mother supported by teaching him English poetry at home and by exposing him to the European classics at an early age. His artistic style derives from a struggle between two cultural heritages which produced his unique hybrid art. Perhaps the most relevant portrait of Walcott is depicted by the poet James Dickey in the following lines:

a twentieth-century man, living in the West Indies and in Boston, poised between the blue sea and its real fish ... and the rockets and warheads, between a lapsed colonial culture and the industrial North, between Africa and the West, between slavery and intellectualism, between the native Caribbean tongue and the English learned from books, between the black and white of his own body, between the sound of the home ocean and the lure of European culture (James D. qtd. in Terada 15)

Both his poetry and his plays celebrate the natural beauty of the Caribbean land and accurately reflect his hybrid background. But more than this, his work is an example of creolization and of linguistic hybridity. In the poem entitled "The Schooner's Flight" Walcott reveals his hybrid identity through Shabine, a *Creole* name for a "red nigger":

I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,

I have Dutch, nigger and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.(Walcott "The Schooner
Flight")

Throughout his work, his consciousness is situated in what Homi Bhabha calls "an in-between space of languages, cultures and identities". (Bhabha 65) His poetry has been extensively studied by Rei Terada, the most important critic of Walcott's work in *American Mimicry* (1992), and by John Thieme in his study called *Derek Walcott* (published in *Contemporary World Writers*, 1999). In the chapter entitled "The Pain of History Words Contain", Terada analyses Walcott's language as a mixture of Creoles and his linguistic hybridism as a model of all languages. She argues that Walcott's poetry is "Creole poetry as it incorporates myriads of idiolects, glimpses of private language, and glimpses of universal language alike in a creole of creoles" (Terada 118). In fact, although Caribbean rhythms and themes pervade his verse on the whole, it is the *Creole* language that makes his poetry particularly Caribbean. Let us take a look, for instance, at the poem "Parang" the volume *In the Green Night*. The word *parang* comes from the Spanish word known as "parranda" which means action of merry making, group of serenaders. In the Caribbean, Parang refers to folkloric music of Hispanic origins (www.Reference.com). We may notice how Walcott uses *Creole* in the first stanza as a vehicle carrying his nostalgic feelings of the past:

Man, I suck me tooth when I hear
How dem croptime fiddlers lie,
And de wailing (...)
Oh, when I t'ink how from young
I wasted time at de fetes,
I could bawl in a red-eyed rage
For desire turned to regret,
Not knowing the truth that I sang
At parang and *la commete*.
Boy, every damned tune them tune
Of love that go last forever

Is the wax and the wane of the moon
Since Adam catch body-fever. (Walcott 'Parang')

The poet is surprised by the sound of the Parang songs from the field as people celebrate harvests and the memory triggers feelings such as envy and regret. *Creole* talk and local Parang songs are the key elements reminding the poet of his nostalgic past.

In another poem, “Tales of the islands” we are offered a mix of *Creole* and standard English, a combination which best reflects, in my view, his crosscultural, hybrid identity:

The *fette* took place one morning in the heights (...)
The priests objected to such savage(...)
Poopa da´ was a *fette*(...) we has gone(Walcott, 1962:22)

According to a Caribbean critic, Omila Thounaojam, Walcott “shifts his poetic language between *patois* and standard English” in order to render the linguistic abilities of the peoples from the Caribbean islands. (Thounaojam “*Understanding Hybridity*”) . This is quite obvious in the poem “Saint Lucie” where after a bilingual recording of indigenous fruits, he invokes nostalgically his language:

Pomme arac,
otaheite apple,
pomme cythère,
pomme granate,
moubain,
z’anananas
the pineapple’s
Aztec helmet,
pomme,
I have forgotten
what *pomme* for
the Irish Potato,
cerise,
the cherry
z’amansea-almonds

Come back to me,
My language! (Walcott, *Saint Lucie*)

Walcott’s multicultural, hybrid background is also reflected in his plays. Following his career as a reviewer and art critic, he founded the Trinidad Theatre, a unique theatre with a distinct Caribbean identity. His best known plays, *Dream on a Monkey*

Mountain, Ti-Jean and His Brothers and *Pantomime*, all written in *patois*, address the problems of Caribbean identity against the backdrop of political and racial troubles. Of the three, the one that stands out in postcolonial terms is the play *Pantomime*. Taking into account Edward Said's thesis on colonial alienation, according to which the settler marginalizes the native and makes him feel insignificant in his own land, thus alienating him from himself and his culture, I believe the play manages, particularly through the use of *Creole*, to challenge the colonial discourse upheld by the imperial powers in the past.

Pantomime is a rewriting of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from a postcolonial point of view. In this respect, Walcott enlists himself into the category of postcolonial authors who "write back" to the imperial centre. (Ashcroft *et al.* 1)) The most significant examples here would be Jean Rhys's with her *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which explores the life of Bertha, Rochester's West Indian wife in *Jane Eyre* and J. M. Coetzee with his novel *Foe*, another rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* narrated by a female narrator. Walcott creates a play-within-a-play and changes the roles so that Jackson, a black hotel servant, plays *Crusoe* while his white employer plays *Friday*. This reversal of roles highlights the troublesome relationship that binds black to white, master to slave, colonizer to colonized.

The play is set on the Caribbean Island of Tobago and the cast is made of a washed-up British actor who is now a hotel owner named Harry Trewe and his Trinidadian servant Jackson Phillip. Harry has the idea of entertaining the hypothetical guests of his low budget hotel with a pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*. He asks Jackson to play *Friday* to his *Crusoe*. Things become interesting when Harry suggests reversing their roles for the purposes of comedy. Through the course of witty dialogue exchanges and the exhibition of their talent, the men exchange roles many times. In the end, Jackson and Harry gain a closer relationship by exploring their cultural differences.

Pantomime is a play in which the Hegelian master/slave relationship may be explored under the guise of acting. At the same time, even though Harry and Jackson are acting, at the hotel, they are in the colonizer/colonized positions. Walcott reminds the audience that the life of the colonized is always an act. This means that the colonizer's domination over the colonized has always been an act. Similarly, Walcott's play shows the

colonized servitude as imitation as well: "You mispronounce words on purpose, don't you Jackson?" says Harry. "Don't think for one second that I'm not up on your game Jackson. You're playing the stage nigger with me" (Walcott,1978: 140).

In his essay called *Theatre of the Castaway*, David Ford argues that Walcott sees Crusoe as a kind of actor as well, an actor that tackles many roles.(Ford " Theatre of the Castaway"). Actually, Walcott himself told his audience in a lecture entitled "The Figure of Crusoe" that the protagonist is Adam, Christopher Columbus, God, a missionary, a beachcomber, and his interpreter, Daniel Defoe. He is Adam because he is the first inhabitant of a second paradise. (Walcott qtd in Hamner 81)

Ironically, the idea of Crusoe as Adam is displayed in *Pantomime* through the act of naming things. In Defoe's novel, the castaway, like Adam in Eden, names the objects around him and most importantly, his famous slave: "I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life; I called him so for the memory of the time" (Defoe 201) Crusoe exerts his colonial power by naming his slave. The long- lasting European myth of Crusoe and Friday is transformed by Walcott into a narrative of freedom for the Caribbean man, a freedom expressed through an extensive usage of Creole. In *Pantomime*, Jackson takes this control and emphasizes it in their reversal by calling the white savage "Thursday". Then he teaches him his language:

Patamba!
Banda Karan!
(Puts his arm around Harry; points at him)
Subu!
(Faster,pointing)
Masz! (116)

Harry quickly interrupts Jackson's naming process, highlighting the fact that everything is artifice. "You never called anything by the same name twice," he says, asking "What's a table?" (117) Jackson's answer is "I forget" (117). This allows Harry to remark "I'll tell you one thing, friend. If you want me to learn your language, you'd better have a gun" (117) outlining the hegemony of the colonizer over the colonized. The domination by force is obvious in *Robinson Crusoe* as well:

He did not see the kid I had shot at, or perceive I had killed it, but ripped up his waistcoat to feel if he was not wounded, and, as I found presently, thought I was resolved to kill him; for he came and kneeled down to me and, embracing my knees, said a great many things I did not understand; but I could easily see that the meaning was to pray me not to kill him. (Defoe 205)

There is no other choice than entering into a life of servitude for Friday. In Defoe, Crusoe tells how Friday makes "all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how he would serve me as long as he lived" (200). Walcott remakes this idea in *Pantomime* and presents an inversion of the Crusoe myth through the servant's taking over the master's version of history. Robert Hamner, another scholar preoccupied with Walcott calls this play a "turning of the mythical narrative into a liberating narrative"(Hamner 293) .

It is *Creole* that serves as a liberating tool for the native in the play. From the very outset of the play, Defoe's binary opposites (civilized vs savage, etc) dividing lines begin to break down as Jackson speaks:

JACKSON:Mr.Trewe?

(English accent)Mr. Trewe, your scramble eggs is here! Are here!

(*creole* accent) You hear, Mr. Trewe? I here wid your eggs!

(English accent) Are you in there?

(To himself) And when his eggs get cold, I is to catch. (Walcott, 1978:94)

Jackson quickly (as the above passage reveals) demonstrates his capacity to go between roles.

HARRY: So how're you this morning, Jackson?

JACKSON: Oh, fair to fine, with seas moderate, with waves three to four feet in open water, and you sir? (95)

JACKSON: This hotel like a hospital. The toilet catch asthma, the air condition got ague, the front-balcony rail missing four teet', and every minute the fridge like it dancing the Shango...brrgudup..jukjuk...brrugudup. Is no wonder that the carpenter collapse. (98)

So he reverses the scenario (black Crusoe and white Friday) and assumes the controlling role of storyteller, all the while mocking at Defoe's novel:

JACKSON: You mean we making it up as we go along?

HARRY: Right!

JACKSON: Right! I in dat! (He assumes a stern stance and pouts stiffly) Robinson obey Thursday now. Speak Thursday language. Obey Thursday gods.

HARRY: Jesus Christ!

JACKSON: (inventing language) Amaka nobo sakamaka khaki pants kamaluma Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ kamalogo! (meaning Jesus is dead)

HARRY: Sure. (113-114)

Jackson's preoccupation with the subjugation of the English language that he uses point to a highly developed sophistication on Jackson's part, so that he turns *Creole* dialect from a negative label of the native to a weapon for critical analysis.

These are just some examples of how *Creole*, a language variety formed during the colonization process functions with a postcolonial writer both as a marker of a hybrid postcolonial Caribbean identity and as an instrument of resistance to the painful experience of colonization. More than that, by easily switching from English to *Creole* and viceversa in many of his plays and poems, Derek Walcott establishes himself as an outstanding crosscultural , hybrid writer.

Table 1. Adapted after *Grammar Features Of Jamaican Creole* in Townson Nigel-*Multilingual Britain* .p 125, 126 and Peter Patrick - *Jamaican Creole Morphology And Syntax P 31-33*

Grammar features	Examples
1.the use of –dem for animate plurals	De tiicher-dem
1.the use of prep. <i>a</i> for in, at, to	y'u goh <i>a</i> y'u bed
3.multiple negation	Im neva du notin
4.pronouns <i>im</i> -him, <i>mi</i> -I, <i>unu</i> -you	me kick him wa dem do to im?

5. diff. in signalling past time	Mi tell you so
6. omission of articles	Police shoot Starman inna dance
7. omission of copula	Ebry day da fishing day,
Vocabulary features	Examples
1. <i>fi</i> -to	try fi hide fram it
2. <i>pan</i> -on	shi waak pan
Sound features	Examples
1. These-	deze
2. Health-	helt
3. best-	bes
4. every-	ebry

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Douglas Hyde's *The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland*. The Inconsistencies of Anglo-Irish Cultural Nationalism

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Abstract: *The present paper points out instances of inconsistencies in Douglas Hyde's seminal cultural nationalist speech: The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland. It also delves into the political, historical, cultural and linguistic realities that brought them about.*

Key words: *de-Anglicization, cultural nationalism, Douglas Hyde*

The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland was a seminal cultural nationalist speech given by Douglas Hyde at one of the first meetings of the Irish National Literary Society in Dublin in 1892. In it, the celebrated Gaelic scholar warned his countrymen against the national and cultural loss inflicted on them both by the adopting of English instead of Irish as their primary language and by their penchant for imitating indiscriminately every aspect of English culture. Hyde pointed out the self-contradictoriness of the attitude of his countrymen who craved for the independence of Ireland, but disparaged their national language and culture, who hated England and resisted English rule but embraced the English language, literature and customs. Yet, while making valid points regarding the inconsistencies of Irish patriotism, Hyde's discourse was not exempt of inconsistencies either. My paper is going to point out and explain both the inconsistencies of Hyde's speech and the political, historical, cultural and linguistic environment that brought them about.

1. Douglas Hyde's English Plea for the Preservation of the Irish Language

The title chosen by Douglas Hyde for his speech: *The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland* makes one expect a discourse that will try

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to convince the audience about the advisability and/or desirability of removing English characteristics and influence of any kind in Ireland. Yet, the speech itself didn't do anything of the kind, and, what is most surprising, at the time, no one seemed to notice or to care.

First and foremost the discourse was delivered in English, and not, as one would expect, in Irish. This discrepancy could be easily explained. In Ireland in the course of the 19th century the number of native speakers of Irish dropped dramatically. The reasons for the decline of the language were threefold. The death knell of the language was first rung by the introduction of English as the medium of teaching in the Irish National School System established by the British government in 1831, then by the split between Irish cultural and political nationalism (English being the language of commerce and politics, political nationalist leaders, such as Daniel O'Connell had no regard for the preservation of the Irish language or culture), and, last, but not least, by the Great Famine between 1845 and 1849, which affected mainly those areas of Ireland where the everyday language was still Irish. Therefore, had Hyde chosen to deliver his speech in Irish, his educated middle-class Dublin audience wouldn't have understood him.

2. Discrepancy between Title and Discourse

Hyde made it clear from the very beginning that by de-anglicizing he did not mean de-anglicizing, but rather turning Ireland more Irish. "When we speak of 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising the Irish Nation', we mean it, not as a protest against imitating what is best in the English people, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish" (Hyde 182). The title he chose (*The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland*), therefore, we can conclude, did not fit his discourse. A title such as *The Necessity of Turning Ireland more Irish than English* would have been more suitable.

Now, one may ask why a man, as keen as Hyde on promoting the cause of the Irish language, customs and literature, had so many misgivings regarding the practicability of his own ideas? There are several explanations. As I have already pointed it out, by the 1890s the speaking of Irish as a primary language receded to the western part of the island. Even those that spoke it on a daily basis could not write in Irish, because Irish was not included as a compulsory subject on the national curriculum. Besides, it was

spoken mainly by people (principally poor peasants) who lacked formal education, and it was considered by many of the political and intellectual leaders of the day as a badge of failure, poverty and illiteracy. No wonder then, that pragmatic Douglas Hyde, saw the idea of his fellow citizens' replacing English, the knowledge of which they considered useful from an economical point of view, with the Irish language, impracticable. Therefore, his speech was not so much an argument against English as it was a plea for the preservation and the acknowledgement of Irish as the nation's language. He believed that by introducing Irish on the national curriculum he could raise awareness among Irish intellectuals that the language and the literature recorded in it was worth having. He also believed that by this means the extinction of the language could be stopped at least within those communities that still used Irish on a daily basis:

we shall insist if Home Rule² be carried, that the Irish language, which so many foreign scholars of the first calibre find so worthy of study, shall be placed on a par with -- or even above -- Greek, Latin, and modern languages, in all examinations held under the Irish Government. We can also insist, and we shall insist, that in those baronies where the children speak Irish, Irish shall be taught, and that Irish-speaking schoolmasters, petty sessions clerks, and even magistrates be appointed in Irish-speaking districts. If all this were done, it should not be very difficult, with the aid of the foremost foreign scholars, to bring about a tone of thought which would make it disgraceful for an educated Irishman especially of the old Celtic race, MacDermotts, O'Conors, O'Sullivans, MacCarthys, O'Neills -- to be ignorant of his own language -- would make it at least as disgraceful as for an educated Jew to be quite ignorant of Hebrew... (Hyde 187-188)

Similarly, the lack of knowledge of written Irish even amongst those who used it as the language of their everyday conversations may have prompted Hyde to encourage the reading of Anglo-Irish literature instead of literature written in the Irish language and especially instead of what he considered worthless popular British English literature. In his speech he emphasized: "the necessity for encouraging the use of Anglo-Irish literature instead of English

² the management of Irish internal affairs by a local parliament and not by Westminster.

books, especially instead of English periodicals.” (Hyde 185) He saw the reading of Anglo-Irish literature as an effective weapon in the battle waged against popular British literature. He also saw it as a stepping stone towards the appreciation of literature written in Irish.

3. Ambivalent Attitude towards the English

The third inconsistency of Hyde’s discourse is his ambivalent attitude towards the British Empire: though critical of English influence, his speech is extremely cautious not to evince any hint that could be interpreted as antagonistic to the extant political order. On the whole, the speech leaves the reader with the impression that the speaker would have preferred his fellow-citizens to succumb to and reap the benefits of the English rule. It is just because he saw the impossibility of carrying out such a wish that he advised them to act otherwise:

If Irishmen only went a little farther they would become good Englishmen in sentiment also. But -- illogical as it appears -- there seems not the slightest sign or probability of their taking that step. It is the curious certainty that come what may, Irishmen will continue to resist English rule, even though it should be for their good, which prevents many of our nation from becoming Unionists upon the spot. (Hyde 183)

Of course, the wink towards Britain was understandable. After all, at the time Hyde delivered his speech (1893) Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. We also shouldn’t forget that, in spite of his penchant for everything Irish, sociable Hyde was also happy with his Anglo-Irish identity, and Anglo-Irish cultural nationalists had no intent on severing their ties with England.

Who were the Anglo-Irish? At the end of the 19th century, there were several ethnic communities living in Ireland. Basically the country was divided into two groups: the Catholic Irish, who considered themselves the descendants of the Celts and the English Protestants who traced their ancestry from the Anglo-Saxons.

The reason for many of the inconsistencies of Douglas Hyde’s speech is the fact that he was born into, raised and educated within the leading faction of the English Protestant community: the so-

called Anglo-Irish. As an ethnic group (or as a nation) the Anglo-Irish were the descendants of loyal British English Protestants who came over and established themselves in Ireland in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries. In the beginning, their English heritage as well as their religious denomination was an important component of the ethnic identity they sought to form for themselves. They were members of the Anglican Church, and allowed no other protestant denominations (such as the Scots Presbyterians) among their ranks.

Both parents of Douglas Hyde were Anglo-Irish. His father, Arthur Hyde, was a unionist and a rector of the Church of Ireland (i.e. the Anglican Church in Ireland), and his mother, Elizabeth Oldfield was the daughter of an Anglican priest, the Venerable John Orson Oldfield, archdeacon of Elphin and vicar of Kilkeevan. The members of Hyde's family and their circle of friends were all very keen on their British heritage and showed little interest in the Irish side of Ireland. Maybe this was one more reason for which Douglas Hyde found it so difficult to talk against England and the English. And maybe this was the reason for which he found it so easy to place all the blame of both the success and the failure of Britain's Anglicization policy on the Irish.

It is just because there appears no earthly chance of their becoming good members of the Empire that I urge that they [the Irish] should not remain in the anomalous position they are in, but since they absolutely refuse to become the one thing [i.e. English], that they become the other; cultivate what they have rejected, and build up an Irish nation on Irish lines. (Hyde 183)

And yet Hyde loved Ireland, the Irish and was proud of and promoted the country's Celtic heritage.

4. Hyde's Anglo-Irish Celticism

Because of a childhood disease Douglas Hyde's education was an idiosyncratic one. He was not sent away, as it was customary for the offsprings of Anglo-Irish families to a Dublin boarding school. He was home educated, but his father didn't pay as much attention to him as he did to his two elder sons. Hyde's boyhood, therefore, was happy and carefree. He was allowed to spend his time with activities that he really enjoyed doing, such as hunting, reading

and the learning of the Irish language. Interest in the latter came from the family's gamekeeper: Seamas Hart, an Irish Catholic who introduced him to Irish language, folk literature and customs. When he turned twenty, Hyde passed the entrance examination to Trinity College where he studied classic and modern languages.

Hyde's devoted love for Seamas Hart, whom he considered a second father to himself, as well as his love and admiration for the Irish language and literature, contributed to the development of an idiosyncratic, double national identity. On the one hand, he was Anglo-Irish Douglas Hyde, who was proud of and comfortable with his Anglo-Irish heritage. On the other hand, he was also An Craoibhín Aoibhinn ("The Pleasant Little Branch"), the pen name that he used to sign the poems and articles that he wrote in Irish and which got published in Irish Catholic nationalist papers.

While the inconsistencies of his speech may partially be explained by the existence of this Irish second self to his primary Anglo-Irish national persona, the hyphenated quality of the latter is yet another thing that prompted the paradoxes of his discourse.

A minority in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish, whom Irish Catholics outnumbered by the millions, felt extremely insecure in spite of the fact that for more than a century they wielded all the financial and political power in Ireland. Their sense of insecurity amplified in the course of the 19th century, when the Irish parliament was abolished and Ireland was united with Great Britain. Estranged from England, which many of them ceased to consider as their primary homeland, and shunned by the British, who considered them inferior to themselves and ineffectual as regarding the maintaining of British supremacy over Ireland, they were anxious to carve themselves an ethnic/ national identity that would secure their position in Ireland. This is the reason for which many leading Anglo-Irish intellectuals of the day became part and parcel of the Irish cultural nationalist movement(s) at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

As cultural nationalist movements all over the world follow similar agendas, and as cultural nationalist discourses are built up of similar discursive components it may be useful to have a short description of the rules that govern both the movements and the discourses engendered by them. In this way I hope to shed a better light on the causes of some of the inconsistencies of Hyde's discourse.

4.1. Cultural Nationalism

According to Benedict Anderson, “a nation is an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” (3) Nation and nationality, as concepts have little basis in factual reality. People who view themselves as members of a specific national community may or may not inhabit the same geographic space, may or may not speak the same language, may or may not have the same religion, may or may not share similar view(s) on the history or/ and literature of their national community etc. Accordingly, cultural nationalism and cultural nationalist discourses, are based not on reality, but on what people accept, or rather imagine to be true as regarding the nation of which they believe themselves to belong to.

Cultural nationalism, as John Hutchinson³ explains it, is a distinct form of nationalism, which, articulated by secular intellectuals, has shaped the modern political community. It arises at times of crisis generated by the modernization process, and its chief aim is the moral regeneration of the nation. Cultural nationalists claim that the essence of the nation is its distinctive civilization, which is the product of its unique history, culture, and geographic profile. They contend that each nation has its own evolutionary path to follow, for only in this way can it make its distinctive contribution to humanity. This, together with the recovery of national pride, is the prerequisite for a nation’s successful participation in the wider world.

The discourses engendered by cultural nationalism vary from nation to nation and from historical period to historical period. Even within one historical period and within the boundaries of one nation or ethnic community, there is a variety of individual discourses produced by various interest groups with opposed interests. However, as Anthony D. Smith demonstrated in his study entitled *Myths and Memories of the Nation (1999)*, there is unity amid variety for all these discourses, irrespective of the epoch or the space in which they were engendered, incorporate the following cultural components of ethnic identities: a myth of ethnic descent (the time and place of the community’s origin and a presumed common ancestor or ancestors), a myth of ethnic

³ John Hutchinson: *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*

election (optional), the symbolism of ancestral or sacred territory, the celebration of 'ethnoscapes'.

All these elements constitute what I shall call the discursive model of cultural nationalism, i.e. the pattern according to which all individual cultural nationalist discourses are structured.

4.2. The Cultural Components of Douglas Hydes' Anglo-Irish Cultural Nationalist Discourse

Attempting to fashion an acceptable national identity for themselves the Anglo-Irish had to overcome several difficulties. First and foremost, they were a minority people in Ireland, a minority that had recently lost its political influence, a minority that was viewed as the usurper of the Irish nation by the Irish Catholics who comprised 90 percent of the people living on the island of Ireland. Some of the members of the Anglo-Irish refused to consider themselves as Irish and when defining themselves they based their national identity on their British racial, linguistic, religious and cultural roots. Those intellectuals that became involved in the Irish linguistic and literary renaissance on the other hand, tried to design an identity that would include both the Irish Catholics and the Anglo-Irish. There were no linguistic barriers they had to overcome, for the Irish language was dying out, so even if they became the supporters of the cause of the Irish language, they were very much on a par with their Catholic counterparts. Religion was, of course a great dividing line, a seemingly insurmountable difficulty. There could be no denial of the fact that Catholicism was an important component of the identity of most of the inhabitants of Ireland.

The Anglican Anglo-Irish were also keen on their religious denomination. Douglas Hyde, the son of an Anglican priest, though refusing to become a priest himself, was a staunch supporter of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Yet, while religion had to be dropped as a link between the Irish Catholics and the Anglican Anglo-Irish, Anglo-Irish cultural nationalists thought that Celticism, Celtic racial and especially cultural roots, could be as effective a link between the two communities (Irish Catholic and Anglo-Irish) as religion. It even can prove to be more effective.

This last statement needs some explanation. Why did the Anglo-Irish cite Celticism to be the link between the Irish Catholics and the Anglo-Irish? Firstly, because the Celts predated Christianity. Secondly, because they left the nation with a

distinguished and internationally acclaimed language and literature. It's all too obvious that the Anglo-Irish could not claim Celtic racial roots for themselves. Yet they did, and their audience did not question their right to lay claim to it, as long as it provided all the people with a much flattering self-image and differentiated them from the much hated British: "I believe it is our Gaelic past which, though the Irish race does not recognize it just at present, is really at the bottom of the Irish heart, and prevents us becoming citizens of the Empire" (Hyde 183), stated Hyde and continued his speech with an all-too flattering contrast between the Celtic Irish and the Anglo –Saxons, which presented the Irish as a nation keen on its spiritual values, on its history, historical figures and ethnoscapas:

Let us suppose for a moment -- which is impossible -- that there were to arise a series of Cromwells in England for the space of one hundred years, able administrators of the Empire, careful rulers of Ireland, developing to the utmost our national resources, whilst they unremittingly stamped out every spark of national feeling, making Ireland a land of wealth and factories, whilst they extinguished every thought and every idea that was Irish, and left us, at last, after a hundred years of good government, fat, wealthy, and populous, but with all our characteristics gone, with every external that at present differentiates us from the English lost or dropped; all our Irish names of places and people turned into English names; the Irish language completely extinct; the O's and the Macs dropped; our Irish intonation changed, as far as possible by English schoolmasters into something English; our history no longer remembered or taught; the names of our rebels and martyrs blotted out; our battlefields and traditions forgotten; the fact that we were not of Saxon origin dropped out of sight and memory, and let me now put the question -- How many Irishmen are there who would purchase material prosperity at such a price? It is exactly such a question as this and the answer to it that shows the difference between the English and Irish race. Nine Englishmen out of ten would jump to make the exchange, and I as firmly believe that nine Irishmen out of ten would indignantly refuse it. (Hyde 184)

Besides its flattering quality, the above cited part of Hyde's speech is also evincing the characteristic cultural components that made up most Anglo-Irish cultural national discourses of the time. Firstly, the speech is inclusive, it views the Irish nation as an undivided whole, linked together by their presumed Celtic racial

heritage. Celticity means that the people are oriented towards spiritual values: they are keen on their national language, history, war heroes and battlefields. This characterization, though embraced by the audience, flew blithely in the face of the fact that most Irishmen gave up speaking the Irish language precisely because they could thrive financially much better if they spoke English.

Conclusions

Nations and nationalism are founded on what the people imagine of the community they belong to and not on historical fact. The inconsistencies of Douglas Hyde's cultural nationalist speech: *The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland* are explainable as much by the political nature of the text, i.e. a cultural nationalist discourse (a discourse attuned to the extant national-political feelings of the audience and not founded on historical fact), as by the anomalous position of the Irish language in Ireland, considered by those who spoke it as inferior to English, as well as by the anomalous position of the Anglo-Irish, who sought a common identity with the Catholic Irish in spite of their different racial, and antagonistic political and denominational past and present. If we add to this the duplicity of Hyde's national personas -- to his Anglo-Irish friends he was bookish but easy-going, sociable and flirtatious Douglas Hyde, son of Church of Ireland rector Arthur Hyde while the Irish Catholic came to know him under the penname of An Craoibhín Aoibhinn, author of fiercely nationalist poems in Irish and later on as Douglas Hyde, the founder of the Gaelic League and supporter of the cause of the Irish language and literature -- then we have a more than satisfactory explanation of the inconsistencies of his speech and also of the fact why he and many of his audience, Anglo-Irish and Irish Catholics alike, remained unaware of the existence of these inconsistencies.

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LITERARY-ISMS AND CULTURAL-ISMS

**LITERATUR UND
KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHE
STUDIEN**

**ÉTUDES LITTÉRAIRES ET
CULTURELLES**



Sampling Tastes: Culinary Habits in Popular Scottish Writings Today

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Abstract. *The present paper attempts to identify several ways in which tastes can create subcultures against a monolithic mainstream culture such as the Scottish traditional one, by examining texts of popular novels of today where the emergence of different lifestyles is illustrated.*

Key words: *taste, consumption, lifestyle, food sub-space*

Of Tastes and people

They say that people can build up, reinforce and express their identities through consumption that nowadays has taken the form of a constant search for specific experiences resulting from an immersion into “thematic settings” (Caru, Cova 3) that generates the participant’s cooperation and is followed by a narrative meant to cover the experientiality of senses enacting the production of cultural meanings and symbols. A consumption instance gets materialized through the activity itself against an environment, surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells, facilitated by an experiential context that favours the consumers’ immersion into the delight and thrill of novelty and uniqueness. One of the dimensions of consumption is embodied by experimenting with food which has become a recurring theme in the contemporary world due to the grappling of different media to meet the culinary curiosity and fantasy of a globalizing cuisines and tastes, thus turning eating experiences into a media event.

Bourdieu’s seminal study on taste pinpoints the fact that “taste is the faculty of immediately and intuitively judging aesthetic values; it is the capacity to discern the flavours of foods which implies a preference for some of them” (Bourdieu 99), eventually generating a lifestyle that speaks of identities of individuals,

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communities, nations, as food choices, based on taste reflect “the eater’s identity” as eating habits symbolize and mark “the boundaries of cultures” (Gabaccia, 8). Food consumption can help create and maintain identity, whether that identity be national-, ethnic-, class-, gender-based (see Sutton 5) as it is able to provide meaning through its very everyday practices, disclosing hidden histories of individuals and communities, as the following research demonstrates, supporting Sutton’s statement that “we are what we eat” or what we “ate”(7) and Bourdieu’s contention that taste is “a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces”(Bourdieu 173).

Spaces of relish

Theorists agree with the fact that, as Bourdieu states it, “the taste for particular dishes is associated, through preparation and cooking, with a whole conception of the domestic economy and the division of labour between sexes.”(Bourdieu 185) and as a consequence the environment for production of tastes and the milieu for celebration of tastes have been taken into account and examined properly, as well as the agents contributing to the final outcome.

On the one hand we can refer to the homely environment best described by Tim Edensor as having, among other connotation, the one that covers affective and spiritual territories as well since it can become the most memorable affectively embedded in memory (see Edensor 59), especially when relating it to the “smellscape”, and the “space of tactile sensations”, as Tim Edensor refers to them, (60) evolving in the process of everyday practices such as cooking and eating. All these ‘scapes’ can be identifiable when we deconstruct everyday practices and individual or collective memories which grant their continual reproduction through domestic work and by the complexity of social and cultural activities that specific groups regularly carry out. Andrew O’Hagan significantly illustrates his protagonists’ belonging to the Italian community and their group identity sustained by cooking memories in his novel *Personality*:

[Rosa] put a pan of water on the cooker. She had a basin of chopped vegetables – onions, celery, carrot and garlic – and she put them in a pan. There was mince in the fridge she was going to throw out, but

she browned it and then put it in with the vegetables, then added salt and tomato and let it simmer. (...)As she stirred the pan and gazed at the deep red of the sauce Rosa began to think of the book (i.e. *the Book of Stuff*) (...) She took the book down. (...) She leafed through the pages. She passed lasagne al forno and cannelloni, passed her father's secret, the recipe for Tambini ice cream, and stopped at *fetuccine* sauce. They didn't make these dishes so much now. They ate rubbish now (O'Hagan 50)

It is so true then that cuisine is a way of life not a mere way of cooking and that, as George Ritzer puts it, "food is much more than the answer to hunger, it triggers moods and memories, it reveals need and desires, it releases tensions, it stimulates creativity."(Ritzer 189) as admitted by Simon, A. L. Kennedy's main character of *Paradise* (2004): "I haven't eaten porridge since we used to have breakfasts together at home. He's made it thick with a little milk added and a touch of dark sugar on top, melting – the way I used to like it then."(Kennedy 140). The semiotics of food is thus connected to both preparation and ingestion of meals as sensed in Isabel Dalhousie's manner of facing these tasks in Alexander McCall Smith's presentation of the scene, first that of Isabel's materializing the requests of the recipe: she

went into the larder and retrieved the ingredients for a risotto she would make for cat and Toby. The recipe called for porcini mushrooms, and she had a supply of these, tied up in a muslin bag. Isabel took a handful of the dried fungus, savouring the unusual odour, sharp and salty, so difficult to classify. Yeast extract? She would soak them for half an hour and then use the darkened liquid they produced to cook the rice. (McCall Smith 30).

The next step consists of carefully carried out operations of cooking the meal itself,

Cooking in a temper required caution with the pepper; one might put far too much in and ruin a risotto in sheer pique....She stirred the risotto, taking a small spoonful to test it for seasoning. The liquid from the soaked porcini mushrooms which had imparted its flavour to the rice," (38) and finally the moment of joy, of spoiling one's senses with the product itself which "was perfect...In the meantime, there was a salad to prepare and a bottle of wine to open(...) Cat [her niece] had brought a plate of smoked salmon,

which she took through to the kitchen with Isabel(...)They laid the salmon and returned to the drawing room. (39)

On the other hand, the eating out provides the culinary experience juxtaposed with the social togetherness of the celebrating taste in the process of bringing people and things under the same roof, acting as a match-maker, marrying colours and people and proving to be “the form par excellence of *amor fati*” (Bourdieu 244) . It turns into a different experience as it can operate with the concept of class as, according to the same author, tastes in food, and the environment rendered for food consumption we would say,

also depend on the idea each class has of the body and of the effects of food on the body, on its strength, health, beauty, on those categories that it uses to evaluate these effects, some of which may be important for one, ignored by others, ranked in different ways by different classes. Taste helps to shape the class body. The body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste.(190).

In M.C.Beaton’s series of books, the Scottish Highlands inspire the strong local recipes to be promoted as they so much speak of issues of identity and belonging to the very place that generated them, such as a

restaurant across from the television centre. It was called Tatty Tommy’s Tartan Howf and was scented with the aroma of old cooking fat. They were served by Tatty Tommy himself, a large bruiser with a shaved head, an earring and blue eye shadow. (...) She[Patricia] bleakly ordered Tatty Tommy’s Tumshies, Tatties and Haggis, thinking that an ethnic dish of haggis, turnips and potatoes might be safer than some of the more exotic offerings on the menu; but it transpired that the haggis was dry as bone, the turnips watery and the potatoes had that chemical flavour of the reconstituted packed kind.(Beaton, 2009: 22)

The proliferation of ethnic restaurants as part of any urban scapes contains a similar mechanism as that of the fast-food franchises as a response to the fact that “many people have come to prefer a world in which there are few surprises” (Ritzer 1996 : 11), and choose an alternative to the home-made meals, the slow meals that imply so much work prior to and right after the very moment of consumption, that is, “going to the market, preparing the

ingredients, cooking the food, eating it, cleaning up afterward.”(36). The solution of an ethnic restaurant works for city dwellers like Val McDermid’s protagonists, Kate and dr. Gus Walters, who decide for a curry house in Edinburgh, “I settled for chicken pakora followed by karahi gosht with a garlic nan. Gus opted for onion bhajis and chicken rogan josh” (McDermid 134-5), or for Liz and Tricia in Anne Donovan’s novel who opt for a Greek place for lunch in Glasgow:

The waitress had appeared at the table.
‘Would you like to order drinks?’
‘Ah’ll have a mineral water, please.’
‘An Appletize for me.’
‘You ready tae order, Trish?’
‘Ah think so. Ah’ll have the soup and moussaka, please.’
‘Can ah have prawns tae start and moussaka as well. Thanks.
(Donovan 110).

It is also an option for Hamish Macbeth of the remote Lochdubh who chooses to dine in the Italian restaurant in the village,

now managed by his once policeman, Willie Lamont [who] married a relative of the owner and settled happily into the restaurant business. He was a fanatical cleaner and although the Napoli, as the restaurant was called, had excellent food, the restaurant was always permeated by a strong smell of disinfectant.

Hamish entered and took a table by the window, the table he usually sat with Priscilla when they went out for dinner together. There were few customers. He felt the stab of loneliness again.

Willie came up. ‘What’s your pleasure, Hamish?’

‘Just spaghetti and a salad, Willie.’ (Beaton 2009:62-63)

Tasteful challenges

If we take for granted what Bourdieu says, namely that

taste is the choice of destiny and is produced by conditions of existence which rule out all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessary. (Bourdieu 178),

then any attempts of subverting traditional food options in favour of novelties is meant to fail when operating with a conservatory sample of consumers such as the protagonist of Christopher Brookmyre’s book who prefers the trodden way:

Jane's efforts at tempting Tom with more exotic fare had long since been abandoned. Minor variations on familiar dishes were met with queries as to whether she'd not been able to get the standard ingredients, and more ambitious undertakings had frequently been forsaken at the preparatory stage; Tom suspecting experimentation was afoot and venturing into the kitchen to inform her: 'I'll just have my steak/chicken/fish plain, with a few tatties. Save you all that bothers.' (Brookmyre 51)

Tastes can eventually create subcultures that are brought into being, constructed, replayed, states C. Evans, through everyday actions, dress, adornment, and other cultural practices, such as eating habits (see Muggleton, Weinzierl 11). The tastes, in the view of Pierre Bourdieu, quoted by Muggleton and Weinzierl, are ritually installed and memorized within the body through the habitus, they manifest themselves as physical dispositions, and together with preferences and affinities, stand for systems of classification and organization and denote social activities and attitudes that influence and are influenced by the spaces in which they reside (28). It is the case of local, regional subcultures, exemplified in the writings of Scottish novelists, M.C. Beaton being one of them when championing the Highlands values and lifestyles:

By the time he [Hamish] stopped in at the Tudor Restaurant [in Cnothan] – fake beams, fake horse brasses, dried flowers, and what was a restaurant called Tudor doing in the Highlands? – he was feeling as sour as the residents. As the waitress slammed down a plate of 'Henry the Eighth Chicken Salad – throw the bones over your shoulder to the dogs!' in front of him, he had more or less decided to give the whole thing up. He ate his cold dry chicken flanked by limp lettuce and wished he were Henry VIII and could have whoever in the back prepared this muck put in his stocks. He finished his dreadful meal with a cup of coffee of a brand publicized by a well-known British transvestite, and the coffee was as much coffee as the publicist was a woman." (Beaton 2009: 244)

Taste can definitely grant one distinctiveness, be it culinary taste or lifestyle, everyday practices, accepted values and beliefs; they all stand for the specificity of one's existence, for the way an individual is ranged within a classification system "constituted by the conditionings associated with a condition situated in a

determinate position in the structure of different conditions.”(Bourdieu 231), either physical or symbolical.

Conclusion

It is a fact that culture is what groups of people say, do, think, feel; it is the communication that links people together; consequently, identities are seen to be socially constructed through a cultural lens and to employ the medium of communication (see Jensen Iben 50). Consumption, respectively food consumption, the subculture of taste can foster one's identity, and may function as an example of banal, everyday affiliation to a smaller or larger community through the formal, material dimension they can get. Writers work with these elements as they are so much encouraged by media productions and by the expansion of popular practices so as to best illustrate the localness within the massive process of global extension.

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Religious Mentorship and Some of Its Reflexions in European Literature

Andrada Marinău¹

Abstract: *Once in a monastery, every novice gets an older monk or a nun, a scholar, as a teacher and mentor, whom he or she has to follow and obey. They spend most of the time together in prayer, learning or researching. The magister becomes for the novice a rough model. This article follows the footsteps of such relationships in some of the masterpieces of the European literature.*

Key words: *mentor, disciple, monastery, convent, abbot, abbess, novice*

The role of a spiritual mentor is unique in its goal not only to transmit experience and knowledge, but also to bring some recognition of the novice's own nature, this being the difference between a spiritual mentor and a regular teacher. The relationship between a mentor and his disciple is an informal one, based on trust. Their meetings are not subjected to strict rules and in monasteries they usually live close together. Their communication is verbal nonverbal as well.

My concern in this paper deals with this relationship between such mentoring pairs in Christianity as reflected in some literary works gathered from European literature. The pairs that I chose seem representative from this point of view, being the best example to characterize the perfectly balanced bonds of mind and spirit that that are formed between those involved. The characterization of the mentors and their disciples is trying to emphasize the fact that the novice is not only willing to assimilate all the knowledge that his mentor is sharing but also to borrow all the qualities that his mentor has, slowly transforming himself in such a manner that he can soon become a mentor in his turn.

Because I chose to talk about Christianity and about the monks as mentors and their novices, I'd rather start with a short

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description of their lives and duties between the sacred walls of the monastery.

With all the differences between the monks, who live in solitude or apostolate, who perform manual or intellectual labour, who worship God in prayer and liturgic offices or serve Christianity in military orders of monks- soldiers born from the Crusades, who have an eremitic or a monastic life, people are very aware of the existence of a particular type, a collective character, The Monk: “The man who, individually or collectively, separates from the people in order to live a privileged relation with God” (Le Goff 6), the one who cries for his own sins and for the others’ but who, through a life devoted to prayer, meditation and penitence, is trying to redeem himself and the people. The monk is:

...a specialist in satanic aggression, he protects the other people from the <ancient enemy>. He is a specialist in death, through the death records kept in monasteries, which were collections of prayers for the dead. He is a counsellor and a mediator, first of all for the powerful ones. He is also a man of culture, a keeper of classical culture, a specialist in reading and writing, due to the *scriptorium* of the monasteries, which was at the same time a library and a workshop for the copying and embellishing of manuscripts. He blends <the intellectual vigour with emotional exuberance> of <a wisdom in writing capable of expressing and embodying the most subtle and secret sensations, variations and preoccupations>. The monastery is the antechamber of Heaven, and the monk is the most capable of becoming a saint. (le Goff 15)

At some point along history an ideal develops which puts forward the monastic profession, ideal which is supported by the reformation of the benedictin monasticism. The canon regular is set up again, especially when it comes to liturgy and exaltation of virginity, considered as the central point in Christian accomplishment. Being compared with the angels, as contrasted with the morals of the secular cleric, the monks get the willingness of the believers.

Once in a monastery, any novice gets as a teacher and a mentor an older monk, a scholar, whom he has to follow and listen to. They spend most of the time together, praying, learning or researching. This way, the mentor becomes a raw model for his alumnus or mentoree. One of my interests relates to the spiritual impact the mentors have on their followers.

The mentor is the one who creates a hospitable space of trust and intimacy, the one who is able to see the presence of God in the disciple, who seeks to live a life of holiness, spiritual maturity, biblical knowledge and wisdom, the one who is familiar with all the spiritual disciplines and who recognizes the potential in people.

The disciple is the one who desires spiritual growth and maturity, who is vulnerable in sharing intimate issues of life, who is responsive and respectful to the directives of the mentor, who is teachable, submissive, faithful and obedient and who desires to serve God with his or her life. Disciples will learn to listen to the voices of their mentors not as absolute experts, with the final authoritative word but more as the shrewd and discerning expressions of those who have travelled this way before.

Mentoring has been an important element to the Christian community from its very beginning, meaning in essence that a master, a person with a certain amount of knowledge and experience is sharing all these to a novice while still being a disciple himself or herself, who is continuing to grow spirituality and knowledge.

Monasteries Zosima and Alyosha

An example of such a pair in literature which is worth mentioning is the one made by the abbot Zosima and the novice Alyosha, in the novel *Karamazov Brothers*, by Dostoyevsky.

The abbot Zosima was born in a Russian *guberniya*² from the north, in the village V. His father, who was a noble, died when Zosima was only two years old, leaving his mother with a little house and some money, in order to be able not to live in poverty. At the age of eight, listening to the liturgy, he understands for the first time the word of God, which gets into his soul. After his brother's death, he is taken to Petersburg to attend the military school, in order to get in the Royal Guard after graduation. After many unhappy happenings (he hits his orderly, he demands satisfaction from his rival but he refuses to shoot) he decides to quit and to leave for a monastery at once to become a monk.

Zosima had a certain spirit that distinguished him from the rest of the world, being a dogmatic teacher, descending from the

² The highest unit of administrative-territorial division in prerevolutionary Russia.

Byzantine icons, but still, a man among men, subjected to the same earthly destiny, ephemeral. Zosima presents himself as the perfect and passive person who has the gifted ability to sense man's motivations and thus has no need to judge others.

Alexei Karamazov, Alyosha, the youngest in the family, has a very special feeling for the human kind and at the age of twenty, he decides to enter a monastery, offering his stormy heart an ideal, "that of getting out of the darkness of human hatred into the light of love." (Dostoyevsky 39) Alyosha is a strong young man, with a serene blush, and very healthy. He is handsome, thin, almost too tall, with a dark blonde hair, with regular features, with sparkling, grey eyes, usually ruminant and apparently self controlled. The fact that he has moments of weakness, when he falls into sin, contributes to his humanization. Still, he is at the highest end of the cross. The most dramatic storms take place in his conscience, not in his soul, so he is thrown into a world of pain and whirl especially to get purified.

Although he is usually passive, he constantly stores ideas and passions. He is a good person indeed, but he is useless. He is neither fanatic, nor mystic, on the contrary, he is more realistic than many of the others, committed because of his love for the others, and because he cannot understand how he could live in another way in order to get immortal, without compromises or half measures. He embodies supreme human virtues.

Torn between his wish to serve God wholeheartedly and Father Zosima's dying order to leave the monastery, Alyosha must make a difficult decision. Reluctant at first, he finds his answer in a dream involving Jesus Christ and the biblical marriage at Cana. Through the dream, Alyosha finds a reason to live and a way to expand his spirituality outside of the monastery. By not immediately attending the dying Zosima's death, Alyosha quickly displays his decision to consider responsibility over spiritual troubles. His specific calling comes in the form of helping children.

Disappointed and unbalanced by the death of his mentor, he falls down. He feels the need to cry, to forgive everything and everybody, to ask for forgiveness from everybody. Three days later, one year after he entered the monastery, he leaves it, listening to his mentor's advice who ordered him to go out into the world.

Gugliermo and Adso

Another representative pair for this category is formed by an old Franciscan monk, Father William (Gugliermo) of Baskerville, and a young Benedictine novice in the Monastery of Melk. The two start together in a mission which will take them through famous cities and ancient monasteries.

Former inquisitor in England and Italy in some of the trials in which he excelled in being an exquisite inquisitor but full of a great well-doing, he is charged with a mission, connected with an illustrious and imposing abbey, led by Abbone. On their way to this abbey the young novice is permanently amazed by the wisdom of his master, a friend and disciple of Roger Bacon (Ruggiero Bacone in the novel), and a good expert in the political and religious realities that were disrupting the Europe of those times. Nevertheless, William's mission remains a mystery for Adso, as well as other eccentricities of his master, like the one of mocking at very serious things, or of expressing himself by paradoxes which the young Germanic mind cannot understand. However, Adso becomes inwardly attached by William, being attracted not only by the charm of his discourse and by the intensesness of his mind, but also by his appearance.

The portrait of the master is very accurately made by Adso:

The physical aspect of Brother William was built in such a manner that it would draw the attention of even the most absent-minded observer. His stature would go by that of a regular man and he was so thin that he looked even taller. His blush was sharp and deep; his nose, thin and a little curved gave his face the expression of a person who was always standing over somebody or something, except for his moments of giddiness, which I will tell you about. Even his chin would reveal a strong will, even though his face, covered in freckles...could express sometimes uncertainty and astonishment. In time, I realized that what seemed uncertainty was in fact only curiosity, but I knew very little about this quality at first, quality which I tempted to consider only a disposition towards a greedy soul, thinking that the wise soul mustn't be nourished with something like that, feeding only with the truth, which (I was thinking) is noticed from the very beginning. (Eco 16)

As Adso is but a young boy, he is amazed by some yellowish hair protruded from his ears, and by his thick blonde eyebrows.

He had perhaps seen fifty springs and was therefore already very old, but his tireless body moved with an agility I myself often lacked. His energy seemed inexhaustible when a burst of activity overwhelmed him. But from time to time, as if his vital spirit had something of the crayfish, he moved backwards in moments of inertia, and I watched him lie for hours on my pallet in my cell, uttering barely a few monosyllables, without contracting a single muscle of his face. On those occasions a vacant, absent expression appeared in his eyes, and I would have suspected he was in the power of some vegetal substance capable of producing visions if the obvious temperance of his life had not led me to reject the thought. (Eco 16)

Although William is a man full of special virtues, he still has his faults. One of them is the fact that he lets himself be led by the vice of vanity when he has to demonstrate the intensesness of his mind. Being a perfect scholar, he knows how to easily read from the book of nature and he understands the way in which the monks read the Scripture and think through it.

Narzis and Goldmund

Two monks live in the monastery of Mariabronn (Maulbronn, from Herman Hesse's novel *Narzis and Goldmund*), one is old and the other one is young. The old one is the abbot of the monastery, Daniel, and the young one, the novice Narcissus, who because of his special talents, although too young to fulfil this task, teaches the pupils, especially Old Greek. Due to the special relation between the two, they are regarded with admiration and respect, but with envy too, being secretly gossiped.

The old abbot is full of kindness and modesty, he is humble and he had no enemies, yet, he is regarded with condescension because "he might have been a saint but he was not a scholar at all. He owned that simplicity, which was mere wisdom, but his Latin was very poor, and he didn't know Old Greek at all." (Hesse 4)³

On exactly the opposite side from this point of view, is the young novice, "the wonder-child, the beautiful teenager with his elegant Old Greek, with his behaviour, impeccable chivalrous, with the calm and keen look of a thinker, and with his thin lips,

³ our translation

beautifully and severely drown” (Hesse 4)⁴ who, like his master, is loved and admired by some and envied by others.

The abbot treats Narcissus with special attention and consideration, always taking care of him. For all these, the novice shows his master a thorough respect, without ever contradicting him or showing the slightest trace of indisposition.

Shortly after, new novices arrive in the monastery. One of them, Goldmund, a beautiful, delicate young man, laden by the burden of his origin, wishes to stay in the monastery and to dedicate his life to God, but doesn't succeed in finding a real friend among his colleagues. This is the moment in which Narcissus, from a young novice, becomes a master, and the new entrant becomes his disciple.

The contrast between Daniel and Narcissus becomes obvious. Narcissus, an ascetic monk, a rigorous intellectual, remains in the monastery to become an abbot, the epitome of the masculine, analytical mind, while Goldmund, romantic, dreamy, flaxen-haired boy who celebrates the lush, lyrical, rapturous, sensuous quality of women, leaves the monastery to find his true nature, epitomizes the feminine mind.

Narcissus noticed very well the wonderful, golden bird that welcomed him in its flight. He, who was alone in his distinction, recognized in Goldmund the relative, although he appeared quite the opposite from every point of view. Narcissus was sombre and lean, Goldmund was radiant and flourishing. Narcissus was a thinker and an analyst, Goldmund was a dreamer, a childish soul. But a kind of a common destiny was bowing over the contrasts: both were noble men, both were, above the others, important for their gifts and visible signs and both were invested by faith with a special calling. (Hesse 16)⁵

Nunneries

In the Middle Ages many women were placed into convents by their families. The Church received a dowry from the parents of the nuns, and any jewellery which belonged to the girl added wealth to the convent or nunnery. Older women also became nuns; many widows chose this way of life after the death of their husband. Many convents and nunneries only accepted postulants who were

⁴ our translation

⁵ our translation

from wealthy backgrounds. Having once joined, they remained nuns for the rest of her life. To inveigle the poor souls into joining the monastic community, the nuns were capable of anything. For many, these religious communities provided a good opportunity for a woman to exercise leadership.

However, it is rarely considered that medieval nunneries had very different social conditions compared to those of their male counterparts: they had different rules, stricter enclosure and fewer opportunities for education.

The nun who was taking care of the novices was usually the mildest in the monastery, considers Suzanne Simonin, in the novel entitled *The Nun*, written by Diderot. “Her play is to hide the thorns of the monastic life; and for this she takes a real course meant to attract you by the most subtle and tried means. She blackens the darkness that surrounds you even more, but she also cradles you, puts you to sleep, cheats you and charms you...” (Diderot 31)

Those who willingly get in a monastery don't feel the same. A novice, who indeed feels the divine call, sees all these with pleasure. Every candidate for admission to a nun's order took the vow of obedience. The postulancy usually lasted one month, the novitiate one year, after which simple vows were taken. The solemn vows of the Medieval Nuns were taken four years later. The medieval ceremony for the consecration of nuns was similar to a wedding - a nun would be seen as married to God. A ring was placed on the nun's finger and she wore a wedding crown or headdress.

Not all nuns were given hard, manual work. Women who came from wealthy backgrounds were invariably given lighter work and spent time on such tasks as spinning and embroidery. Many nuns also worked on religious manuscripts and many became illuminators.

Zenaida and Rița

In Damian Stănoiu's novel *Abbess Election*, Sister Rița is nun Zenaida's novice and Sister Cristina is nun Tomaida's novice. They are good friends, of about the same age, they are both cheerful and well behaved and they are both bell ringers. Rița is twenty years old and she is pretty fat, with a not very beautiful face but always looking for a reason to have fun. Cristina is a year younger, thinner and with a pretty face. The thing that she enjoys the most is seeing

her good friend laughing out loud. She also has a good opinion about herself, being aware of the fact that her mind is poor, she knows that the mind that she has is very healthy. Speaking about her mentor, nun Tomaida, she emphasises that once gone over something, nothing can stand in her way; she is able to demolish the whole city in order to succeed. About the same is Rița's opinion about her mentor when it comes to fulfilling one of her ambitions; not even the Devil can stand in her way. She does everything to succeed from lying, promising, hiding, shouting or crying, to getting into the man's soul. As a conclusion, they both agree that their mentors are so alike as if they had the same mother and father. They don't look alike, but they have twin souls and ways of speaking.

Epiharia and Lămâița

In the novel entitled *The Case of Nun Varvara*, written by the same author, we can trace a real gallery of characters. The convent is led by abbess Epiharia, who, because of the fact that she only drinks sheep and goat milk, is supposed to have borrowed the nature of the two animals. She is now mild as a sheep and after a few moments she has an attitude that upsets and scares the other nuns. Taught by her novice, Lămâița, she gets sick whenever she needs to get rid of some undesired duties. Besides all these, the abbess has a special soul and her anger doesn't lower her tongue. As soon as she stops talking, no trace of anger can be noticed. She doesn't know how to tell stories, but she likes to listen to them and to laugh at them. There are still some gifts from God that make her loved and appreciated; she is calm and she always listens with endless patience to any complaint. She brings all the nuns together with a good word or gesture and is very forgiving regarding the small errors. She has the appearance of the cutest grandmother ever because she only quarrels with her tongue and lips, her eyes being always kind and her heart warm and forgiving.

Sister Lămâița, her second novice and the secretary of the convent, is in fact the one who is running the life of the abbess and the duties in the convent. She is a twenty year young girl, who is said to be too clever. Her advice is always listened to and the abbess doesn't do anything without taking into account what she has to say. That is why everybody in the convent thinks that it is the young novice who is the real abbess, and the abbess is in fact but Lămâița's novice. She is modest and she takes care of the other

novices of the abbess. That is why she is loved not hated or gossiped about. The only fault that she has is her curiosity.

Because of her detective capacities, she sometimes lets the things complicate on purpose, only to put her sophisticated mind to test by solving them.

For many nuns the convent is not the final of an initial personal choice: brought to the convent because of their parents' will, they have to gradually become nuns; they have to accept to form themselves and to prepare themselves after a pattern which has the unique aim to conquer the absolute.

This article is part of a greater study which deals with the monastic literature and with monks and nuns as literary characters. Among all the types of monks and nuns that can be found in literature, angels or demons, saints or inquisitors, this is another category which I consider to be worth studying.

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Un exemple de ré-écriture post-moderne du mythe du «bon sauvage» des Lumières dans *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* de Michel Tournier

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Abstract: *M. Tournier is concerned with “a bricolage” of myths whose initial meaning he re-interprets in an idiosyncratic manner in his work. Here, he uses the myth of the “bon sauvage” and its ethnological foundation together with the literary figure of Robinson Crusoe so as to suit his own philosophical projects. Tournier’s singularity resides in his reversing the consacrated roles of the two protagonists, Robinson and Vendredi, whereby he reflects upon the condition of man in western society. This is an example of re-writing which uses post-modernist techniques both at content and rhetorical level which the article intends to focus upon.*

Key-words: *myth, «bon sauvage», re-writing, difference, nature, culture, metamorphosis.*

Introduction

Si l'on admet l'idée que toute ré-écriture est une répétition avec différence, le roman qui nous concerne, *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*, est d'un côté, la répétition avec la différence respective du mythe du « bon sauvage » des Lumières et de l'autre, celle du mythe littéraire de Robinson Crusoe, créé par l'écrivain anglais Daniel Defoe. "*The life and strange adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, mariner*" (1719) est le premier roman d'aventures écrit à partir d'un événement réel qui est arrivé au marin écossais Alexander Selkirk, le Robinson originel et la source réelle de l'écrivain anglais. On dit qu'il a habité une île du Pacifique au large des côtes du Chili. Tournier avoue comment il a consulté des documents qui racontent la vraie vie d'Alexander.

Robinson représentait la lutte de l'individu contre la solitude et la nature, il était le symbole du salut par le travail selon le modèle que lui avait offert l'Angleterre bourgeoise et puritaine du XVIIIe siècle. Il illustrait les valeurs économiques, morales et

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religieuses de l'homme blanc, étant le symbole de l'orgueil de la civilisation occidentale par la domination sur Vendredi, à une époque où les Européens imposaient toujours leur façon de vivre aux «sauvages», qui, croyaient-ils, ne pouvaient rien leur apprendre. La grande entreprise coloniale des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles a trouvé des justifications dans le roman de Daniel Defoe. Cette aventure exemplaire est devenue un mythe, une histoire universelle, donnant lieu à un véritable genre littéraire, la robinsonnade ; c'est un récit d'aventures loin de la civilisation où l'on utilise les seules ressources de la nature. Il en existe un grand nombre de ré-écritures dont on pourrait rappeler parmi d'autres : le recueil poétique *Images à Crusoé* de Saint John Perse, *Suzanne et le Pacifique* de J. Giroudoux et *Sa majesté les mouches* de W. Golding. Le roman de Tournier est aussi une ré-écriture qui s'encadre par beaucoup d'éléments dans une grille post-moderne. Notre objectif est d'en relever les aspects et d'en montrer le spécifique.

Tournier et les mythes

L'oeuvre de M. Tournier puise dans les mythes fondamentaux qui sont actualisés car pour lui, «cette histoire fondamentale » a la fonction d'éclairer les aspirations de l'homme. Sa passion et son intérêt pour le mythe s'épanouissent au Musée de l'Homme où il suit les cours de Claude Lévi-Strauss qu'il considère son Maître² : « C'était en 1962. J'ai commencé la rédaction de *Vendredi* où je voulais mettre l'essentiel de ce que j'avais appris au musée de l'Homme sous la direction notamment de Claude Lévi-Strauss ». (Tournier, 1977 : 194). Pour Tournier, le mythe est un « édifice à plusieurs étages », aux « niveaux d'abstraction croissante » dont « le rez-de-chaussée est enfantin » tandis que « le sommet est métaphysique ». (Tournier, 1977 : 188). Son langage imagé permet le passage de la métaphysique au roman. Dans ce contexte, il mérite de rappeler la définition de Claude Lévi-Strauss :³ « C'est une histoire qui cherche à rendre compte à la fois de l'origine des choses, des êtres et du monde, du présent et de l'avenir et qui

² Dans son essai *Le Vent Paraclét*, il souligne qu'il s'est créé un lien entre l'ethnologie et la création littéraire, la première fournissant au philosophe un langage, celui des mythes, concret et transcendent en même temps.

³ Définition énoncée par Claude Lévi-Strauss en 1984 dans une émission de télévision modérée par Bernard Pivot.

cherche en même temps, simultanément, à traiter des problèmes qui nous apparaîtraient aujourd'hui, à la lumière de notre pensée scientifique, comme tout à fait hétérogènes les uns avec les autres, à les traiter comme s'ils étaient un seul problème, admettant une seule réponse...Si vous demandez à un Indien des deux Amériques : qu'est-ce qu'un mythe ? vous obtiendrez toujours la même réponse...L'âge des mythes, c'est celui où la communication était possible (entre les règnes), les êtres à cheval sur deux natures».

Comme le souligne Arlette Bouloumié dans son étude *Le roman mythologique suivi de questions à Michel Tournier*, l'écrivain retrouve dans ses romans ce temps des origines marqué par une circulation mystérieuse entre les différents règnes, ainsi qu'une forme de pensée singulière « qui réalise une sorte de globalisation par une correspondance inhabituelle dans la pensée occidentale entre les êtres, les astres, les saisons et la météorologie ». (Bouloumié : 10). Tout comme son maître, il se livre à un bricolage des mythes car il les détourne de leur sens premier en les intégrant dans son oeuvre à sa propre façon. « J'écris, dit Tournier, pour être relu mais...je ne demande qu'une seule lecture. Mes livres doivent être reconnus – relus - dès la première lecture ». (Tournier, 1977 : 189)

Le mythe du « bon sauvage »

L'auteur s'empare du mythe du «bon sauvage» et de son fondement ethnologique pour le réorienter selon ses projets philosophiques et la poétique postmoderne. Mais quelle est l'origine de ce mythe ? Qu'est-ce que « le bon sauvage » ? Les réponses à ces questions nous permettront de mieux approcher cette utopie des Lumières qui fait encore rêver. Il répond, entre autres, à la quête de nouvelles valeurs du XVIII-ième siècle ainsi qu'à son fougueux débat opposant « nature » et « culture ». Associé à la période des grands bouleversements de la Révolution industrielle - réorganisation sociale, développement technologique, productivité, propriété privée, il représente un refuge pour tous ceux qui s'inquiétaient de leur avenir. Vivre en d'autres temps, en d'autres lieux en contact avec la Nature bienveillante qui assure le bonheur, voilà ce que propose le mythe du « bon sauvage ».

Même si le syntagme renvoie au XVIII-ième siècle, notamment à Rousseau, le mythe du bon sauvage, s'est constitué bien avant,

suite à la découverte de l'Amérique. Il est le fruit de l'imaginaire de tous les grands lecteurs des récits de voyages qui foisonnent à partir du XVI-ième siècle : c'est, en quelque sorte, un personnage composite, fait à partir des nombreuses descriptions des hommes primitifs, des êtres naturels foncièrement bons, vivant dans un « âge d'or » naturel. Cette vision des « sauvages » a longtemps été nourrie par des explorateurs et des missionnaires habités encore par l'illusion d'un paradis perdu. Les penseurs du XVIII-e siècle n'ont pas vérifié l'exactitude de ces données car, on le sait, le « bon sauvage » ainsi présenté sert mieux à réfléchir sur l'homme, sur sa nature, ainsi que sur sa société. Mais Jean-Jacques Rousseau est reconnu comme celui qui a contribué le plus au développement de ce mythe par quelques idées qu'on retrouve dans l'essentiel de son oeuvre : « La nature a fait l'homme heureux et bon, mais la société le déprave et le rend misérable », « Le luxe conduit à la corruption de l'âme », « L'éducation doit suivre l'exemple de la nature ».

Ces idées ressortent d'abord de ses essais philosophiques *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) et *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), écrits pour répondre à la question de l'Académie de Dijon qui avait organisé en 1753 un concours dont le sujet devait répondre aux questions : « Quelle est l'origine de l'inégalité des conditions parmi les hommes ? est-elle autorisée par la loi naturelle ? ». Rousseau prétend que l'état primitif de l'homme le porte vers la vertu et le bonheur, car l'ignorance même du mal l'empêche de le répandre. Quand Rousseau oppose la civilisation à la vertu, il apparaît comme un auteur à paradoxes. C'est le développement de son intelligence et la recherche du luxe, de la propriété et du pouvoir (lesquels sont encouragés par les institutions sociales) qui ont jeté l'homme en dehors d'un paradis possible auprès de la Nature.

Comme sur un palimpseste nous relisons dans *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* l'histoire de Robinson et de Vendredi. En même temps, ce roman peut être considéré tout seul un palimpseste dans le sens que le rapport de l'auteur au mythe du bon sauvage se fait par l'intermédiaire d'un texte culturel, notamment *l'Anthropologie culturelle* de Claude Lévi-Strauss qui met en évidence la configuration du mythe. On pourrait la considérer, d'ailleurs, une vraie syntaxe du mythe. La relation entre Tournier comme disciple et Lévi Strauss comme maître

transparaît dans le roman par la relation entre l'hypertexte et l'hypotexte, faisant référence à la théorie de G. Genette.⁴

Techniques post-modernes

« Le plaisir et la complexité vont de pair dans l'oeuvre postmoderne » affirme Matei Călinescu dans son étude *Cinci fețe ale modernității*.⁵ *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* répond à ces attributs et constitue un exemple d'oeuvre postmoderne. A un premier niveau, le roman est un conte captivant qui raconte les aventures de Robinson sur l'île déserte, sa nouvelle vie, sa solitude, ses efforts de recréer le monde occidental d'où il vient. A un autre niveau, la description détaillée des épreuves du héros met en lumière d'autres codes. Il s'agit surtout d'un code philosophique cher à Tournier où il pose le problème de l'existence de l'homme⁶ :

« Mon idée était de choisir un sujet hautement philosophique (avec des problèmes de connaissance, de temps, d'espace de rapport à autrui, etc.) et, en même temps, d'écrire une histoire populaire qui intéresse tout le monde. Y compris les enfants. J'ai choisi Robinson Crusocé et ce fut *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*. Il y a dans l'histoire de Robinson au moins deux sujets éminemment philosophiques : la solitude (Robinson passe vingt ans seul sur son île) et le rapport à autrui (lorsque Vendredi arrive sur l'île).»

Il existe aussi un code culturel car le roman fait allusion à la *Bible* ou en reproduit des extraits, réunit des articles de la « Charte de l'Ile de Speranza », le « Code pénal de l'Ile de Speranza » rappelant ceux de la société anglaise du XVIII-ième siècle, des citations ou des maximes comme celles appartenant à B. Franklin. D'ailleurs, on peut distinguer plusieurs textes dans le roman de Tournier comme le montre D. Platten⁷ : le texte « précurseur » de

⁴ Genette a développé cette théorie dans *Palimpsestes, la littérature au second degré*. Il a proposé ces termes pour désigner le texte ré-écrit dans le premier cas et le texte de base, l'objet de la ré-écriture dans le deuxième. L'Hypertextualité est la relation particulière qui s'établit entre les deux : toute relation unissant un texte B (hypertexte) à un texte antérieur A (hypotexte) sur lequel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire. L'hypertexte est donc un texte dérivé d'un autre texte préexistant au terme d'une opération de transformation

⁵ *Cinq visages de la modernité* (n.t.)

⁶ Bernard. Pivot, « Entretiens avec Michel Tournier », in *Lire*, n° 347/2006

⁷ Voir pour plus de détails l'étude de David Platten, *Michel Tournier and the metaphor of fiction*, p. 41.

D. Defoe, les vieilles cartes de Tarot (en guise de «préface»), la Bible et le log-book qui présente l'exploration de la conscience de Robinson tout en remplaçant le journal de bord de l'oeuvre de Defoe.

La complexité est illustrée aussi par trois types distincts de discours qui s'entremêlent : entre Robinson et son île, la première personne du log-book et la troisième personne du narrateur des aventures de Robinson. L'opposition entre les deux (la 3-ième et la I-ère personne) relèvent la réflexivité du texte dans le sens d'une dissociation du je narratif qui se détache du contenu concret de ses propres faits pour méditer sur leur sens. Celui-ci est délibérément ambigu comme il apparaît dès le début par l'invocation des cartes de Tarot qui prévoient une évolution imprévisible du personnage sous le signe du hasard. L'épisode où le capitaine Van Deysell lit les cartes à Robinson représente une préface aux aventures du naufragé; elle propose son propre code d'interprétation du roman. Le commentaire du capitaine souligne l'importance narratologique de l'événement : « Le petit discours que je vous ai tenu ... est en quelque sorte chiffré, et la grille se trouve être votre avenir lui-même. Chaque événement futur de votre vie vous révélera, en se produisant, la vérité de telle ou telle de mes prédictions. Cette sorte de prophétie n'est point aussi illusoire qu'il peut paraître tout d'abord». (Tournier, 1972 : 75). Les cartes qui dépeignent des héros et des dieux représentent chacune une devinette, «un inintelligible galimatias». Elles anticipent les événements qui auront lieu sur l'île et le capitaine établit à leur aide l'évolution de Robinson pour le temps qui suit : 28 ans, 2 mois et 19 jours.

Comme chez Tournier il existe une relation étroite entre mythe et ethnologie, il faut souligner l'idée de Lévi-Strauss qui nous intéresse dans ce cas, voire la nouvelle perspective sur les cultures primitives : il propose à la place d'une évaluation hiérarchique une évaluation en termes de différence qui n'implique pas un jugement de valeur. Son *Anthropologie structurale* est considérée une oeuvre radicale parce que, identifiant le mythe comme une clé, comme un principe organisateur dans les sociétés primitives, il a été le premier à démontrer que celles-ci ont évolué par des voies qui ne s'avèrent pas moins sophistiquées que celles des autres sociétés. C'est pourquoi, l'idée de supériorité de la société occidentale basée sur les idées des Lumières a été sans fondement.

Comme nous l'avions affirmé plus loin, toute ré-écriture suppose une répétition avec différence. Nous considérons que cette

différence est visible tant au niveau thématique qu'au niveau rhétorique. Au niveau thématique on a affaire à un retournement idéologique qui est visible dès l'intitulé : le nom de Vendredi, l'esclave, remplace celui du maître, ce qui focalise toute la narration sur lui. L'explosion dans la grotte est le moment décisif qui change le déroulement des faits. Tournier s'intéresse davantage à la composition de ce personnage, influencé par ses expériences au Musée de l'Homme pendant une année très fructueuse passée dans la compagnie de Lévi-Strauss : « Il ne me fallut pas moins de quinze ans pour exprimer à ma manière la leçon des sociétés dites 'primitives' et des bons sauvages qui les composent. Mais, lorsque j'eus publié *Vendredi ou Les limbes du Pacifique*, j'hésitai à envoyer ce petit roman lyrique à mon ancien maître. Pourtant la filiation ne devait pas demeurer secrète. Un critique américain écrivit aussitôt du roman: 'C'est Robinson Crusoe récrit par Freud, Walt Disney et Claude Lévi-Strauss. »⁸

Robinson de Tournier tout comme celui de Defoe illustre en grandes lignes l'esprit des Lumières : la domination de la nature, sa transformation, l'ordre, les lois, les institutions, le progrès. L'île déserte est peut-être la terre du mythe du « bon sauvage » telle qu'elle est décrite par Rousseau dans son *Discours sur l'origine ...* "Comme l'humanité de jadis, il était passé du stade de la cueillette et de la chasse à celui de l'agriculture et de l'élevage". (Tournier, 1972: 47). Robinson veut métamorphoser son île dans une société abstraite, rationnelle: il construit un "Conservatoire pour les mesures et les poids", conçoit un code pénal et une Charte, se déclarant Gouverneur. C'est une reproduction *in nuce* de la société occidentale du XVIII-e siècle. La dimension coloniale de cette société est évidente par la présence de l'esclave qui pose le problème de son identité personnelle et culturelle. Vendredi arrive puis il s'en va ; ses origines et sa destination ne sont pas importantes. Dans son log-book, Robinson le décrit dans une première étape par des termes qui dénotent son attitude raciste: "Dieu m'a envoyé un compagnon. Mais par un tour assez obscur de sa Sainte Volonté, il l'a choisi au plus bas de l'échelle humaine. Un Indien mâtiné de Nègre! Et s'il était encore d'âge rassis, capable de mesurer calmement sa nullité en face de la civilisation que j'incarne." (Tournier, 1972 : 146) Vendredi est vu comme un

⁸ M. Tournier, "Lévi-Strauss, mon maître", in *Le Figaro littéraire*, 26 mai 1973, p. 18.

sauvage qui n'a pas la qualité "d'être humain à part entière". Le but de Robinson est de le civiliser, de l'incorporer dans le système qu'il essaie de perfectionner depuis longtemps. Il est conscient que Vendredi est un être inférieur auquel il peut facilement apprendre les vertus du travail. Mais dans un moment de lucidité, il se rend compte de l'absurdité de ses exigences: "Je suis saisi de pitié devant cet enfant livré sans défense sur une île déserte à toutes les fantaisies d'un dément." (Tournier, 1972: 151)

D'ailleurs, les deux personnages incarnent l'opposition entre Nature et Culture. Comme le souligne Genette, « Robinson est le maître du récit et d'un récit qui raconte son histoire non pas celle de Vendredi ». (Genette : 424). On pourrait alors se demander pourquoi Tournier a affirmé que «Vendredi est dédié à tous les Vendredis dépêchés vers nous par le tiers monde». (Tournier, 1977: 230) C'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle il a choisi Lévi-Strauss comme modèle pour son roman. Vendredi apparaît d'abord comme une projection des traits et de l'anxiété de Robinson. Celui-ci commence à s'interroger sur l'existence d'un autre Vendredi que ses préjugés empêchaient de voir. Il se met à l'observer passionnément et admire «la naturelle majesté de l'enfant qui semble drapé dans sa nudité». (Tournier, 1972: 221) Mais plus tard, lorsque Vendredi acquiert une identité, ses activités sont soumises à un discours abstrait, philosophique. Le narrateur garde le même ton neutre que dans la description des activités de Robinson. D'ailleurs, l'auteur montre sa sympathie pour le personnage de Vendredi qu'il a voulu valoriser par rapport à d'autres ré-écritures: «Je voulais réhabiliter Vendredi. Dans la plupart des robinsonnades, il est supprimé. Chez Defoe, c'est un sous-homme. Seul compte Robinson parce qu'il est blanc, chrétien et surtout anglais. Vendredi a tout à apprendre de lui. Dans mon roman, la supériorité de Robinson sur Vendredi ne cesse de s'effriter. Finalement, c'est Vendredi qui mène le jeu et enseigne à Robinson comment on doit vivre sur une île déserte du Pacifique. J'ai fait le tour du monde avec ce petit livre. J'ai parlé avec des enfants de tous les pays qui l'avaient lu. J'ai constaté que la plupart des enfants occidentaux aiment et admirent Vendredi parce qu'il incarne pour eux la joie et le plaisir de vivre...»⁹

Vendredi se rapproche de l'homme sauvage par son aspect extérieur et par sa conduite: il aime s'orner de plumes et de peaux

⁹ Voir pour plus de détails *Les vertes lectures*, p. 132.

de reptiles, dort dans un hamac de lianes, entretient une relation particulière avec les animaux, il plante les arbres à l'envers et décore les cactus de vêtements et de bijoux. L'Indien représente l'homme primitif, oisif et heureux qui ignore la notion du temps. Il fait voler et chanter le bouc mort, le transformant dans une harpe éolienne. Vendredi présente à Robinson l'image du double personnel, comme complément nécessaire de l'image de l'île. Enfin, il le conduit à la découverte des éléments.

Même si Robinson s'était lancé au début dans l'organisation de l'île déserte, il connaît une métamorphose complète sous l'influence de Vendredi, personnage désormais essentiel. Son rôle primordial explique le titre, ce qui constitue la différence essentielle entre le roman de Tournier et celui de Defoe, car, après l'explosion dans la grotte, les rôles sont inversés : c'est Vendredi qui, avec ses espiègleries, initie Robinson à la vie sauvage. Lui seul peut guider et achever sa métamorphose et lui en révéler le sens. Robinson ne peut se connaître que par rapport à autrui, par différence donc; Vendredi, à son tour, réussit à se connaître par rapport à Robinson. Il détruit l'ordre économique et moral instauré par Robinson; la grotte qui saute pourrait symboliser la disparition du monde ancien, le monde conçu par Robinson. Celui-ci commence à se métamorphoser, à imiter Vendredi. Il oublie son éducation puritaine car il commence à «travailler» son corps et à l'aimer: «Il découvrait ainsi qu'un corps accepté, voulu, vaguement désiré aussi...peut être non seulement un instrument d'insertion dans la trame des choses extérieures, mais aussi un compagnon fidèle et fort.» (Tournier, 1972: 192) Robinson commence à accepter et à comprendre le rire démentiel de Vendredi comme une forme d'harmonie avec le monde. Il apprend des choses de Vendredi qui a «miné» son règne tellurique et se rapproche de la vie sauvage: il dort parmi les branches, grimpe dans les arbres, écoute la musique de la harpe éolienne et entre en communion avec le soleil. Il lui adresse la prière de le débarasser de son air sérieux, ressenti comme une pesanteur, et de le faire semblant à Vendredi: «Soleil, délivre-moi de la gravité... Enseigne-moi l'ironie. Apprends-moi la légèreté, l'acceptation riante des dons immédiats de ce jour, sans calcul, sans gratitude, sans peur... Soleil, rends-moi semblable à Vendredi. Donne-moi le visage de Vendredi épanoui par le rire, taillé tout entier pour le rire...» (Tournier, 1972: 217)

Conclusion

L'unicité de Tournier réside dans le fait qu'il renverse non seulement les attentes du lecteur conditionné par la lecture de Defoe mais aussi ce qu'on pourrait considérer une évolution plausible au plan comportemental : Robinson qui, au début, signale sa présence sur l'île par le feu qu'il garde allumé, donne l'impression qu'il veut retourner désespérément à la civilisation. Lorsque cette chance apparaît à la fin, il décide de rester sur l'île répudiant la civilisation pour vivre dans un monde rousseauiste. D'un côté, dans cette volonté de régénération, Robinson ne sera heureux qu'après avoir entièrement assimilé les lois de la nature. Il choisit de son plein gré de rester insulaire, d'abolir le temps, de vivre dans l'immortel présent.

De l'autre côté, Vendredi, un fils de la nature qui paraît heureux dans son milieu naturel, cherche la compagnie des matelots du navire Whitebird et s'enfuit, ce qui renverse le mythe du « bon sauvage ». Chacun d'eux veut devenir ce qui est l'autre. Si Robinson est attaché à la terre, Vendredi possède des attributs aériens. Paradoxalement, par sa décision finale, Robinson sort du temps social et rentre dans le mythe. Au contraire, Vendredi aspire à une existence dans le temps, abandonnant l'espace atemporel, naturel de l'île. En même temps, Tournier confirme le mythe du « bon sauvage » par l'exemple de Robinson et le contredit par le choix de Vendredi. Le livre se situe donc, métaphoriquement parlant, dans « les limbes du Pacifique ».

Cette inversion des rôles est un thème cher à Tournier qui a exprimé ainsi son idéal philosophique, sa réflexion sur la civilisation occidentale dont l'assurance est, à notre époque, de moins en moins affirmée, les valeurs de plus en plus critiquées, tandis qu'on reconnaît les valeurs primitives par lesquelles le désordre de la nature est respecté et le sens du sacré est conservé. Les aventures de Robinson sur l'île reflètent, dans une certaine mesure, l'évolution de l'humanité, montrant l'échec de l'entreprise occidentale sur la nature. Le Blanc de l'Ouest qui a essayé de garder ses valeurs morales et sociales, se voit guider vers une vie sauvage par un Indien qui devient son égal. Dans l'esprit postmoderne, Tournier refuse les conclusions claires, abolit l'idée d'un sens stable de l'oeuvre littéraire et montre, s'il était nécessaire, que l'identité individuelle et culturelle est fluide, changeante et possible à définir seulement par rapport à l'autre.

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The Said and the Unsaid in Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*

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Abstract: *The paper is a thorough text-based analysis of one of Robert Browning's most representative poems, illustrating the dramatic monologue technique and starting from the assumption that the elements that are left unsaid and that can be inferred from within are a lot more important and relevant than what is actually said.*

Keywords: *the dramatic monologue technique, involvement, detachment, said, unsaid.*

Sources of Inspiration

Robert Browning first published the poem in 1842 as *My Last Duchess* in *Dramatic Lyrics* in which, as GK Chesterton (1919:46) states “he showed himself a picturesque and poignant artist in a wholly original manner” and gave it the present title *My Last Duchess*. Ferrara only in 1849, in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*. The poem is illustrative for the official Victorian position on love as the supreme experience of life, a pure, soul-saving feeling, oriented towards marriage and children. As Louis S. Friedland (1936: 666) extensively suggests, while researching the historical background of his poem *Sordello*, Browning discovered the Este family of Ferrara, particularly the figure of Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara, the real-life model for the duke in *My Last Duchess*. According to Friedland (1936: 666), his sources most likely included *Biographie universelle* (1822) - a reference text Browning had consulted on several previous occasions - and Ludovico Antonio Muratori's *Della Antichità Estensi*, both of which Browning had also used for *Sordello*. R. H. Wilde's *Conjectures and Researches concerning the Love Madness and Imprisonment of Torquato Tasso*, of which Browning was writing a review in spring of 1842, may have provided further details on

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Alfonso II, who was Torquato Tasso's patron. Friedman (1936: 670-671) states that on July 9, 1558, Alfonso II married a 14 year-old young lady, Lucrezia di Cosimo de Medici, in the chapel of the ducal palace by Bishop di Cortona, Giovambattista di Simone Ricasoli, and left her immediately for two years. Lucrezia was "tall, thin, of modest mental endowment and not very much education, serious, very devout but taciturn, and by no means expansive" (G. Pieraccini *apud* Friedman 1936: 670), and the Medicis' status could be termed "nouveau riche" in comparison with that of the venerable and distinguished Este family ("My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name"). According to Friedman (1936: 672) the Duchess died on April 21, 1561 at the age of 17 and her sudden death caused rumours that she had been poisoned, although a more probable cause of death was tuberculosis Friedman (1936: 673). After the death of Lucrezia, the Duke sought the hand of Barbara, eighth daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I and Anna of Bohemia and Hungary and the sister of the Count of Tyrol, Ferdinand II. Supposedly the count is the one referred to in the narrative of *My Last Duchess* as he was in charge of arranging the marriage. The chief of his entourage, Nikolaus Madruz, a native of Innsbruck, was his courier. Madruz is presumably the silent listener in the poem.

As Litzinger and Smalley (1995:84) observe, the *Athenaem* reviewer of Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) in which *My Last Duchess* first appeared expressed reservations about his style, actually considering that Browning's strongest points were his weaknesses, complaining about the limitations and the unintelligibility of meanings in the poem.

The Dramatic Monologue Technique

Browning's poetry is primarily dramatic, consisting of a few stage plays and a multitude of dramatic poems of a kind or another, a thing which is reflected by the titles of his shorter collections: *Dramatic Lyrics*, *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, *Dramatis Personae*, *Dramatic Idyls*, etc. Literary critics Woolford and Karlin (1996:38-39) observe that:

Browning himself never used the term 'dramatic monologue'. The term seems to have been first used by George W. Thornbury in a collection of poems published in 1857 and first applied to Browning's poetry in William Stigand's review of *Dramatis Personae* in the *Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1864. (...) Browning did

distinguish between 'dramatic lyric' and 'dramatic romance', the former presenting an emotional or psychological state and the latter telling a story of action. The two categories are present as 'Lyrics' and 'Romances' in his *Poetical Works* of 1863, and as 'Dramatic Lyrics' and 'Dramatic Romances' in the *Poetical Works* of 1869 and 1888-1889.

My Last Duchess is a dramatic monologue, a form that Browning helped make famous. The dramatic monologue as executed by Browning and others was characterized by a single character - obviously not the poet himself - who delivers his speech in a specific temporal and situational context while interacting with one or more silent auditors.

As GK Chesterton (1919: 48) observes: "The actual quality, the actual originality of the form is a little difficult to describe. But its general characteristic is the fearless and most dexterous use of grotesque things in order to express sublime emotions."

Browning's dramatic method is diverse as he worked with a number of dramatic methods. As Woolford and Karlin (1996:41) mention: "there is certainly no such thing as an archetypal dramatic monologue which dominates the field."

Browning's taste for the theatrical often led him to choose particularly dramatic situations for his characters: thus, the avaricious bishop in *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church* is on his deathbed, the rebellious monk in *Fra Lippo Lippi* has just been apprehended in the red-light district by the night watchman, and the duke of *My Last Duchess* is on the brink of remarrying.

As Robert Woodrow Langbaum (1957:75) mentions:

The usual procedure in discussing the dramatic monologue is to find precedents for the form in the poetry of all periods, and then to establish, on the model of a handful of poems by Browning and Tennyson, objective criteria by which the poem is henceforth to be recognized and judged.

The formal criteria for pure dramatic monologue include three features, commonly agreed upon by critics (Woolford and Karlin, M. H. Abrams, Glen Everett):

1. A single person, who is not the poet, using a case-making, argumentative tone, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment. This critical

moment is called by Everett *the point of entry*. Woolford and Karlin (1996) consider that another important characteristic of Browning's dramatic monologue is the fact that the poem begins in the middle of its action.

2. This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people (*the implied listeners or interlocutors*); but we know of the auditors' presence and what they say and do only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker. According to Woolford and Karlin (1996), even where the speakers of the poems are nominally alone, they often imagine an audience. (Here, Glen Everett proposes that the reader should take the part of the silent listener, often perceiving a gap between what that speaker says and what he or she actually reveals and completing the dramatic scene from within, by means of inference and imagination.)

3. The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's psychology, nature, temperament and character at a certain moment in his life and the dramatic situation in which he finds himself.

Consequently, as Woolford and Karlin (1996) observe, we cannot reduce the dramatic monologue to a set of generic and general rules, but it remains the case that Browning, as a poet, was concerned with the creation of dramatic speakers and dramatic situations.

Fittingly, *My Last Duchess*, written in iambic pentameter couplets, marked what was to be a rewarding new direction in Browning's poetry. Literary scholar William Clyde DeVane (1955:109) observed:

The poem far surpasses its source in subtlety and suggestiveness. In the character of the Duke, Browning makes his first brilliant study of the culture and morality of the Italian Renaissance ... 'My Last Duchess,' though one of the earliest of Browning's dramatic monologues, has always been considered one of his greatest...

This great subtlety and suggestiveness, his obscure references and difficult syntax were actually responsible for some extreme charges of unreadability brought by the critics of 1830's, '40s, and '50s who said that it was impossible to make sense of his poetry and that he must have gone mad. Referring to these accusations, Glen Everett comes to the conclusion that his contemporaries reacted as if they

were facing something new and alien, not knowing what strategies to use in reading Browning's poems. According to Everett (2003), the rules for reading Browning's poem are the same rules that apply to schoolboys' games: the participant has to infer the truth without actually being told it, from a set of governing rules.

Thus, the unsaid in Browning's poems is a lot more important and fascinating than the things that are said, because the unsaid reveals the actual psychology and character of the speaker. Woolford, Karlin and Phelan (2007:735) quote a December 1855 "thank you" letter to Ruskin, a letter which is highly suggestive of Browning's poetic practice:

For your bewilderment more especially noted -- how shall I help that? We don't read poetry the same way, by the same law; it is too clear. I cannot begin writing poetry till my imaginary reader has conceded licences to me which you demur at altogether. I know that I don't make out my conception by my language, all poetry being a putting an infinite within the finite. You would have me paint it all plain out, which can't be; but by various artifices I try to make shift with touches and bits of outlines which succeed if they bear the conception from me to you.

As Woolford and Karlin (1996:55) observe: "Browning's poetic voice impresses itself on a multitude of differing dramatic situations and psychological states". The purpose of Browning's style is to give the impression that someone is simply talking, overriding and dissolving the versification of the poem, the voice of the speaker being often modulated in such a way as to disguise the effects of metre and rhyme.

The powerful, aggressive speaker of *My Last Duchess* starts very abruptly and violently, taking control of the interlocutor, by asserting his possessive attitude regarding, ambiguously, either the portrait or the woman, or both. Using enjambment, Browning makes verse imitate, as much as possible, the diction and rhythms of human speech, speech which consists of ordinary words in their natural order of utterance:

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:1)

The speaker is a connoisseur and an aristocrat, obsessed with rank and privilege and control. The Duke of Ferrara, as we can infer from the title, alludes, for the first time in the narrative of the

poem, to the fact that his Duchess might be dead, by using the words *last* and *as if she were alive*.

The Duke brings ambiguity to a whole new level in the next lines:

I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? (Appelbaum and Weller
1993:1)

as we do not know whether by the word *piece* he refers to the woman or the painting. Unconsciously and involuntarily, calling the piece a *wonder now*, the Duke reveals more than he wants, the fact that his insistence on control is better satisfied by the portrait, by the artistic representation of the woman, than by the person herself. He prefers the fixity and eternity of art to the mutability of real life. The Duke also mentions his superior status as an aristocrat who is able to command an artist (Frà Pandolf) to *work busily a day* so that the portrait is finished. Another thing that is unsaid is the identity of Frà Pandolf. Louis S. Friedman (1936: 677-678) suggests that Frà Pandolf was actually Alfonso's court painter, Bartolommeo Faccini, who was ordered to cover the walls of the castle with life-size portraits of noble ancestors and who died during the process by falling from the scaffold.

He proves to be even more ambiguous as we do not know who he is addressing, who that *you* is: is it a second self he is talking to, is there someone in the room and is that someone a substitute for the reader, or is it us, the readers? In order to understand the poem, we have to employ what Glen Everett (2003) calls *engagement*, that is to get actively involved in the narrative of the poem, to assume that that *you* is us, to passively participate in the scene and listen to the monologue of the Duke.

The next lines in the poem:

I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:1)

point to the Duke's aggressive attitude regarding the portrait and the interlocutor. As Woolford and Karlin (1996:167) observe:

And, as his Duchess appears from behind the curtain when needed, to retire as punctually when the show is over, so the interlocutor, unidentified at this stage, finds himself being initiated into the ritual prescribed for strangers. (...) Just as the Duchess is the 'last' (i.e. the latest) in a series, so the envoy is 'not the first' to ask about her: the Duke appropriates and stereotypes their identities, enforcing their subordination to his own.

Now the Duke starts a long list of things he did not like about his last/latest/late Duchess:

Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace--all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:1-2)

Unconsciously, the Duke reveals himself as a tyrannical husband whose wife should have been made glad *only* by his presence, a wife whose heart should have been impressed *only* by him and who should have liked and looked *only* at him. His verbal aggressiveness builds up being fuelled by remembering the fact

that she dared compare the noble name of his family with anybody's gift:

She thanked men,--good; but thanked
Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

The next lines have a double quality: first of all, via remembrance, they bring the Duke to the climax of his fury and secondly, he states one thing and does another. He considers he would lower/humiliate himself if he told his Duchess the things that disgust him, but, paradoxically, he does exactly the same thing in front of a stranger:

Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech--(which I have not)--to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"--and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
--E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

The smiles the Duchess shared so generously make him give commands to put an end to that situation:

Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

Robert Browning emphasized the uncertainty of the line: "I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together" in his comment to Hiram Corson according to which the Duke might have had his Duchess put to death or he might have had her shut up in a convent.

In the next lines, ambiguity clears with regard to the identity of *you*; we now find out that that *you* is actually an emissary sent by a

Count to negotiate the conditions of the future marriage between his daughter and the Duke. In order to attain a detached, critical view of the whole poem, we now have to employ the second strategy, of extracting ourselves from the narrative of the poem, a strategy that Everett calls *detachment*. Again, the Duke, unconsciously reveals his priorities: he is interested in the dowry, not in the Count's daughter.

Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

Another involuntary gesture of stooping appears in the next lines in which the Duke offers himself to go down together with a person who is socially inferior to him:

Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

But before they are able to continue negotiations for the future marriage, the Duke points to another paradoxical work of art, symbolizing the brutal male domination of the feminine, of the beautiful, the natural and the frail, a statue of Neptune taming a seahorse, thus sending a very clear message to the Count's daughter: she should be submissive or she might become his future "last Duchess":

Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me. (Appelbaum and Weller 1993:2)

Conclusion

The sophisticated and cultivated rhetoric of the aristocratic and civilized Duke involuntarily gives away the most horrific example of a mind totally mad despite its eloquence in expressing itself. Involuntarily and unconsciously, the Duke reveals himself for what he is: an aggressive and violent egomaniac obsessed by obedience

and control. We find out that the duchess was (probably/likely) murdered not because of infidelity, not because of a lack of gratitude for her position, and not, finally, because of the simple pleasures she took in common everyday life. She is reduced to an object of art in the Duke's collection of paintings and statues because the Duke equals his instructing her to behave like a duchess with "stooping," an action of which his megalomaniacal pride is incapable. Adrian Radu (2012:145) concludes that:

In this case art replaced real life. The mutability and transience of life is replaced with the immutability and permanence of art. The poem is thus a study of the distorted psychology of a villain (of noble position though) for whom the portrait of his deceased wife and not herself becomes an object of obsessive contemplation and pride.

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Au-delà des mères perdues ou comment nommer la mère après la Shoah

Amelia Peral¹

Abstract: *This article focuses on the relationship between mothers and daughters in the French literature, taking as its starting point the Holocaust as it was experienced by these two authors, Sarah Kofman and Esther Orner. For most Holocaust survivors, this is, at first, to find the words to break the silence, find the words to describe the indescribable and, therefore, with writing, these two writers try recover the time spent, the one where as children they had had a mother to love. Mothers lost in the pain of separation that would give them a new life, another mother. So what to call these mothers lost when another mother had cradled in her womb? Through the writing of Sarah Kofman and Esther Orner, we make this journey against time.*

Keywords : *holocaust, Sarah Kofman, Esther Orner, mother, writing*

1. Ecrire l'indicible. Nommer la Shoah

Comment nommer l'innommable? Comment écrire sur l'indicible? Comment écrire sur une feuille de papier, caressée par la main de l'être en lutte avec des conflits intérieurs si douloureux que seul le silence, croit-elle, aurait le pouvoir de devenir un baume capable d'endormir les démons qui la poursuivent depuis si longtemps déjà? Comment? Pourquoi? A quelle période de sa vie, la voix de celle qui a failli être éteinte, atteinte à jamais d'une maladie inguérissable, pourra-t-elle enfin se dévoiler et écrire sur cette feuille de papier qui se meurt de ses envies d'exister: « je fus aussi celle qui au temps jadis eu une mère à aimer? Je fus, en fuite de moi-même, petite fille aimée par une mère qui dû abandonner son être de chair. Je suis, dans le temps de l'écriture, une femme qui crut être abandonnée, par manque d'amour, pensai-je? Devenant étant, femme qui essaya de comprendre la séparation du premier amour qui est celui de la mère, je serai jusqu'à la fin de ma vie

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étang de pluie, sable chaud, eau de mère, eau de vie »². Dire l'innommable, dire l'indicible, c'est révéler aux autres que les événements vécus lors de la Shoah accompagneront toujours celles qui ne pourront plus récupérer leur enfance abîmée. Devenues des Orphelines de la Shoah³, je cite à ce propos Anny Dayan Rosenman:

Le terme d'orphelins de la Shoah ne recoupe pas exactement la définition des *enfants cachés*, car certains des enfants cachés ont retrouvé leurs parents. Il ne recoupe pas non plus toujours un fait de génération, car si beaucoup de ces orphelins étaient de jeunes enfants⁴ certains d'entre eux étaient pendant la guerre des adolescents⁵ ou de jeunes adultes⁶. Tous dans leur douleur non surmontée sont restés à jamais de vieux orphelins. (Dayan Rosenman, 2012)

C'est, donc, en ce sens que nous appliquons ce terme en faisant référence à la perte de la figure maternelle comme mort symbolique de la mère réelle.

Longtemps, ce fut le silence qui accompagna la plupart des auteurs dont particulièrement, Sarah Kofman, Esther Orner, Elisabeth Gille ou Denise Epstein entre autres. Un silence de plomb, un silence d'enfer, un silence douloureux car elles avaient appris pendant leur enfance cachées, que pour survivre il fallait se taire. Le silence devient un des leitmotivs existentiels pendant la plus grande partie de leur vie. Il a donc fallu attendre le temps nécessaire pour écouter les témoignages des survivants des premières générations. Comme Régine Waintrater a si bien souligné, on peut distinguer trois temps dans la formation et l'évolution du témoignage de la Shoah.

Le premier temps est celui des témoignages immédiats de l'après-guerre.

Le deuxième temps, plus littéraire, est celui des récits parus environ dix ans après le retour.

² Recréation fictionnelle proposée par l'auteur de cet article.

³ Nous faisons aussi référence à l'ouvrage d'Odette. 2005. *Orpheline de la Shoah*. Paris : Presses de la Renaissance.

⁴ C'est le cas de Georges Perec, Elisabeth Gilles, Sarah Kofman, Jean-Claude Grumberg, Aharon Appelfeld, Raymond Federmann ou Berthe Burko-Falcman.

⁵ Tels Elie Wiesel ou André Schwartz-Bart.

⁶ C'est le cas de Vassili Grossman ou de Romain Gary.

Le troisième temps correspond à la dernière décennie et se caractérise par une floraison de formes diverses, recueils ou films, avec une nette prépondérance d'essais et de témoignages centrés sur la personne, qui reflète le besoin éprouvé par toute une société de s'informer et de réfléchir sur la nature d'événements qui restent difficiles à comprendre. (Waintrater, 2003 : 38-39)

Dans ce premier temps de l'après-guerre⁷, les femmes qui témoignent ne sont pas nombreuses. Dans la littérature française, Pelagia Lewinska publie en 1945, *Vingt mois à Auschwitz*⁸, et dans la littérature italienne aux côtés de Primo Levi, une femme, Liana Millu qui publie en 1947, *Il fumo di Bikernau*, qu'elle avait commencé à rédiger en 1945.

Le deuxième temps est marqué par les témoignages de femmes comme Anna Langfus⁹, Charlotte Delbo¹⁰ ou Vivianne Forrester¹¹ entre autres, chacune d'entre elles dans leur propre spécificité ancrée dans leur vécu.

Nous allons nous arrêter au troisième temps celui qui a vu comment à partir des années 1990 jusqu'à nos jours, les récits ont permis à certaines des femmes écrivains de sortir du silence. Nombreux ouvrages comme ceux de Henriette Slisonsky¹², Sabine Zlatin¹³, Fela Brajtberg-Fajnzylber¹⁴, Alexandra Krah¹⁵, Isabelle

⁷ Les écrivains qui témoignent dans le temps de l'après-guerre ne sont pas nombreux. Nous pouvons citer notamment Robert Antelme, auteur d'un ouvrage de référence, *L'espèce humaine* en 1947 ; Primo Levi avec *Si c'est un homme*, ouvrage écrit en 1946 et publié dix ans plus tard pour la première fois.

⁸ Publié à Paris aux éditions Nagel.

⁹ 1962. *Les Bagages de sable*. Paris : Gallimard ; 1963. *Le Sel et le soufre*. Paris : Gallimard ; 1965. *Saute Barbara*. Paris : Gallimard.

¹⁰ Auteur de la trilogie *Auschwitz et après* : 1965. *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*. Paris : Gontier ; 1970. *Une connaissance inutile*. Paris : Minuit ; 1971. *Mesure de nos jours*. Paris : Minuit.

¹¹ 1970. *Ainsi des exilés*. Paris : Denoël. Vivianne Forrester a continué sa production littéraire et son témoignage sur la Shoah avec d'autres ouvrages, notamment *Ce soir, après la guerre* publié en 1992. Elle appartiendrait à cette catégorie d'écrivains qui ont commencé à écrire sur cette expérience dans un deuxième temps et ont poursuivi par la suite.

¹² 2001. *L'arbre de Jacob*. Paris : Des Écrivains.

¹³ 1994. *Les enfants d'Izieu. Suivi du témoignage de Sabine Zlatin*. Paris : Seuil ; 1992. Mémoires de la "dame d'Izieu", avec sa déposition au procès Barbie... Paris : Gallimard.

¹⁴ 1991. *Le témoignage ordinaire d'une juive polonaise*. Paris : La Bruyère.

¹⁵ 1996. *Les fantômes de Lisa*. Paris : l'Harmattan.

Choko¹⁶, Larissa Cain¹⁷ et bien d'autres témoignent de ce besoin d'écrire pour faire face à l'indicible, et surtout pour ne pas oublier. L'écriture est devenue la quête de l'être qui s'écrit dans sa recherche identitaire, ainsi que la quête d'une mère perdue, une mère perdue qui se révèle à son tour, par l'écriture, la récupération du pays oublié, aimé ou désiré dans une assimilation propre entre la *Mater* et ma terre, pays d'origine.

Cependant, avant d'en arriver à ce troisième temps, une étape a dû être surmontée : sortir du silence. Abandonner la peur qui pendant des années a aidé à vivre et à survivre. A la fin des années 70 et tout le long des années 80, divers témoignages se sont succédé. Des psychanalyses ont été entreprises par des survivants. Claudine Vegh mène à terme une étude¹⁸ basée sur le témoignage des enfants de déportés, étude publiée en 1979 où elle met en relief certains traits communs chez la plupart d'entre eux. En prenant comme point de départ le témoignage des survivantes, nous pouvons observer que l'une des caractéristiques qui apparaît dans la plus grande partie de leurs témoignages est celle qui marque l'impossibilité d'assumer, de confesser la perte des parents, ou de se souvenir de leur visage, et par conséquent la question qui les tourmente est celle de savoir si elles ont le droit d'en parler, c'est-à-dire de parler de ÇA et sur ÇA. Certains des témoignages recueillis comme celui de Madeleine insiste sur ce point. Née à Paris, en 1931. Son père est déporté à Pithiviers d'où il ne reviendra jamais. Pour Madeleine, pouvoir enfin parler librement sur cette partie enfouie de sa vie est ressentie comme une libération. « Il a fallu ton mémoire pour qu'une fois dans ma vie j'aie le droit de dire ce que j'ai sur le cœur. Au moins ça, oui, au moins ça. » (Vegh, 1979 :68). C'était simplement impensable. La peur de réveiller les fantasmes endormis est toujours présente : « « J'ai accepté cet entretien, mais j'ai peur... J'ai même très peur » (Vegh, 1979 :91) dit-elle. Pour Hélène, née à Paris en 1938, la perte de ses parents, de ses grands-parents et de son frère à Auschwitz l'a empêchée de parler, d'avouer son profond désarroi : « Après

¹⁶ 2004. *Mes deux vies*. Paris : Caractères.

¹⁷ 2003. *Ghettos en révolte, Pologne, 1943*. Paris : Éd. Autrement ; 2003. *J'étais enfant à Varsovie*. Syros jeunesse ; 2006. *L'odyssée d'Oleg Lerner, Varsovie 1940-1945*. Paris : Syros ; 2007 : *J'étais enfant dans le ghetto de Varsovie*. Paris : l'Harmattan.

¹⁸ Vegh, Claudine. 1979. *Je ne lui ai pas dit au revoir. Des enfants de déportés parlent*. Paris : Gallimard.

avoir accepté cet entretien, « j'étais paniquée à l'idée de ce que j'allais pouvoir te dire. J'ai l'impression d'un vide sur cette enfance » (Vegh, 1979 : 131). L'impossible mot à venir, la peur de parler de ÇA, de nommer l'innommable, la pousse cependant à affirmer :

Je n'ai jamais posé de questions aux autres. Je ne pouvais pas en parler, les mots se coinçaient au fond de ma gorge. Mais je me disais : si au moins ma mère revenait, même malade... mais qu'elle revienne... J'ai espéré très longtemps ! [...] Je n'ai jamais pu parler de tout cela. Si devant moi une allusion est faite à la déportation... Je m'enfuis, c'est lâche, mais je ne veux pas m'effondrer devant les autres. .. Je n'ai pas dit au revoir à mes parents. (Vegh, 1979 : 154)

Cependant face à la perte, la voix de certaines survivantes se casse. La question devient la douleur même d'un être en conflit avec soi-même. Être reconnaissante à leurs parents pour leur avoir sauvé la vie en les cachant ? Et comment vivre après ÇA ? Pourquoi survivre sans eux ? Hélène affirme à ce propos que :

Leur seule consolation a sûrement été d'avoir réussi à nous sauver ! Mais... ce que je dis est totalement scandaleux... fallait-il à tout prix nous sauver et vivre après, sans parents, avec l'impression d'être toujours abandonnée...

Mon Dieu, je n'ai pas le droit de penser Ça » (Vegh, 1979 : 155)

Si les témoignages recueillis par Claudine Vegh mettent en scène la figure des survivantes anonymes, qui, l'espace d'un temps, donnent leur voix en héritage pour abandonner le silence et se dire pour la première fois, d'autres voix de femmes, écrivains comme Sarah Kofman et Esther Orner, remémorent moyennant l'écriture leurs mères perdues.

2. Les mères perdues

« Au moment où les images de ma vie vont devenir papier », (Epstein, 2008 : 23) Denise Epstein, l'une des filles d'Irène Némirowski, commence ainsi dans *Survivre et vivre*, à remémorer à partir d'anciennes photos jaunies les « personnages de cette comédie humaine » comme elle les dénomme. Des photos sur lesquelles ses parents, eux, évoluent intemporels car le temps les a figés au-delà des montagnes éternelles.

Helen Epstein essaie aussi de reconstruire à travers les photos de famille un paysage familial disparu en fumée :

Des branches entières, de grands réseaux de feuilles avaient disparu dans le ciel et dans la terre. Aucune pierre ne marquait leur passage. Tout ce qui restait était des photographies pâlies que mon père gardait dans une enveloppe jaune sous son bureau.

Ces photographies n'étaient pas de ces clichés collés dans des albums que l'on montre à des étrangers. C'étaient des documents, des preuves de notre participation à une histoire si extrême que, malgré toutes mes tentatives pour en prendre connaissance à travers les livres que me donnaient mon père ou les films auxquels il m'emmenait, je n'arrivais pas à l'appréhender. (Epstein, 2005 : 13)

Les vieilles photos jaunies ne pourront pas remplacer la mère perdue, celle qui ne reviendra pas de son voyage éternel. Les photos jaunies ne seront que feu dans un désert existentiel qui se meurt de ses envies d'exister. Comment récupérer les mères perdues ? Parfois, ce sera une photo qui témoignera de leur existence. Quelquefois, un souvenir que l'écriture sortira de l'oubli

Pour Sarah Kofman, l'écriture autobiographique entreprise en 1993, entre avril et septembre, dans *Rue Ordener, rue Labat* (1994), avait sans doute comme but de réveiller la petite Sarah perdue encore dans son enfance abîmée. Quelques mois après sa publication, Sarah décidait de mettre fin à son existence. Comme s'il s'agissait de ses derniers mots, ce récit autobiographique, court, intense, sans détours, direct, écrit presque à bout de souffle, n'avait pas réussi à lui faire abandonner les ténèbres. L'oubli ne pouvait pas céder sa place à la mère perdue. Mais à laquelle ? Elle avait enfin osé avouer dans *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*, après des années et des années à écrire des œuvres philosophiques: « Mes nombreux livres ont peut-être été des voies de traverse obligées pour parvenir à raconter « Ça » » (Kofman, 1994 : 10). Mais, pour Sarah quel est le sens accordé à ÇA ? A notre avis, ÇA représente le tout de son écriture aussi bien philosophique qu'autobiographique. Car comment entreprendre un récit si intense comme celui qu'elle nous a laissé sans avoir effectué une profonde réflexion sur la vie de l'être, des êtres, sur la vie de soi ? Sarah a entrepris avec *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat* ce que nous appellerons un processus *autobiophilographique*¹⁹ littéraire de son enfance. Ça, c'est son

¹⁹ Néologisme formé à partir de : autobiographie+philosophie.

enfance manquée pendant la Shoah. C'est le père mort, incarné à travers la métonymie du stylo. C'est le stylo de l'écriture. Et c'est la mère perdue. Mais, c'est surtout le livre d'une mère que la petite Sarah avait pleuré jusqu'à la douleur. Comment comprendre à 8 ans que toute la vie bascule et qu'à présent, plus de père à attendre, plus de mère à aimer ? Pour la petite Sarah, le vrai danger, le seul danger à l'âge de trois ans : « Être séparée de ma mère » (Kofman, 1994 : 33). La première scène d'amour entre mère et fille venait juste de commencer. Elle était douloureuse. Elle allait se répéter quelques années plus tard quand les rafles s'amplifièrent et que sa mère se vit obligée à la cacher pour la protéger. Alors, ce fut l'excision brutale qui marqua la séparation définitive entre mère et fille.

Esther Orner, écrivain et traductrice d'hébreu, de nos jours l'une des voix les plus reconnues de la littérature israélienne francophone, a publié plusieurs livres parmi lesquelles une trilogie autobiographique: *Autobiographie de Personne* (1999), *Fin et Suite* (2001), *Petite biographie pour un rêve* (2003), d'où se dessine la figure maternelle. Esther Orner est née en 1937, à Magdebourg en Allemagne. Ses parents sont d'origines juives polonaises. Ils quittent l'Allemagne en 1939 et se réfugient en Belgique où Esther apprendra le français. Ses parents furent déportés. Son père ne revint jamais. Le titre *Autobiographie de Personne* est construit sur un oxymore et représente de même un mot valise créé à partir du titre de deux œuvres : *Autobiographie de tout le monde* de Gertrude Stein (1978) et *La Rose de personne* de Paul Celan (1963). La deuxième partie de ce mot-valise fait allusion à *La Rose de personne* de Paul Celan²⁰ où l'auteur reprend un des versets du célèbre *Cantique des Cantiques* bibliques « une rose parmi les ronces », c'est-à-dire comme avoue Esther Orner lors d'une entrevue²¹, une rose parmi les nations. Et le thème du pays, de l'origine, des origines parcourt en tout sens cette *Autobiographie de personne*, que l'auteur aurait voulu au premier

²⁰ *La Rose de personne* publié en 1963, est le quatrième volume du poète d'expression allemande Paul Celan. Il se donne la mort à 50 ans en 1970 en se jetant dans la Seine.

²¹ Braester, M. 2004. 'Esther Orner-voix majeure dans la littérature israélienne francophone contemporaine.

<http://francais.agonia.net/index.php/article/84737/index.html> [consultée le 20-04-2012]

abord appeler *Meguilah* (Histoire de la reine Esther « La Meguilah »). Cependant, à cause de cette narration à la première personne incarnée par la figure maternelle, le rapprochement entre le prénom d'Esther et celui de la mère aurait donné une fausse piste aux lecteurs, avoue l'auteur. Même si *personne* marque l'oxymore, *Personne* en majuscule veut bien mettre l'accent sur l'existence d'un être, celui de la mère perdue.

Si *Autobiographie de tout le monde* fait référence à la vie de certains personnages célèbres connus par l'auteur, l'*Autobiographie de Personne* que nous propose Esther Orner est celle de deux femmes inconnues jusqu'alors, la sienne et celle de sa mère. Écrit à la première personne, les deux voix féminines se superposent à l'intérieur de trois histoires : celle de la fille qui cherche la mère en écriture, celle de la mère qui essaie de fuir le pays de sa naissance avec la petite fille :

Il était urgent de partir. Chaque jour des soldats venaient nous chercher, nous expulser vers le pays mort (....) Chaque jour je mettais l'enfant dans la poussette, prenais un petit sac de voyage et j'allais escortée au train sous les yeux de la voisine qui se frottaient les mains [...] Poliment, les soldats m'ordonnaient de monter dans le train. Je leur demandais de m'aider à monter la poussette avec l'enfant. Ils me rappelaient le règlement pas de poussette dans les trains. Je m'obstinais. Ne pas me séparez de la poussette. Alors vous ne monterez pas. Tant pis. Et ils me raccompagnaient chez moi. Et ainsi chaque jour. (Orner, 1999 : 22-23)

Et celle de l'écriture du récit, un métarécit où le processus d'écriture se voit constamment confronté aux problèmes de mémoire. Qui se faufile à l'intérieur de ce métarécit ?

Depuis longtemps, je ne suis plus où j'écris. Je ne vois plus très bien. J'écris encore un peu. Achever ce qui a été commencé. Ma vue baisse de plus en plus. Elle voudrait que je continue. Me faire parler de là où je suis. Elle n'a vraiment peur de rien [...] Elle se tait. Mais je la vois s'agiter. Elle reprend mon histoire. Elle la corrige. (Orner, 1999 : 149)

Si pour Sarah Kofman, *Ça* incarne le père mort, son enfance vécue pendant la Shoah, l'écriture, *Ça* représente aussi la mère... pour Esther Orner, parler de *Ça*, c'est faire aussi référence à son enfance saccagée. « *Ça* » représente l'indicible qui doit être nommé,

l'imbrication entre la *Mater* et la Terre-ma, la Terre Promise, sama Terre, une nouvelle MATER née de l'écriture.

En ce sens, Esther Orner dessine une petite allégorie des origines afin d'atteindre le pays rêvé. Le pays mort : c'est la Pologne, le pays d'origine de la mère. Le pays Voisin : c'est l'Allemagne, pays d'accueil pour ses parents et lieu de naissance de l'auteur. Le pays de l'aube : La Belgique : pays d'accueil qui présente deux aspects différents : un aspect positif (pays d'accueil : c'est le pays qui la sauvé) ; un aspect négatif (séparation de la mère, et parents adoptifs). La ville du Fleuve : c'est Paris où elle a vécu pendant 20 ans et où elle a commencé à écrire en français. Le pays des rêves, c'est Israël. Et le lieu qui ne doit pas être nommé : c'est là-bas « Après lorsque je suis revenue de là-bas » (Orner, 1999 : 33).

3. Le paradoxe : *Mater* ou *Genitrix*

Séparée de sa mère comme Sarah Kofman, Esther Orner s'est débattue entre deux mères, sa mère biologique, c'est-à-dire sa *Genitrix* et sa mère adoptive à laquelle nous donnons l'appellatif de *Mater*.

La deuxième partie de la trilogie autobiographique d'Esther Orner, *Fin et Suite*, marque dès le titre même le paradoxe. La narration débute à la mort de la mère, dans ce cas, sa *Genitrix*. Pour la première fois, la narratrice appelle sa mère par son prénom : Gitele. La narration commence ainsi : « Gitele, ton prénom te va bien. Plutôt t'allait bien. De toute manière tu seras toujours Gittel fille de Rivka dite Gitele » (Orner, 2001 : 7). Pour la première fois aussi, c'est l'emploi de la première personne qui va déterminer la prise de parole de la fille (dans *Autobiographie de Personne*), la première personne faisait référence à la mère. Dans cette deuxième partie autobiographique, nous assistons à un long monologue presque une lettre adressée à la mère morte, une sorte de réconciliation avec la *Genitrix*. La narratrice avait l'intention de refermer cette plaie amère, de faire le deuil qui n'avait pas été fait à temps, mais voilà que le paradoxe de l'écriture et de la mémoire qui n'est pas linéaire empêche de mener à bon terme ce deuil. Après la fin, début du titre de l'ouvrage il y a, accolé au même, cette *Suite*. Le rapprochement entre mère et fille passe par la nécessité de la nommer dans la narration. Mais, comment la nommer se demande la fille ?

Gitele, plus d'une année est passée. J'ai eu toute suite envie de t'écrire. [...] Et puis comment te parler ? J'ai d'abord pensé au *Vous* comme dans les bonnes familles. Mais ça ne nous concerne pas [...] Je te disais que j'avais eu envie tout de suite de te parler mais il fallait que j'attende que s'achève l'année de deuil qui dure onze mois. [...] Rien ne m'interdisait de t'écrire. Je me le suis interdit. Ecrire c'est malgré tout la fête. Je prenais des notes par-ci par-là. La peur d'oublier. Et déjà c'est le *Tu* qui apparaissait. Quoi de plus naturel que le *Je* au *Tu* et le *Tu* au *Je*. (Orner, 2001 : 9)

Et sous le *Je* de la narratrice, dans sa recherche identitaire autobiographique, se cache un moi fragmentaire qui se libère dans l'écriture, et qui veut effacer la faille existante entre mère et fille, que le pronom *Vous* aurait bien marqué. Le *Tu* s'impose. La familiarité, l'amour, l'envie de nommer « maman », la narratrice devient pendant le temps de l'écriture la petite fille qu'elle avait été, cette enfant cachée qu'elle avait dû être car Maman ne l'avait pas abandonnée, maman l'aimait d'amour. Dans ce jeu de pronoms personnels, se cache le besoin de nommer l'amour de maman et de s'écrier : « Gitele, JeVoust'aimais »²².

Le silence sur les circonstances qui ont provoqué leur séparation a empêché que le lien entre mère et fille se rétablisse. La narratrice ose enfin avouer dans cette longue lettre qui n'arrivera jamais à sa destinataire :

Gitele, je ne t'ai jamais posé une question « toute simple » à savoir si tu savais où l'on vous emmenait. J'ai failli dire *nous*... Que m'aurais-tu répondu ? Je n'arrive pas à imaginer ta réponse (Orner, 2001 : 78).

La question n'était pas « si simple » comme marque la narratrice par l'emploi des guillemets. A nouveau, l'emploi du pronom personnel « *nous* » en italique démontre que la déportation concernait toute la famille : le père, la mère et l'enfant, si la mère ne l'avait pas empêchée. Réconciliation ? Sans doute.

Les allusions aux parents adoptifs ou d'après la narratrice « parents de rechange » (Orner, 2001 : 28) sont fréquentes dans *Fin et Suite*. La petite les appelait tante et oncle. Longtemps après la fin de la guerre, la correspondance entre les deux familles s'est maintenue. Cependant, la relation entre la mère biologique et les

²² Recréation fictionnelle de l'auteur de cet article.

parents adoptifs n'était pas idyllique. La fille retrouve dans les papiers de sa *Genitrix* une lettre que ses parents adoptifs avait envoyée où ils la responsabilisaient de l'abandon de sa fille sur ces termes : « Il fallait nous la laisser nous l'aimions nous [...] Même une chienne n'abandonne pas ses enfants, ses petits » (Orner, 2001 : 29).

Et finalement, dans la troisième partie de cette trilogie autobiographique *Petite biographie pour un rêve* (2003), le titre se construit sur une antithèse qui marque le jeu entre la réalité biographique de la narratrice et la fiction du rêve qui déclenche à nouveau le besoin de se dire. Le livre met en scène deux personnages maternels : Maria A, la morte et Maria B., la vivante ; entre les deux quinze ou vingt ans de différence ; et entre les deux femmes, un seul lien : la rêveuse, c'est-à-dire la narratrice. Maria A, la morte avait sauvé la rêveuse en l'adoptant. Maria A vivait à la campagne. Maria B, la vivante habitait en ville. Maria A était aux yeux de l'enfant une vraie héroïne, elle cachait une enfant pour la sauver. Pour la petite, et pendant des années, Maria A deviendra la remplaçante de sa *Mater*, une vraie mère tandis que Maria B perd son rôle de *Mater* pour adopter celui de *Genitrix*.

Et si avec l'âge, elle avait compris qu'elle leur devait la survie, elle continua de penser que c'était l'affaire des ses parents qui l'avaient placée là, pour la délaissier. Et peu importe s'ils étaient responsable ou pas. Ils étaient partis. Ils l'avaient abandonnée et condamnée au silence (Orner, 2003 : 68).

Le rêve qui permet la narration se déclenche lorsque la narratrice reçoit une carte postale de Maria B, la vivante. Elle lui reproche son silence, son abandon. Séparée par des kilomètres de distances, la rêveuse habite en Israël, Maria B à Paris. Sur la carte postale, un tableau de Diego de Rivera, *Madre y niño* (1934) marque la relation affective entre la mère et son enfant.

Sur la couverture du premier livre de Sarah Kofman, *L'enfance de l'art* (1975), le célèbre « carton de Londres » de Léonard de Vinci (1507-1508) met en scène d'un point de vue métatextuel : « deux femmes, la Vierge et sainte Anne, étroitement accolées, se penchent avec un bienheureux sourire sur l'Enfant Jésus qui joue avec saint Jean-Baptiste » (Kofman, 1994 : 73). A l'intérieur de *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*, cette même image que l'auteur met en rapport, à l'aide d'une citation explicite, avec l'analyse

psychanalytique que Freud effectue sur l'enfance de Léonard mise en rapport avec la représentation picturale du milan, nous donne la clé d'écriture, la clé de vie et de mort de l'enfance de la petite Sarah. Dans son enfance, comme la petite Sarah, Léonard a été obligé de se séparer de sa Génitrix, sa mère Caterina, et de se fait de vivre avec son père et sa marâtre, Albiera. En analysant les dessins et les diverses théories sur le milan qui recouvrent les œuvres du peintre, Freud en arrive à la conclusion suivante :

Ecrire ainsi d'une façon si particulière sur le milan semble être ma destinée, car mon premier souvenir d'enfance est le suivant: j'étais dans mon berceau lorsqu'un milan est venu vers moi, il déploya sa queue et me frappa avec elle, à plusieurs reprises, entre les lèvres. (Nicholl, 2006 : 47).

Pour Freud, la clé qui ouvre l'interprétation de ce souvenir d'enfance se trouve dans la relation existante entre la mère et l'enfant. Le souvenir de la queue de l'oiseau entre les lèvres de l'enfant est mis en relation avec l'étape de sevrage du nourrisson. D'autres études postérieures ont mis en relief un autre texte de Léonard, que Freud ne connaissait pas, à partir duquel on en arriverait à une autre déduction : de la peur de l'enfant face à la perte de la figure maternelle, on pourrait en extraire la peur de l'enfant à être détruit par la mère. En effet, les théories à ce sujet se sont succédées pour en arriver jusqu'aux collections *Profezie* de Léonard où s'établit la suivante devinette : « Les plumes élèveront les hommes dans les airs, comme elles le font avec les oiseaux, [jusqu'au ciel] ». La réponse qui s'ensuit est bien celle de « plumes », les plumes qui permettent aux hommes d'écrire les mots pour atteindre l'envol de la lettre qui pousse en germant à l'intérieur du texte qui s'écrit. D'ailleurs, Sarah Kofman n'a-t-elle pas commencé *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*, en remémorant le stylo paternel comme symbole d'une écriture métonymique qui la contraint à écrire (Orner, 1994 : 9), son enfance blessée, raturée, après des années et des années à essayer de comprendre, dans chaque essai, derrière chaque mot qu'elle aurait voulu dire et qu'elle ne disait pas, en attendant le moment propice pour faire comme avait écrit Léonard de Vinci : « Comment décrire ce cœur, avec des mots, sans remplir un livre entiers ? » Comment aller au-delà des limites de l'indicible ? et décrire toute une enfance en peu de mots, et affirmer haut et clair par celle qui redoutait tant la

séparation de maman que sa mère n'était plus sa *Mater* mais sa *Genitrix*, et qu'entre elles se dressait, Rue Labat, une nouvelle figure maternelle appelée « Mémé » qui : « avait réussi ce tour de force : en présence de ma mère me détacher d'elle. Et du judaïsme » (Orner, 1994 : 57). Comment avouer que, pour survivre, l'enfant avait renoncé à la *Mater* ?

Deux mères à aimer, deux mains à caresser, et des mots à verser pour renverser le mythe de Déméter. Si Déméter c'était lancée, folle de douleur, à la recherche de sa fille en asséchant la Terre, la *Genitrix* perd sa condition de *Mater*, dépossédée de son être de chair pour la sauver ainsi d'une mort certaine, bien des années après les rôles seront inversés. Les filles devront assumer leur nouveau rôle, celui de devenir la mère de leurs mères.

En guise de conclusion, je vais reprendre une belle et triste histoire qui pourrait résumer d'une façon claire la relation entre la mère et l'enfant lorsque les événements vécus obligent à la séparation. Esther la cite ainsi dans *Fin et Suite* :

Un oiseau doit choisir entre sa mère et ses oisillons. Qui faire traverser le fleuve lorsque l'oiseau n'a de place sur ses ailes que pour ses propres enfants ? L'oiseau laissera sa propre mère de l'autre côté du fleuve. Les enfants d'abord... Ne serait-ce pas une des raisons pour lesquelles on a toujours quelque chose à régler avec sa mère ? (Orner, 2001 : 119)

L'enfant ne peut pas percevoir l'angoisse de la mère qui doit se séparer de lui pour le sauver, qui doit renoncer à elle-même, à ce qu'elle ressent, à la douleur de ne pas savoir si un jour elle reverrait son être de chair. L'enfant ne doit pas entrevoir la plaie amère/à mère qui est en train de s'installer entre les deux lors de la séparation. La mère doit renoncer aussi à cela pour le protéger. Elle sait qu'un jour, même si l'enfant oublie, il se souviendra que le jour des adieux, elle était Mère, *MATER*, et qu'elle serait devenue volontairement *GENITRIX* pour le sauver, pour l'aimer ainsi à travers temps. Un jour, l'enfant qu'elle dut abandonner à l'autre pourra enfin répondre à l'éternelle question de l'oubli.

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BOOK REVIEWS
BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN
REVUE DU LIVRE



Lück, Gabriele: *An Hermann Hesse. Der Leser als Produzent.* Frankfurt am Main, u. a.: Peter Lang, 2009. (Medien und Fiktionen; Bd. 6)

Veronica Buciuman¹

Das ursprünglich als Dissertation an der Universität Siegen erschienene Buch von Gabriele Lück *An Hermann Hesse. Der Leser als Produzent*, 2009 vom Peter Lang Verlag veröffentlicht, spricht ein relativ junges Thema in der internationalen Hermann Hesse Forschung an.

Im Mittelpunkt dieser Arbeit steht der weniger prominente Leser des Schriftstellers Hermann Hesse, nicht der Autor mit seinen Werken. Ziel ist, wie die Autorin es formuliert, „die bisher auf wenige Ausnahmen noch unveröffentlichten Leserbriefe an Hermann Hesse zu sondieren“ (Lück, 18), um das „Massenverhalten“ der Leser und die unzählige Menge an Briefen, die Hermann Hesse erhalten hat, zu untersuchen.

Gabriele Lück schlägt einen Betrachtungswinkel vor, der erfrischend wirkt und formuliert dadurch eine überraschende These, die besagt, dass in Hermann Hesses Fall die zahlreichen Briefschreiber einen selten begegneten literaturgeschichtlichen Kontext schaffen, zwar eine Zweibahnkommunikation in dem Verhältnis: Autor-Text-Leser. Durch Hesses Werke inspiriert schreiben die Leser ausführliche Briefftexte, die sie selber als Schriftsteller auszeichnen. Gabriele Lück wagt keine deutliche Schlussfolgerung, die den Leser sogar zum Mitschreiber der Hesseschen Werke proklamiert. Die Behauptung der Autorin jedoch, – dass die Leser als keine professionellen Schriftsteller, den Akt des Erzählens „als [einen] unbewussten [Prozess]“ begreifen, der ihr „durch die Zeitumstände verwoben mit persönlichen Schicksalsschlägen von Blessuren gezeichnetes Ich wieder zum *Ausgleich*“ (Lück, 98) bringt – könnte darauf hindeuten, da Hermann Hesse von sich behauptete, dass er selber nur *Seelenbiographien* schreibe, keine Romane. Die Frage, ob die erzählten Lebensgeschichten von Hesses Korrespondenten tatsächlich zum Thema seiner Prosawerke geworden sind, überschreitet die Rahmen dieser Rezeptionsforschung und wird nicht beantwortet. Die Analyse ist ausschließlich rezeptionsgeschichtlich

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und -ästhetisch geprägt und verbindet zusätzlich statistische Arbeitsmethoden mit Spezifika des Forschungsthemas. Der Inhalt der Briefe wird nach der „Autorfiktion“ des Lesers befragt, während die Form entsprechend ihrer Aufbauelemente hervorgehoben wird. Diese rezeptionsgeschichtlichen Daten werden mit Hilfe von Graphiken veranschaulicht; Leser-Typologien werden anhand eines breiten Brieffundus festgelegt, über den Lück genaue Auskünfte liefert, was Umfang und Aufbewahrungsort betrifft.

Das erste Kapitel befasst sich mit dem weltweiten Rezeptionsphänomen Hermann Hesse und mit der Interaktion des Schriftstellers mit seiner Leserschaft. In dem zweiten Kapitel spricht die Autorin die Problematik des Briefwechsels um den Roman *Der Steppenwolf* an.

Das vierte Kapitel, das dem Buch seinen Titel gibt *Der Leser als Produzent*, zeigt welche Leserreaktionen die Schriften von Hermann Hesse hervorheben und warum diese, im Grunde, als Rollenzuschreibungen betrachtet werden können. Die zunächst statistisch belegte These, dass der durch Briefe reagierende Leser selber Produzent von literarischen Texten ist, wird hier mit Argumenten unterstützt, die genaue Reaktionen der Leser registrieren und klassifizieren. Gabriele Lück erkennt *non-fiktionale Geschichten-Erzähler, bewusst agierende Geschichten-Erzähler, Dichter, Literate und Lyriker*, die sich an Hermann Hesse wenden.

Das fünfte Kapitel geht auf die Problematik der *Literatur als Medium* ein, indem die Wissenschaftlerin ihre These aus einer verschiedenen Perspektive betrachtet, indem sie Hermann Hesses Bücher als „Vergrößerungsgläser“ (Lück, 163) versteht, die den Lesern sehen helfen. Mit anderen Worten sucht Lück ebenfalls in den Briefen nach Hinweisen, die das Reaktionsverhalten der Leserschaft erklären könnten. Dieses teilweise spekulative Unterfangen samt einem überflüssigen Kapitel über literaturgeschichtliche Betrachtungen über die Poetik während der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts sind die einzigen Tatsachen, die als Makel dieses Buches kritisiert werden können.

Zum Schluss sei noch ein Mal darauf hingewiesen, dass dieser Forschungsansatz überhaupt eine neue Dimension der Bedeutsamkeit autobiografischer Daten für das Verständnis literarischer Werke von Hermann Hesse aufhellt. Darüber hinaus, kann diese Studie eine gute Grundlage für weitere poetologische Analysen Hermann Hesses Werke darstellen.

**Teresa Gomez Reus & Aranzazu Usandizaga, eds.: *Inside Out. Women negotiating, subverting, appropriating public and private space*
Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam, New York, NY, 2008**

Teodor Mateoc¹

The Amsterdam- based Rodopi Press is an independent academic publishing house catering mostly to the research interests of scholars pioneering new fields that encourage cross-disciplinarity. A point in case is the present anthology of critical essays under the heading "Spatial Practices. An Interdisciplinary Series in Cultural History, Geography and Literature".

An offshoot of cultural studies, the topographical approach that the authors embrace aims at looking at the ways *space* is turned into *place* through its investment with cultural meaning made manifest in various types of discourses: fiction and poetry, journalism and essays, diaries and letters. Starting from the consecrated dichotomy of *public* and *private* spheres, traditionally associated with *masculinity* and *femininity*, the sixteen essays share, ultimately, one 'grand' concern: by looking at the social history of gender relations, they deconstruct 'a number of our received ideas about women and the space they live in'(30) and testify to the arduous struggle of women to transcend barriers and 'conquer' the public realm, theretofore a problematic if not forbidden arena.

Dense, documented, alert and insightful, the essays display a wide variety of topics and their chronological order is certainly a plus, since it highlights the progress made in the engendered battle of 'negotiating, subverting' and 'appropriating public and private space'. Structured into six chapters, they take the reader onto less trodden paths, often to liminal spaces, borderlands and unconventional settings. The first three essays, grouped under the heading 'Early Escapes into Public Spaces' are stories of trespassing; they bear testimony to the inraids of several Victorian women into less visited territories: the social theorist and sociologist, Harriet Martineau and her effort to turn public her confinement to the sick room, i.e a truly

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private experience; the 'invisible flaneuse', here under the guise of a woman traveller to the Turkish baths in Sofia, an experience that invites comments on the twisted relationship between space and power; or the impoverished East End of London, where charity work and personal commitment to public needs allow middle-class women access to urban, poverty-ridden spaces never accessible before.

Trespassing and the dangers thereof could be the theme of the next section, 'Women on Display'. The focus is on fiction; in the first essay, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and Henry James's *The Wings Of the Dove* occasions comments on the gradual invasion of the private familial space by the outside forces of publicity, marketing and consumerism and their 'rules of transaction, production and display'(87); in Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth*, corporeality, the body itself becomes the centre of public interest- an early example of female icon as a marketable commodity for male consumption; in the last essay of the section, two less known novels, Gertrude Atherton's *Patience Sparhawk and her Times* and F. Tennyson's *Jesse's A Pin to See the Peepshow* consider the pitfalls of categorical trespassing when, for example, the rejection of the traditional role of the submissive wife and the appropriation of a new, public workplace is perceived as a threat to the social status-quo.

'Approaching the City' is the third section of the volume and the three essays tell stories of women trying to gain access into urban spaces. In the first essay, the 'street-walking women' of Eliza Lynn Linton, Ella Hepworth and Emily Morse Symonds are emblematic figures of feminine independence, 'paving the way for Mrs. Dalloway'(150); in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, the bedchamber and the cafe are private and public spaces, but equally, 'interstitial places'(167), the privacy of the former leading to the need for self-assertion in the public sphere; last, but not least, the third essay deals with the figure of the female *flaneur* and looks at the impact of colonial background, in Janet Frame's and Doris Lessing's autobiographical work, on their vision of London life.

The next three essays are gathered under the heading 'Conquering the Spaces of War' and they look at the presence of women in the preeminently masculine world of war. In her personal record of WW I, *Fighting France*, Edith Wharton brings an homage to the dedication and resilience of French soldiers and citizens, 'from Dunkerque to Belfort', faced with the loss and horrors of the war, while May Sinclair's *Journal of Impressions*, records her short but intense experience with warfare in terms both psychological and emotional and draws a perceptive if unconventional picture of '[non-combatant] women, consciousness and war'(247). Much in the same vein, Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* speaks of the women's incursions into the forbidden world of war and their subsequent

responses in moral, emotional and literary ways, a seminal text which reads as a testament of a whole generation.

One essay in the next section, 'Transformations in Nature', takes issue with the Rouseauistic and Wordsworthian convention of the masculine figure of the solitary wanderer and focuses on the 'gendered responses to the natural environment'(29) in the fiction of four Romantic women writers- Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft- whose protagonists attempt to overcome the trauma of captivity and exile. The other, examines the difficulty of women exploring outdoor places, here the masculine space of Wild America as it appears in Gretchen Legler's non-fictional work *All the Powerful Invisible Things: A Sportswoman's Notebook*.

The last two essays in the volume make up its concluding chapter, 'Negotiating the City'. It deals with two poetic voices: that of Adrienne Rich who turns Baudelaire's classical figure of the *flâneur* into a modern *flâneuse* who, in her encounter with the urban space, is forced to reconsider received ideas about such notions as race, class, gender, sexuality and identity; and that of the Irish poetess Eavan Boland who finds the domestic and familiar space of the suburb relevant to public, national and political concerns.

All in all, the present collection of critical essays is a praiseworthy academic enterprise. By looking afresh at the gender relations embedded in various discourses and spanning more than two centuries, the essays illuminate penumbral areas of interference between ascribed and assumed gender roles and, in so doing, bring an important contribution to the cultural and literary re-evaluation of tradition, which is the task of every generation of scholars working in the field of British cultural and literary studies.

**Russell West-Pavlov: *Bodies and Their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre*.
Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2006**

Dana Sala¹

In his challenge of one-sided views of gender-charged issues, Russell West-Pavlov starts from *public-private* dichotomy and gradually builds a system on its basis. This system developed by the book *Bodies and Their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre* is grounded on the interconnectivity between acting the masculinity on/off stage versus pure acting, the exertion of power over the space as relevant for masculinity-femininity differentiations, the paradoxes of early gendered perceptions on women, the spatial restrictions imposed on women in the theatre and the evolution of gender theories since the incipient rise of individual values. Public and private are quintessential terms in the analysis of any form of crisis, be it financial or a crisis of representation. An age when financial crisis bechanced the emergent dissolution of a cultural model was the Closure of the London Theatres in 1642. The Restoration was more afraid of contradiction than the age of Shakespeare, so it developed a greater emphasis on the illusion of the theatrical art rather than counting the performance itself as an intensified "lived" experience just like in the Elizabethan drama. No clear-cut spatial boundaries separated the spectators and the actors.

The crisis of theatrical forms and of theatre as institution, immediately after Shakespeare's death, in fact the crisis of a cultural model. On the Elizabethan stage, private and public spheres could overlap and have a heightened effect. Men could perform the actions that defined them as men.

Russell West-Pavlov's book, *Bodies and Their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2006, dare cast a new light on the complexity of gendered-charged subjects, at the dawns of modern subjectivity. The foundations of gendered space, of gendered body as manifest within the special *heterotopias* of the theatre stage and performance are challenged by Russell West-Pavlov in an elaborate research. The result is a book where the reader faces one of the most honest approaches of this topic. No pedantic premises occur in West-Pavlov's

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in-depth study. The author has a genuine passion of discovering what lies beyond the patterns of certain traceable dichotomies.

As a result, *Bodies and Their Spaces: System, Crisis and Transformation in Early Modern Theatre* discloses more facts about the modern anxiety of being a man in those difficult crisis times after the Elizabethan drama. West-Pavlov's practical evidences make the book unique: it speaks about gendered-charged identity and spaces and goes to the root of the problem, the collocation of male vulnerability within the gender issue. This is what many biased studies elude. West-Pavlov's starting point is definitely from the right *locus*. Masculinity defines itself by its acts of spatial power, of conquering the space. "The display of spatial control" (p. 93) is one of the keys of figuring out manhood in its frail, humane essence. Using Luhmann's theory of systems, West-Pavlov points out that masculinity could not break away from defining itself only by the means of a violent breach within a more encompassing wholeness. This model follows Luhmann's theory of social systems. According to that, a system tends to divide itself from the more encompassing, chaotic exterior. Through this division and through limitative selection, the system preserves its identity. Therefore, male separation from the "primordial space of femininity" follows this rule, is inescapable.

Women had been associated with the private spaces and the domestic sphere and had been constrained to act accordingly; acting and theatrical performance had been a forbidden zone for them, yet the Restoration changed the pattern and the female roles on the stage started to be played by women, not by young boys. Thus the performance lost some of its fictional power. Before the Restoration, what happened on the stage was the bonafide "lived" experience, not the life outside the stage. Women were supposed to be coy, yet the playwrights alluded to their presence among the spectators. The spatial restrictions imposed on women were not only functional, but also powerful. Men needed to reinforce their masculinity by acknowledging their power to perform in public spaces. To be a man became synonymous with "to act like a man", to actively configure the onstage space: "how do you know when someone is acting like a man or only *acting* like a man?" (Gary Spear quoted by Russel-West Pavlov p.88).

Apart from the private-public equation, a new dichotomy is emergent, that between body and space. The space is perceived in its most concrete elements, from the seats taken by women to position of the marginalized woman or that of women the intercessory of mankind, especially in the balcony scenes. If before the body had been perceived as a part of the world, in early modern theatre the body was autonomous in an incipient wake of modernity. The

Restoration times did not manifest the courage of a full contradiction, they relied on the intensification of the illusion.

The novelty of Russell West-Pavlov's book is the creation of a unique system of research where the tensions of inherent aporias are exploited, and yet they do not generate more aporias. Well-balanced, with very good choice of examples, Russell West-Pavlov's book on the crisis of very early modern theatre is a good reading interregnum, a way to better understand the underlying transformation constituent to any crisis of representation.

Liliana Lazar : *Terre des affranchis*

Éditions : Gaïa, 2009. Coédition ACTES SUD (BABEL)

Rodica Tomescu¹

Liliana Lazar, écrivain francophone d'origine roumaine, débute en force dans la littérature francophone avec son premier roman *Terre des affranchis* remarqué, dès son apparition, par la critique française. En 2010 le livre reçoit le Prix des Cinq Continents de la Francophonie, un prix prestigieux qui la consacre en tant qu'écrivain.

Liliana Lazar est née en 1972 à Slobozia, en Moldavie roumaine. Elle a fait des études de langue et littérature française à l'université de Iassy. Mariée avec un Français, elle quitte son pays natal en 1996, à 24 ans, pour s'installer en France, à Gap, aux pieds des Alpes où elle vit actuellement. Le français est sa langue d'adoption. Dans une interview, elle avoue qu'elle parle le français au quotidien, qu'elle pense et rêve en français mais que son imaginaire est resté roumain. Elle avait choisi le français pour sonder dans son roman les bas-fonds de son village natal tout en comprenant qu'écrire dans une autre langue que la sienne lui offrait la liberté et la distance nécessaires pour dire des choses que sa langue maternelle, plus affective et plus pudique à la fois, n'autorisait pas.

Cette terre des affranchis pourrait être son village natal qui s'appelle Slobozia, un nom qui vient du verbe roumain « a slobozi » qui veut dire « affranchir », ou bien sa Roumanie natale. Quant aux affranchis du roman, plusieurs pistes s'ouvrent au fur et à mesure que l'on avance dans la lecture et c'est seulement à la fin du roman que le lecteur tire sa propre conclusion.

Si l'on veut chercher des références littéraires, on peut aller de Barbey d'Aurevilly, par le côté fantastique, à Jean Giono, par sa spiritualité imprégnée de paganisme et son panthéisme et aux frères Grimm, par l'atmosphère d'un conte dans laquelle on est plongé dès le début. Mais nous pouvons ajouter sans hésitations les influences qui viennent de la littérature roumaine, celle de Mihail Sadoveanu dont elle a hérité les belles descriptions de la campagne moldave et celle aussi importante de Mircea Eliade, par son arsenal symbolique et l'omniprésence de la fantaisie dans un monde surchargé de légendes, de croyances et de symboles.

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La terre des affranchis que Liliana Lazar nous décrit est un espace sacré et magique à la fois. L'auteure maîtrise parfaitement l'art de l'encadrement et passe facilement du plan d'ensemble au premier plan et au gros-plan.

Le plan d'ensemble est représenté par Slobozia et la forêt qui la borde. Tandis que le village symbolise un espace ordonné et chrétien, dominé par un monastère byzantin, symbole de la foi qui dominait la vie des gens, mais aussi symbole de la résistance des Moldaves face aux Turcs musulmans, aux Polonais catholiques et aux communistes athées, la forêt représente le lieu sauvage, l'animalité, les forces païennes. C'est le raisonnable et l'instinctif, le sacré et le magique.

Le premier plan souligne la séparation définitive, l'incompatibilité entre les deux dimensions, le sacré et le profane, une coupure autour d'un axe qui dessine une carte symbolique du village : « *Au milieu de la bourgade coulait une rivière nommée la Source Sainte...[...] il y avait ceux de la vallée et ceux de la colline.* »(pp.26-27)

La troisième perspective, celle du gros-plan, nous introduit dans le foyer orthodoxe de la Roumanie profonde qui, protégé par de nombreuses icônes, « *échappait au profane et s'ouvrait déjà sur une dimension céleste.* »(p.59)

Situé en dehors de ces repères, il y a un endroit que Liliana Lazar nous présente comme un espace d'au-delà, « *reflet des ténèbres* » (p.12), un endroit magique et porteur de mystère depuis des temps immémoriaux. C'est *La Fosse aux Lions* qui s'est appelée longtemps *La Fosse aux Turcs* et qui s'étend au milieu de la vaste forêt moldave, un lac maudit où l'on peut rencontrer les moroï, les morts-vivants.

Dans ce décor de légendes et de peur, merveilleux et angoissant à la fois, l'auteure place ses personnages dans une période historique atteinte de cette maladie deshumanisante qui fut la dictature communiste de Ceausescu. L'histoire se tisse autour d'une famille, les Luca, une famille pauvre, refermée sur elle-même, et dont l'auteure suit le destin tragique. Les Luca étaient « *de la colline* » (p.27), toujours considérés comme des étrangers par les villageois.

Au fil du texte on comprend que Victor, le fils de Tudor et d'Ana Luca, qui commet plusieurs crimes, est le reflet d'une Moldavie qui vit sous le poids des superstitions, en proie aux doutes et au mal, où l'interdit du péché domine les mentalités. Ce personnage agit sous l'implacable logique d'une terrible pathologie penchée vers le crime comme s'il était entraîné par un tourbillon obsessionnel vers le néant symbolisé par la Fosse aux Lions qui avale chaque fois le corps de ses victimes. Nous dirions que cette obsession morbide rapproche Victor du personnage de John Steinbeck, Lennie Small, un colosse attardé et innocent aux mains dangereuses. On est chaque fois tenté, comme dans le cas de Lennie, de lui trouver des excuses vu qu'il agit par un

instinct qu'il ne peut pas maîtriser, que son repentir semble sincère et qu'il cherche le pardon de Dieu. En même temps, on ne peut pas remarquer qu'il est en proie à une totale altération de la faculté de juger, sa conscience ne le torturant pas du tout malgré ses regrets apparents.

La fin de l'histoire nous surprend, on assiste à des retournements de veste, certainement typiques pour cette période historique trouble que l'auteure décrit, on atterrit dans une réalité post communiste qui change tous les repères narratifs. Victor Luca, comme tant d'autres personnages, devient un imposteur de l'histoire, « *un héros national* » (p.211) d'une Roumanie qui, selon Liliana Lazar, a raté le grand rendez-vous avec la démocratie : « *Libres ! Ils étaient tous rachetés de leurs fautes, misérables mais allégés de leur joug, toujours sous influence mais délivrés de leurs chaînes, sans véritable raison d'espérer un avenir meilleur, mais pourtant sauvés. Libres! Tel l'esclave qui, à peine affranchi, se cherche un nouveau maître.* » (p.212)

Liliana Lazar a créé dans son roman une ambiance faite d'un mélange de nature et de civilisation, de superstition, de foi religieuse et de foi politique. C'est une ambiance pleine de contradictions et d'hypocrisie et qui est sans doute celle qui régnait sous Ceausescu et qu'elle avait bien connue pour avoir grandi dans ces lieux. Les superstitions des villageois provoquent les pires catastrophes. En Moldavie les moroi font bon ménage avec les saints ce qui fait que les pulsions meurtrières de Victor trouvent un espace dans lequel elles peuvent s'exprimer en toute sécurité. La nature chez elle n'est pas un simple décor qui sert une action humaine mais elle a une existence indépendante de celle des gens qui la peuplent.

C'est un roman aux situations symboliques qui se lit facilement, comme un conte, haletant car le lecteur espère jusqu'au bout en la rédemption de Victor, en la victoire du Bien contre le Mal. Mais ce n'est pas un conte car les choses tournent mal et ne se terminent jamais comme on l'attend. Les personnages sont plus complexes qu'on ne le pense. Certains les trouveront très simples voire un peu primaires, d'autres seront impressionnés justement par leur naïveté qui leur donne une fragilité touchante. L'auteure ne porte pas de jugement sur eux, elle aime laisser le lecteur se faire sa propre opinion.

On se demande à la fin de quoi les personnages sont-ils « affranchis » et, si beaucoup de lecteurs voient dans la chute de Ceausescu la libération suggérée par le titre, il y en aura d'autres qui réfléchiront peut-être que la première libération est d'abord intérieure et personnelle, celle qui nous affranchit des chaînes qui tiennent de notre inconscient.

Par son premier roman Liliana Lazar rend hommage à son pays natal, à une Moldavie roumaine vivante et forte de son patrimoine

culturel et religieux. « *Un des romans les plus originaux de ces dernières années. Vous allez être entraînés par une vague que vous ne contrôlez pas* » a affirmé Jean Marie Gustave Le Clézio, membre du jury du Prix des Cinq Continents de la Francophonie depuis sa création en 2001.

Next Issue's Topic:

Modernity & Postmodernity

Thematik der nächsten Ausgabe:

Modernität und Postmodernität

Les sujet du prochain numéro

Modernité et postmodernité

Confluente, Annals of the University of Oradea, Modern Literature Fascicule is an academic, openly peer-reviewed journal that appears once a year.

The executive editors and the advisory board shall decide on any change about the frequency of the journal.

TCR specializes in bridging the world of academic literary criticism and theories with the aliveness of everyday literary phenomenon as reflected in the cultural media and book-production.

The topics covered by our journal in its 2 generous sections – **Literary - Isms & Cultural - Isms** are as they follow:

British and Commonwealth Literature
American and Canadian Literature
German Speaking Literature
French Literature
Emmigrants' Literature
Cultural and Gender Studies
Literature and Media

Foundation:

As a research journal, the beginnings can be traced back to the academic year 1966- 1967, when, under the name *Lucrari stiintifice*, the section of academic research emerged at the University of Oradea. In 1991 the research journal changed its name and template, focusing on topics of immediate relevance and on thorough going studies, on cultural studies, research articles on Romanian literature, comparative literature. In 2006 emerged *Confluente*, a Modern Literature Fascicule including academic literary studies in English, French, German and Italian.

Submission:

The details about the submission of papers, instructions for the contributors and on the preparation of the manuscript are published online at:

<http://www.deoradea.info/confluente/notes.shtml>

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Our journal advocates open peer-review system, considering that the names of the authors of the articles should not be sent anonymously to the reviewers, since this fact has little impact on the quality of the paper submitted. The quality of the research article is the single argument taken into account when operating the selection of articles.

The administration of the peer-review process is the attribution of the reviews editors that are selected from the members of the advisory board. The sender of the manuscript does not know the names of the reviewers of his/her particular case, only the complete list of reviewers.

The complete list of reviewers will be included in every other issue .The editor-in-chief may supplement the initial list of reviewers, if necessary.

Konfluezen, Jahrbuch der Universität Oradea, Band für Neuere Literaturen und Fremdsprachen, ist eine wissenschaftlich begutachtete Fachzeitschrift, die ein Mal im Jahr erscheint.

Der Redaktionsbeirat und die wissenschaftlichen Begutachter sind befugt, über die Erscheinungsfrequenz der Zeitschrift zu entscheiden.

TCR setzt sich zum Ziel, die Welt der akademischen Literatur- und Kulturforschung mit dem dynamischen Alltag des literarischen Phänomens, so wie dieses von der Kulturmedia und der Buchproduktion widerspiegelt wird, in Einklang zu bringen.

Die in den zwei umfangreichen Sektionen dieser Zeitschrift behandelten Thematiken umfassen:

Die Dynamik des literarischen Phänomens
Die Interdisziplinarität von Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft
Identitäts- und Alteritätsstudien, Anthropologie- und
Kulturtheorien anhand der Literatur
Literarische Identitätsmodelle
Zeit und die Literaturtheorie
Mythos in der postmodernen Literatur
Komparatistische Literaturstudien

Geschichte:

Als wissenschaftliche Fachzeitschrift wurde das Jahrbuch der Universität Oradea, im Universitätsjahrgang 1966-1967 zum ersten Mal unter dem Titel *Lucrări științifice* herausgegeben. 1991 änderten sich Titel und Format der Zeitschrift, während der Inhalt sich auf Forschungsthemen mit Aktualitätsbezug aus dem Bereich der rumänischen Literatur und der Komparatistik fokussierte. Im Jahr 2006 entstand *Confluențe*, ein Band für Neuere Literaturen in den Fremdsprachen Englisch, Französisch, Deutsch und Italienisch.

Hinweise zur Einreichung des Manuskripts:

Auskunft über die Einreichung des Manuskripts entnehmen Sie unserer Internetseite:

<http://www.deoradea.info/confluente/notes.shtml>

Begutachtungsverfahren:

Unsere Redaktion setzt ein offenes Begutachtungsverfahren ein, im Verlauf dessen die Beiträge nicht anonym den jeweiligen Begutachtern

zukommen, da dieses Faktum einen geringen Impakt auf die Qualität der eingereichten Beiträge haben kann. Allein die Qualität der Studien spielt eine Rolle für die Auswahl der zu veröffentlichenden Artikel. Die Verwaltung des Peer-Review Verfahrens ist die Aufgabe des Redaktionsbeirates. Die Autoren der eingereichten Beiträge kennen nicht den Namen jener Begutachter, die über ihre Studie referieren.

Die vollständige Liste der Begutachter erscheint in jeder Nummer. Der Chefredakteur hat die Befugnis, diese Liste zu ergänzen.

Confluences, les Annales de l'Université d'Oradea, Fascicule Littérature moderne, est une revue académique évaluée qui paraît une fois par an. Les directeurs exécutifs et le comité scientifique vont décider tout changement concernant la fréquence de la revue.

TCR a le but de réunir le monde de la critique littéraire académique et des théories avec le phénomène vivant de la littérature d'aujourd'hui tel qu'il est reflété dans les médias culturels et dans la production du livre.

Les sujets contenus par notre revue dans ses deux sections généreuses – **Littéarismes** et **Culturalismes** sont les suivants :

Les dynamiques de la littérature, tendances
L'interconnexion de la littérature et de la culture
Identité, altérité, anthropologie et littérature, études culturelles
L'identité et son expression en littérature
Temps et théorie littéraire
Myths et auteurs postmodernes
Littérature comparée et études comparées

Fondation :

Comme revue de recherche, son commencement remonte loin, dans l'année académique 1966/1967, lorsque sous le nom de *Travaux scientifiques*, la section de la recherche académique a démarré à l'Université d'Oradea. En 1991, la revue a changé son nom et sa forme se fixant sur des sujets d'intérêt immédiat et sur des études approfondies, sur la culture, sur la littérature roumaine, sur la littérature comparée. En 2006 a paru *Confluences*, un Fascicule de littérature moderne incluant des recherches académiques littéraires en anglais, en français, en allemand et en italien.

Soumission

Les détails pour la soumission des articles, les instructions pour les contributeurs et pour la préparation du manuscrit sont publiés en ligne :

<http://www.deoradea.info/confluente/notes.shtml>

Evaluation

Notre revue soutient un système d'évaluation ouverte, considérant que les noms des auteurs des articles ne doivent pas être envoyés comme anonymes aux évaluateurs, parce que cela pourrait avoir un petit impact sur la qualité de l'article soumis. La qualité de l'article de recherche est le seul argument dont on tient compte lorsqu'on fait la sélection des articles.

L'administration du processus d'évaluation est la tâche des éditeurs évaluateurs. L'expéditeur du manuscrit ne connaît pas les noms des évaluateurs de son cas particulier mais seulement la liste complète des évaluateurs.

La liste complète des évaluateurs sera incluse dans un numéro sur deux. L'éditeur général peut augmenter la liste initiale des évaluateurs, si nécessaire.